1. Creative Brief
2. Competitive Analysis
3. User Research

Japheth Crawford

Overview

Library websites are often just seen as a utility for physical libraries and research rather than a place we go for enjoyment. The utility side of things can be correlated with negative experiences rather quickly when things aren't exactly expressed or organized in a both logical and pleasing way.

These websites can be given a lot more functionality in relation to the physical library as well as an easier experience when using the site as a gateway to the vast amount of research databases available through the library membership.

The site can also be more attractive if used as a digital portal for ebooks that are available to subscribers as well as organizing digital content to be read.

Goals

- Improve the organization/heirarchy of existing pages to ease navigation on the site. (Way less links in one main navigation bar)

- Create an internal social network to allow ratings/reviews as well as sharing what a user is reading/has read.

- Make intelligent recomendations based on user history

- Streamline the access point for the many research databases that are connected.

Target Audience

The target audience for the entire library remains incredibly broad with both a children's section and a research section, but the site's target audience is more narrow to benefit and please those who would use it the most – college-aged students through post-college, middle-aged professionals. The youngest "library users" would rely on their parents that would fall into the website audience, and the oldest "library users" who don't fall into the middle-aged category (physically or mentally..) may continue to use the library in their current way that they're happy with. The website's target audience is fine with change, so that would allow the way the site functions to be that much more different.

1. **Readmill**
2. **Oyster Books**
3. **Medium**
4. **Scribd**
5. **Pocket**
6. **Readability**

AT A GLANCE

	Readmill	Oyster Books	Medium	Scribd	Pocket	Readability
Desktop Browser Experience	●●○○○	●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●●○○	●●●●●
Recommendations/Suggestions	●○○○○	●○○○○	●●●●○	●●●○○	○○○○○	●●○○○
Social Interactivity	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●●●●	●●○○○	○○○○○	●●○○○
Reading Quality/Functionality	●○○○○	●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●●●●
Smartphone/tablet Strategy	●●●●○	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●●●○	●●●●○

CRITERIA

—**Desktop Browser Experience**
—**Recommendations/Suggestions**
—**Social Interactivity**
—**Reading Quality/Functionality**

Enoch Pratt Free Library

READMILL

http://www.readmill.com

Description

Users can either purchase ebooks or upload pdfs and purchased ebooks to read on multiple devices. Also incorporates a social network of "highlighting" passages.

Notes

- For pushing things across devices, it's odd that the site isn't responsive, even if there is an app for mobile devices

- There's no way to get recomendations based on a book's content, only by the author

- Rating system is only yes or no

- Random uploaded PDFs are also included in site search which is super broad – the search results page even includes highlights in different languages mixed with the results of books when just searching for a certain author

- No way to read in browser – user has to download and read in iBooks? (gross)

