MS Library User Study – Final report

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# Executive summary

MS Library user study was conducted to understand employees’ experience with the MS Library portal. This study consisted of two phases: survey (223 responses) and 1:1 user interview (10).

Based on thematic analysis from survey comments and user interviews notes, we have identified these five focus areas for MS Library for the next three years.

* + **Awareness/Promotion of MS Library:** Many employees rely on promotions for latest content and reminders to use MS Library. Among ideas shared to raise awareness, the most common suggestion was a consistent presence at New Employee Orientation. Other ideas included book clubs, mini libraries, parties at the physical library location, increased attendance at all hands meetings, continuing to promote library orientation, and adding more people to the MS Library email list. China has a bigger awareness bar to cross than other regions. ***Continue to delight employees with engaging experiences.***
  + **Beyond MS Library:** Employees would like to experience the MS Library resources and services on Teams, and other internal platforms in the future. ***Mapping Microsoft’s digital ecosystem and systematically integrating MS Library is critical to driving employee attention in a scalable way.***
  + **Content Availability:** Employees would like to see journal and market research content available through library search. Moreover, they would like to browse content (books and research) by broader areas of interest or subjects. ***Onboard more content in the search index with subject-based browsing experiences.***
  + **Optimized search on MS Library**: Overall, employees are more satisfied with book search, but not with searching research content. They also need more flexibility to browse content based on topic areas and subjects, discoverability of formats, and looking for what’s recent and relevant. ***Building on the current modern SP search and optimizing search UI for findability is the way to go.***
  + **Simplification:** To prevent information overload, employees are looking for simplified browse experiences, especially on the home page and mega menu. Employees are interested in knowing everything that’s available to them, yet not being overwhelmed by information that’s not relevant. ***With minimalistic design and personalization, we can achieve simplification for the user by displaying what’s relevant.***

Contents

[Executive summary 1](#_Toc78286764)

[MS Library user study – goals and intent 3](#_Toc78286765)

[Study Methodology 3](#_Toc78286766)

[Phase I: Survey 3](#_Toc78286767)

[**Survey questions:** 3](#_Toc78286768)

[**Survey analysis:** 3](#_Toc78286769)

[Phase II: User Interviews 5](#_Toc78286770)

[**Interview questionnaire:** 5](#_Toc78286771)

[**Interview analysis** 6](#_Toc78286772)

[Comments/kudos from survey and user interviews 8](#_Toc78286778)

[Personas 9](#_Toc78286779)

Want a quick read? Go to:

[Executive summary 1](#_Toc78285986)

[**Survey analysis** 3](#_Toc78286769)

[**Interview analysis** 6](#_Toc78286772)

[Personas 9](#_Toc78286779)

# MS Library user study – goals and intent

This study was conducted to understand employees’ experience with the MS Library’s digital presence, with a focus on findability. MS Library’s digital presence includes the library portal, marketing presence, and integrations with other Microsoft platforms.

# Study Methodology

The study was done in two phases: survey and user interviews, with a thematic analysis performed after each phase. The survey was conducted to cover the breadth of user types and their information needs. The 1:1 interview covered the experience in-depth.

Phase I: Survey

The intent of the survey was to collect information from current MS Library users who would be to provide actionable feedback based on their experience of the library portal.

A Microsoft Forms survey was sent to MS Library users through distribution lists, Yammer, and partner channels. We received 223 responses.

Survey questions

1. What is your title/role and organization?
2. Which region/country are you located in?
3. How often do you use MS Library? [Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Occasionally, and Never]
4. On a scale of 1-5, how easily do you find what you need from MS Library?
5. Tell us more about your rating in the previous question.
6. What resources and services do you use from MS Library? [Books, e-books, audiobooks, abstracts, blog posts, news, market research, Research Service, Topic papers, Reading Recommendation Service, Reading lists, Weekly emails, Kindle books, other]
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with the MS Library website?

Survey analysis

* Employees have varied information needs from MS Library ranging from technical to research content as well as content for personal and professional growth.
* 39% of respondents were from the Engineering discipline followed by Services (12%) and Business Programs & Operations (12%).
  + Highest represented profession was Software Engineering at 21% followed by Program Management at 10%.
* 57% response was from the US, followed by Western Europe (8%), India (7%), and GCR (7%).
* Overall findability rating is 3.83/5. Employees who use the library more frequently (weekly) rated high (4-5) for findability.
* Employees expressed a lot of positive sentiment about the resources and services from the library.
* Some **positive themes** include:
  + ***News***: Employees are grateful for complementary news subscriptions from MS Library, and there’s demand for more sources.
  + ***Research Service***: Experience is extremely satisfactory.
  + ***Customer service***: Library front desk service is exceptional.
* Some **neutral/mixed themes** include:
  + ***Search:***
    - Search works when employees know what they’re looking for.
    - Search experience can improve with several aids including sorting, filtering, and navigating across formats.
    - Market research content is difficult to search.
  + ***Site organization:*** It takes some time for employees to get used to the site organization.
  + ***Library collection:***
    - High satisfaction with technical content. Could improve a little bit more on the latest technologies, e.g., GoLang, etc.
    - Huge demand for Chinese language books from China.
    - Lots of demand for fiction, especially related to D&I content.
    - Need a way to avoid long waitlist for more popular titles.
  + ***Access to physical libraries:***
    - China needs more awareness.
    - Employees who are remote/not close to a physical library site need an easier experience to issue and return print books.
  + ***Content access:***
    - Employees appreciate all the resources available, but it’s hard to keep up with everything. They don’t know what they don’t know.
    - Easier sign-up experiences are in-demand and expected.
  + ***MS Library integrations:***
    - Employees expect library resources to appear in places where they visit. Several internal platforms were mentioned repeatedly.
  + ***Marketing and promotions:*** Emails serve as a reminder to use MS Library for many employees.
  + ***Orientations:*** A lot of employees didn’t know about the orientation sessions.

