The problem: Libby is an amazing way to borrow ebooks and has connected people with their local libraries in a great way. Although, research comprised of more than 100 users shows that 70% spent more time than they desired when looking to complete a task.

The app developer (OverDrive) released an update not long ago and implementing big changes is not an option. The project is setting realistic expectations, intending to optimize the navigation mimicking the habits users already have with familiar apps, instead of learning a whole new navigation pattern. Keeping as much as possible of the UI structure and the minimal code change is also key.

The process: I started my research by asking questions to users with a survey that provided me data to know the main demographics I was looking to design for. I then executed a usability test with 5 people, observing the main navigation patterns and frustrations. With the data in hand, I stipulated the major insights and started to sketch how to improve the experience. Observing the Informational Architecture of the Libby and what the user is looking for, I searched for icons that could make more sense to the users and prioritized frequent tasks and came up with a flow that can be found in most social media apps we use. I developed I prototype and tested it again with 5 different people respecting the main user criteria to evaluate how the public received the change.

This was a project I executed alone out of curiosity because I use the app daily. I played the UX Researcher and UX Designer's role and asked a more experienced UX who works with me on a freelance project for feedback.

The solution: The solution I found was pretty simple: I substituted the current icons for ones that are more familiar to the user, and organized the hierarchy of the pages based on frequent tasks and known navigation patterns, keeping the current design style as similar as possible to the original app. I also suggested the menu bar be fixed and the 'now reading' feature appears in all pages, creating consistency and easy access.

To validate my solution, I executed an "icons recognition" test and the second round of usability testing with the prototype I developed, asking people to realize the same tasks I did with the current app and evaluate the performance of the new design and reaction of the user to the improvements. I would like to execute more usability tests and ask the developers for feedback to validate the solution I proposed.

Reflection: I was surprised to identifying that the same tasks that seemed obvious to me, were not obvious to everyone else, even the icons that I thought would make sense at first, actually requested a little more research. I also learned that the users get nervous during the usability test even if you assure them you are testing the product and not them. I definitely (and probably will) test the prototype with more people. I think that not working on making it "pretty" and focusing on functionality seemed like a constraint at first but became an ally in the end.

I would love feedback on my project and I believe there is vast room for improvement. I also would like to know from a developer how hard and costly it would be to make such updates.

I learned that if you ask what the user wants with no restrains, they will request everything possible, so when researching, you need to be very specific about what you are looking to understand.

Overall, I appreciated the experiences and learnings of the process and how the changes I made affected the user's usability.