OYSTER BOOKS

http://www.oysterbooks.com
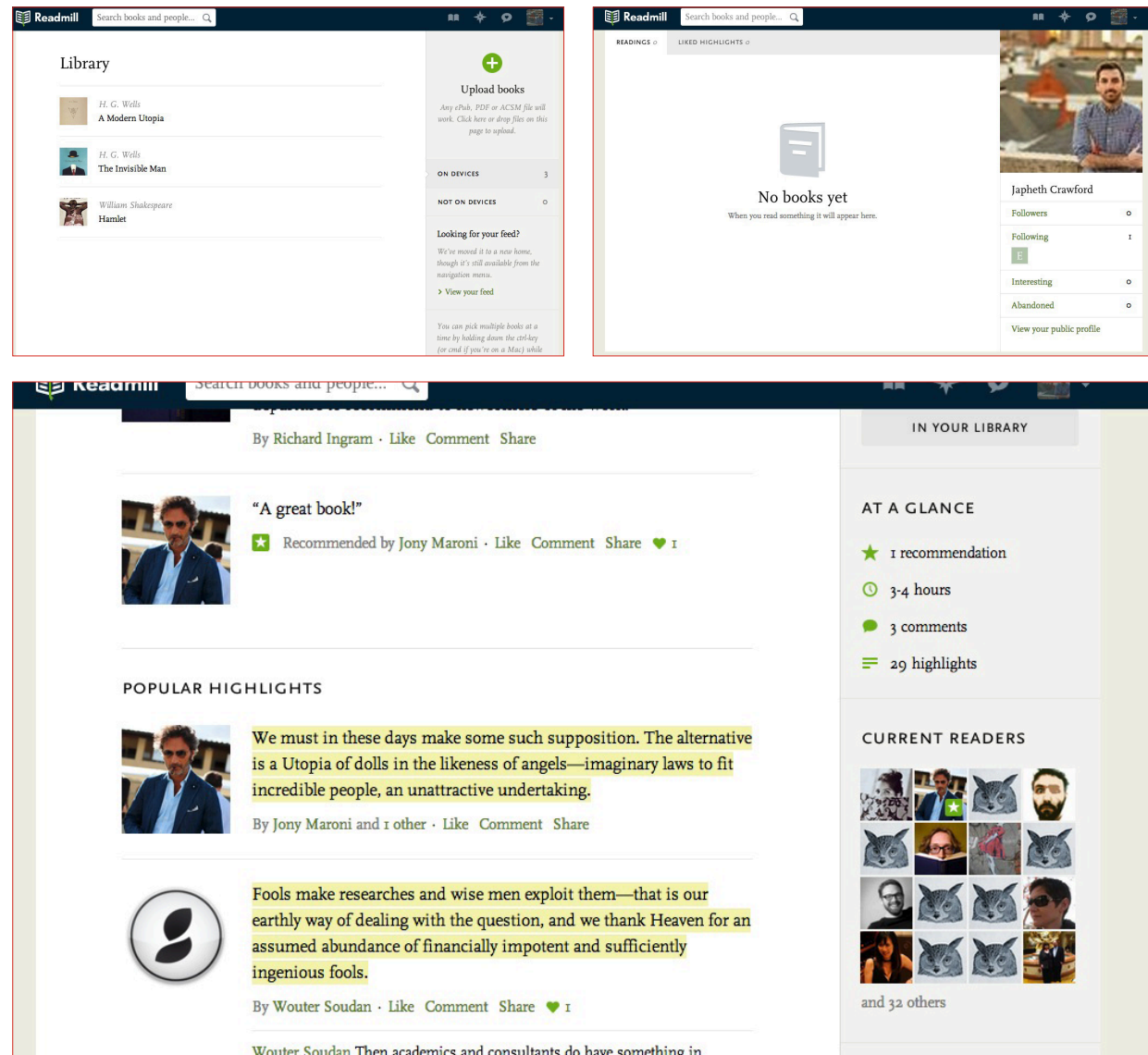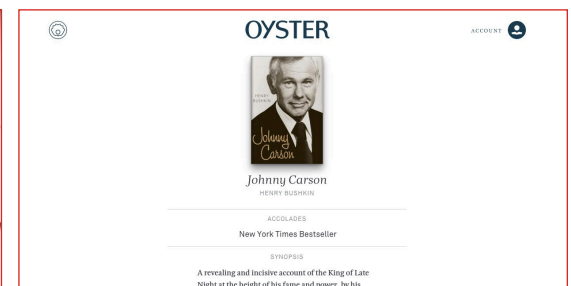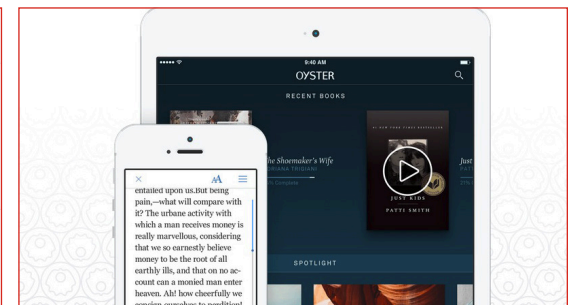