Phase II: User Interviews

From thematic analysis of survey comments, we created interview questions that dive deeper into the experience with the library portal. After analyzing responses from our interviews, we were able to identify five overarching focus areas for the library.

Interview questionnaire

**User profile**

1. How long have you worked at Microsoft?
2. Can you tell me about your work and your team?
3. Can you tell me about your information needs?
   1. How does the MS Library website support you in those needs?

**User experience with the site (the complete journey)**

1. How do you visit the library site? (bookmarked/remember the link/other MS resource) - look for source
2. What’s the first thing you notice or do when you visit the library site?
3. Describe your last experience with MS Library? (see what they remember, profound experience - something good or bad)
   1. What was most helpful?
   2. What was least helpful?
   3. What changes would you make?
   4. What did it enable you to do?
4. Search
   1. What do you search for?
   2. Can you share your screen?
5. Home page
   1. How do you feel about the home page?
6. Filters
   1. What kind of filters do you wish for?
   2. What's troubling about the current filters?
7. View all formats
   1. What is your expectation?
8. Journal/research content search
   1. What kinds of content are you looking for?
   2. How do you search?
   3. What would be helpful that doesn't exist today?

**Awareness and promotion**

1. How did you first hear about the library?
2. What drives you to use MS Library again?
3. How would you describe MS Library site to a colleague?
4. If you had a magic wand for the library, what would you do?
5. How can we expand to other employees?

Interview analysis

5 focus areas for MS Library

# Search on MS Library

Overall, employees are satisfied with book search although searching across formats is difficult and there is a level of dissatisfaction with search related to research content.

**Books:**

* The employees we interviewed expressed they were able to find the books they were looking for but searching books across formats is difficult and it would be helpful to have a simpler, clearer way of displaying book formats with less repetitive content.
* Adding a filter for platform was mentioned along with the ability to sort for relevant content by format, date, and content type.
* Employees also want to see curated collections of books and browse books based on broad topic areas or subjects.

**Research:** Several users said they would like more research content integrated into search capability and a clear way to access it. It would be helpful to see what research is free versus what is behind a paywall.

# Simplification & personalization

* Many employees requested a simplified homepage and mega menu layout. They still want to know everything the library has available, but don’t want to be overwhelmed by seeing too many things at once. If there is a way to show more without scrolling on the homepage that would be helpful. Easier access to library staff contacts and who to reach out to for help as that is not immediately obvious.
* Topic-based searching was also a frequently mentioned theme.
* Personalizing the portal experience is one way to achieve simplification by only displaying what’s relevant to the user. Using the My Library area on the portal could provide a way to further personalize and simplify the user experience.

# Awareness/Promotion of MS Library

* The employees we spoke with had many suggestions for increasing awareness of the library and ideas for evangelism and promotion. Among the most common suggestions was a greater presence at New Employee Orientation and having a benefits table at the end of the event. Other ideas included book clubs, mini libraries, parties at the physical library location, increase attendance at all hands meetings across the company, continue to promote library orientation, and work to add more people to the MS Library email list.
* Our interviewee from China requested MS library emails in Chinese language in addition to more Chinese language books, which would increase usage and awareness of library.

# Content Availability

* Overall, the customers we interviewed were satisfied with the content available on the MS Library platform. Their desire for change centered around the search capability of the content, particularly Market Research (MR) content and content from third-party sources; an integrated search functionality would be beneficial.
* Users would also like to see the search function allow for topic-based searching to retrieve books, MR content and journal articles. For example, one user searching for “exam development” would like results to show all content available including books, MR, and journal articles available.
* A clear indication of what content is available on which third-party platform was also requested.

# Beyond MS Library

Expanding beyond the MS Library will increase visible presence and will be particularly important in reaching the “occasional user” in a scalable way. There are many ways to expand beyond the library, but the actionable and most mentioned ideas include the following:

* Integration with Teams, including RSS feed that is personalized and topic-based
* Ensuring seamless access across devices so customers can access content with one button click
* Using the MS Library as a space to enable conversations and build community
* Integration with internal tools and allowing for issuance of books
* More visible presence on Microsoft Intranet

# Comments/kudos from survey and user interviews:

“The MS Library is a firehose of information, the most valuable resource at Microsoft and a main reason of staying at the company.”

“A great resource with rich content.”

“Keep going, a library is an essential part of our knowledge.”

“Thank you for providing such an amazing service.”

“The breadth and depth of available resources is incredible.”

“Indispensable for my professional and personal development.”

“I really appreciate having the MS Library and its rich contents available to me. For my role, this is key to my success. Thank you very much and great job!!”

“The library is an undiscovered gem in the company.”

Tells his colleagues: “Go to the MS Library … it has everything!”

“I really like the structure of the site, everything is handy on the homepage, book recommendations, blog posts, external services we can consume like the News Hub and things like the events. Really enjoy it!​”

“Over the last decade or so I have become adept at searching MS Library.”

“Just a couple of clicks to find what I'm looking for”

“Ever since the migration to SharePoint online, finding information works much better”

“I generally search for articles -- mostly in newspapers and magazines.  It is both a convenience and a privilege to have effectively full subscription access to almost everything I read and rely on for information.​”

“MS Library mails are very good at drawing my attention to useful content.”

“MSLibrary is my favorite place in MS, it is an unsung hero in Microsoft. Mostly i find what i need to enrich and enhance my knowledge/skills.​”

“Love the ability to discover new things​”

“It's quite intuitive and vast, love the experience.​”

# Personas