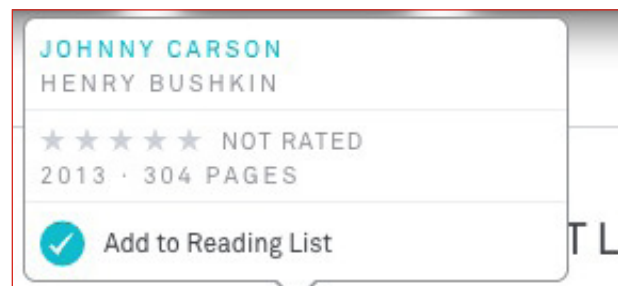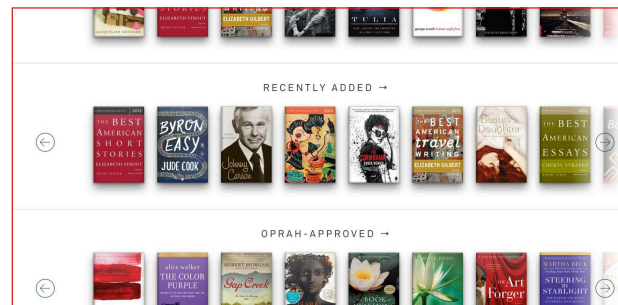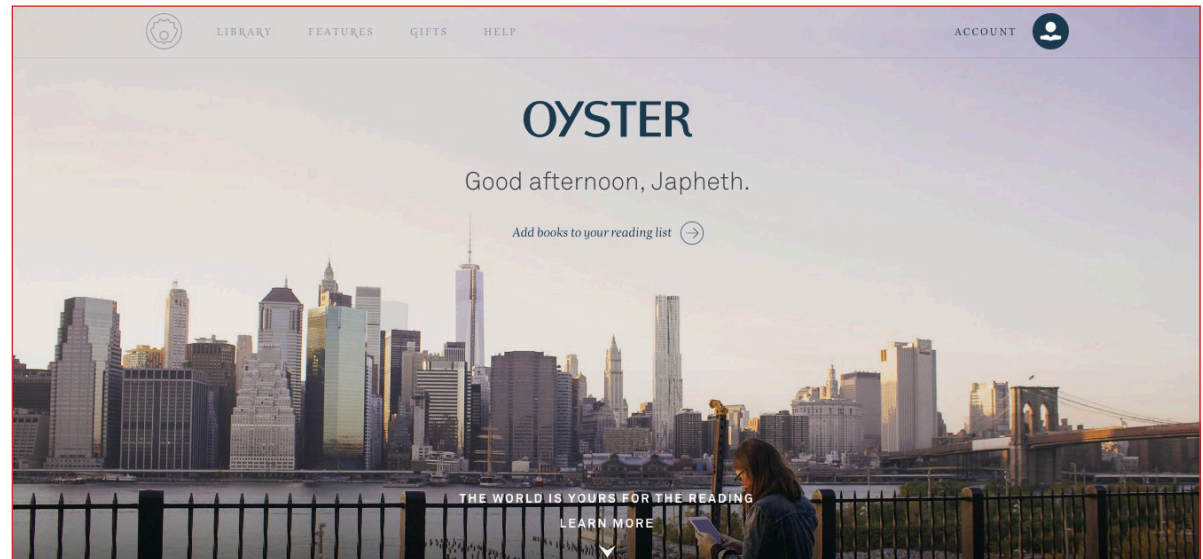
Description

Netflix of books –users can pay $9.95/
mth to access 1000's of books. Start a
reading list, share books you're reading
with others, ratings, suggestions, etc..

Notes

- Seriously no way to read these on-line, only in the app?
- Front page looks identical to Netflix
- Clicking on any book opens a new tab?
- Hovering on a book, nice info block and access to "+ to reading list"
- Hover is completely different when going into a section and hovering on a book though
- No way to see/browse profiles on the web, only in app.
- No search feature - only browse

MEDIUM

http://www.medium.com

Description

Public blogging platform that allows users to comment on specific sections of an article, follow certain collections, and apply their contributions to certain collections.

Notes

- Collections only have "Latest" and "Trending" sorting options.. no way of sorting out already read content

- nothing like a "featured collections" section/link – closest thing would be a top 100 of all articles on Medium

- For the most part, good balance of text and imagery (all up to the author)

- Good for short stories but not "novels"

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SCRIBD

http://www.scribd.com
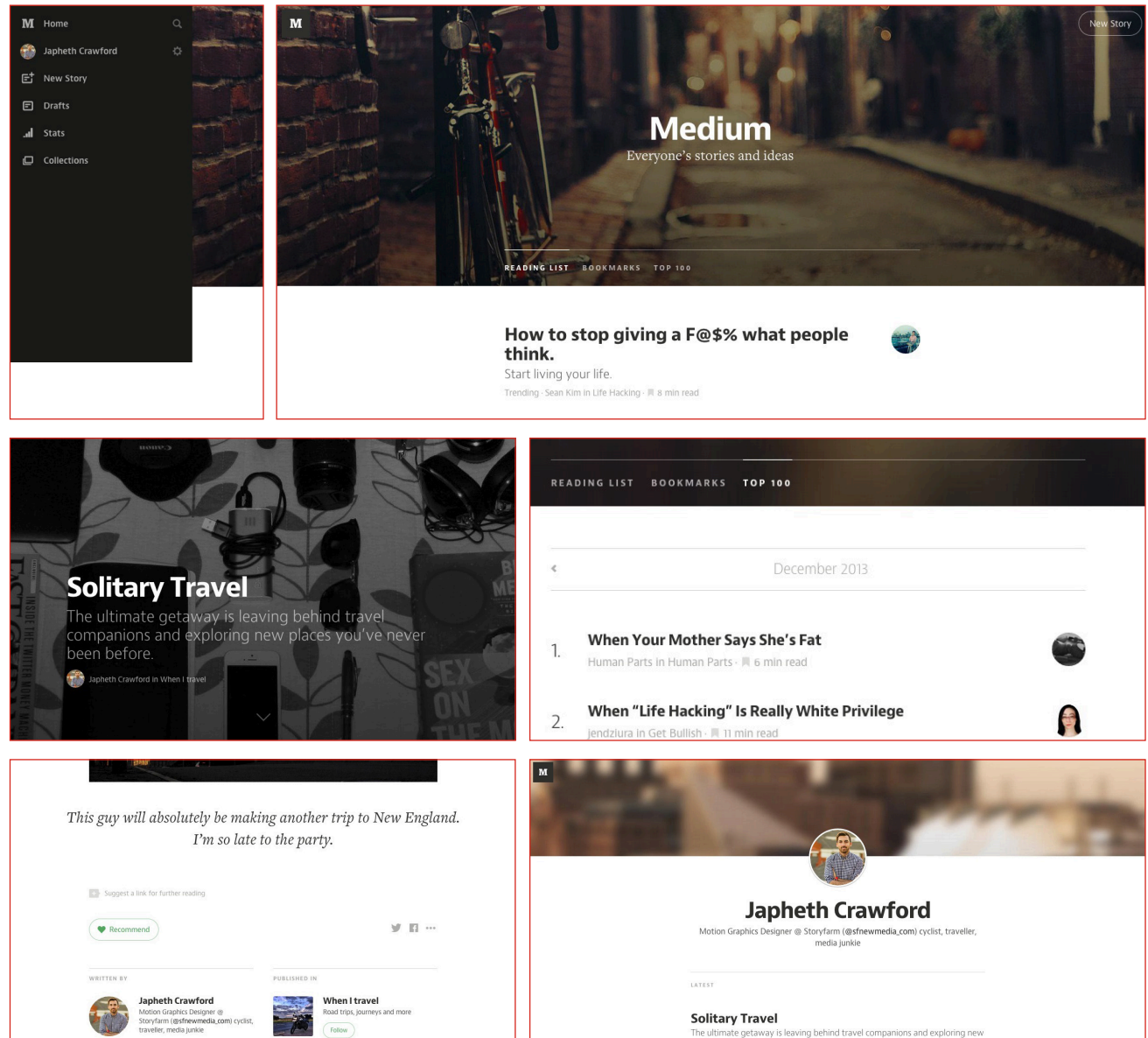
Description

Yet another "Netflix of books" with a subscription to read unlimited books online or in an app.

Notes

- Very limited in content.. It's easy to go through the entire library in a collection

- The search results page is better for browsing than the browsing page is

- Confusing profile page (How do I already have 1,022 followers 2 minutes after opening an account?)

- Social Feed – Not sure what the benefit of this is

- Reading pages really comes close to being skeumorphic. All it needs are the page turning sound effects.

- Table of Contents has only chapter #? Why not names?

POCKET

http://www.pocket.com

Description

Gather content from all over the web (newspapers, blogs, articles) and presents it in a straight forward way, only the text and images like reading them in a book. Features like "Save for Later" "Add to Favorites" "Archive" etc

Notes

- No way to really "archive" things, only delete. What if I want to mark something as "read" so it doesn't show up in my things to read? Maybe I want to move it to my "read pocket" instead of putting it my "to-read pocket"

- I like being able to switch to sans serif type on a dark background

- Nice tagging feature

- No way to list content just from one tag?

READABILITY

http://www.readability.com
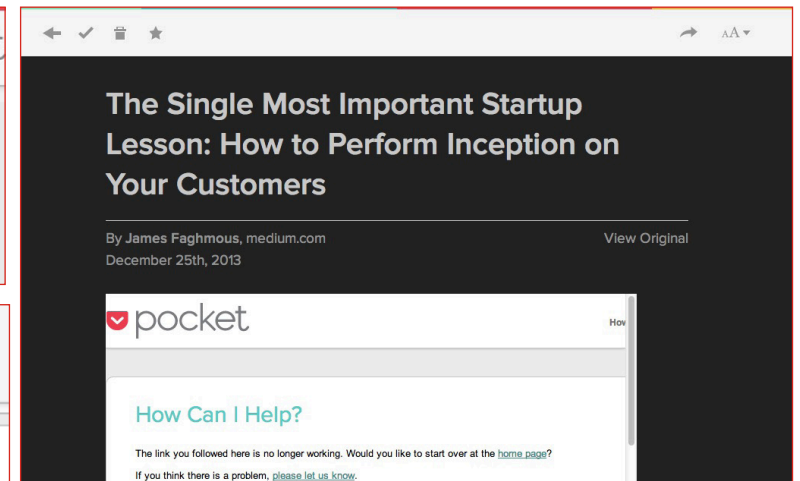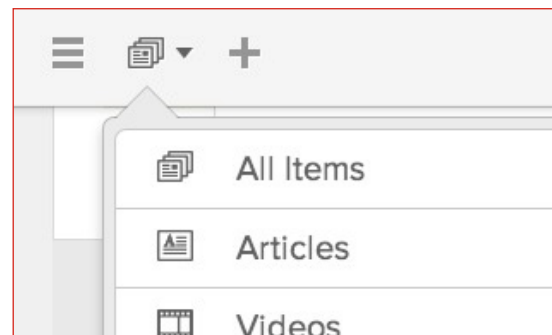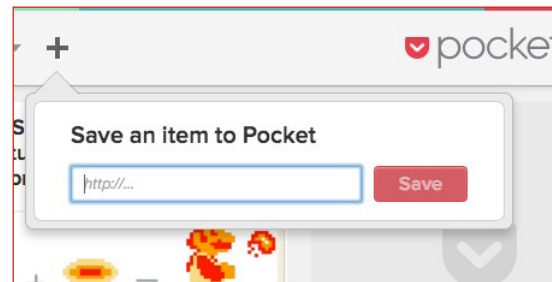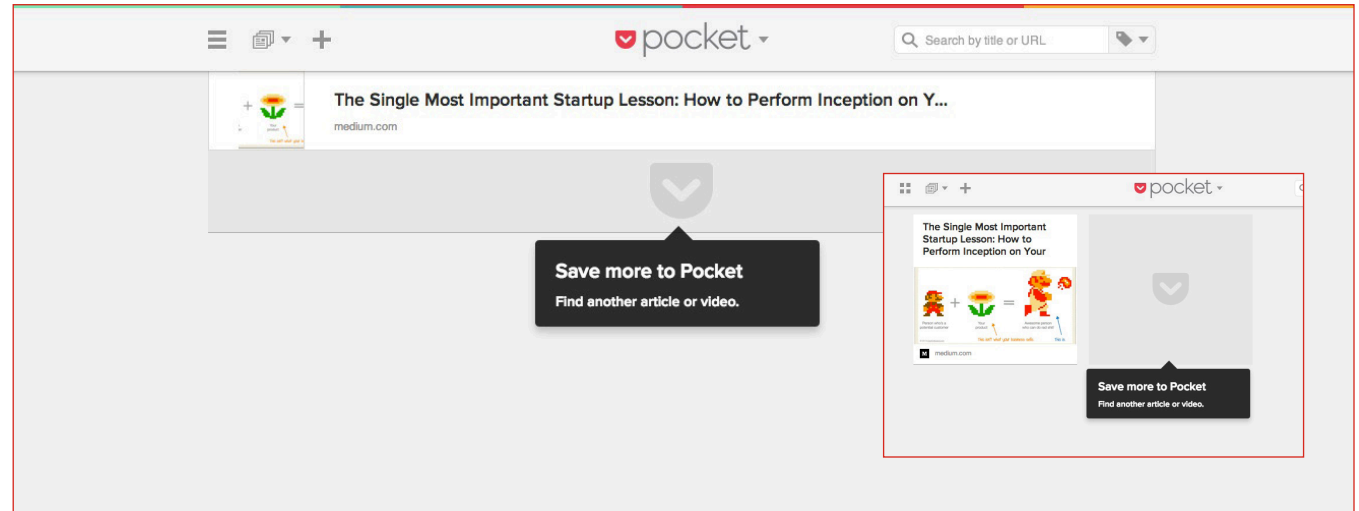
Description

Allows users to easily import content from articles/websites using either the URL import on the site, emailing yourself a link to a customizeable email address, or if your blog app (like feedly) has a readability button. Beautiful reading interface, customizeable.. Recommend articles to feature on your profile so your followers can see.

Notes

- Super simple interface
- Tagging feature is great
- Recommended articles aren't exactly customized per user – I don't think
- No "ratings"
- No comments/reviews on articles/highlights/etc.
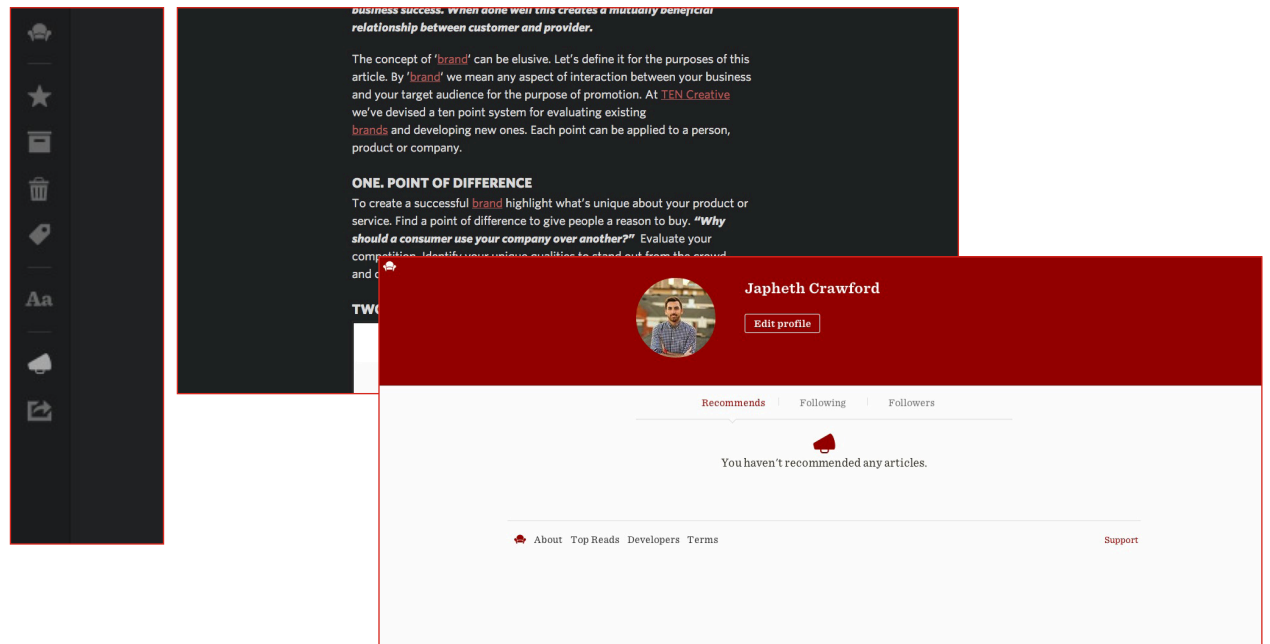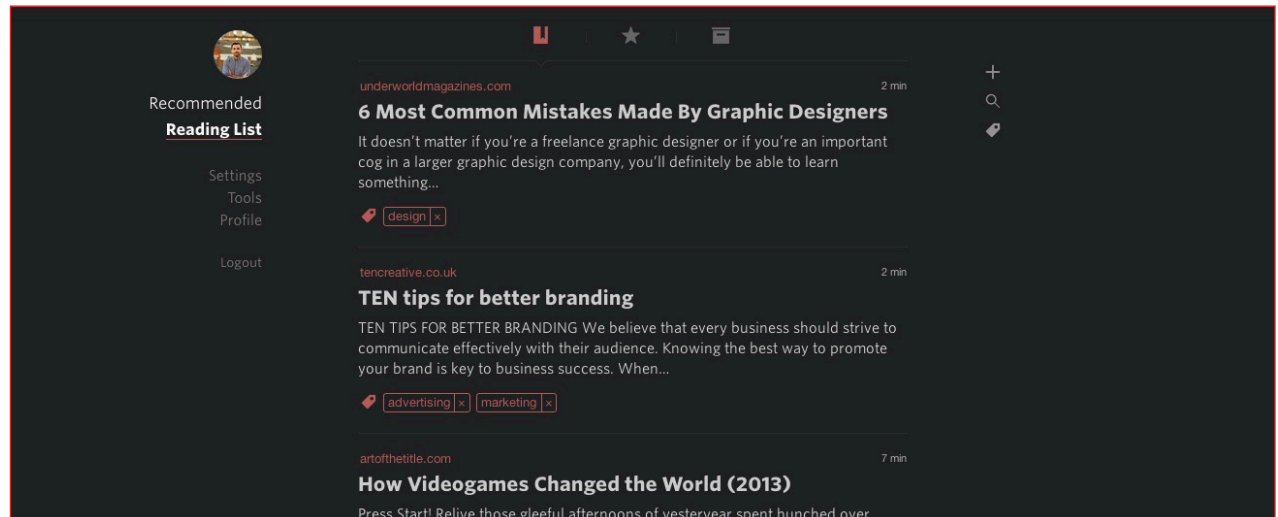
1. How often do you visit the library?

2. What do you go to the library for?

3. Do you ever use the library website? What for?

4. Is there anything that frustrates you with the library and/or website?

5. Do you use an iPad, Kindle, Nook, etc? If so, how often?

6. Where do you read the most? Desktop? E-Reader?

7. If the entire library's catalog was available in digital format, would you ever still go to the physical building?

8. When reading on a desktop, is there anything that could be done to better your experience?

–Marisa, 26F
–Jon, 23M
–Danielle, 33F
–Corinne, 42F
–Dan, 34M

Danielle
THE ENGLISH TEACHER

Uses the library as a place to get physical books often and to always have a quiet place to read, study, or work. Loathes paying fines all the time in person because of guilt. Can't stand to read for extended periods of time with screens – only short articles. Uses reading physical books as conversation starters with her students.

Online portal for physical library features are most important

Jon
THE COLLEGE STUDENT

Only uses the library when required for school. Mostly reads online articles/forums/reddit/etc. Uses the library website mostly for the database access for doing research for papers. Reads mostly on his phone, physical books, and on his laptop.

Mobile responsiveness with easy-to-understand and organized database collections are most important. Ability to import articles for more customizeable reading experience is also important

Corinne
THE MIDDLE AGED PROFESSIONAL

Goes to the library generally for exercise DVDs and movies.. sometimes books. Uses website mostly to keep track of items checked out and renewals, but finds the website to be frustrating and limited in practical functionality. Prefers reading the physical book and visiting the library which always has peace and quiet.

DVD/Multimedia cataloging and physical library features are important.

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