EMPATHISE STAGE

In this stage, an attempt was made by the Ernst and Young web dev unit to gather critical information from the bookstore client. The questions were as follows:

* What is the current process?: Well an employee enters the items from one computer in an excel spreadsheet and update the spreadsheet. However, current employees have the ability to delete items from the excel spreadsheet. We enter fields like author, title, Year, Condition, Genre
* How do you check to see if a book is available at other branches? By phone
* How many rows i.e. records? : About 1000
* Will there be users with different functionality?: Yes, users who can add and update the inventory system and users who can delete records from the system
* Is there any way to track when employee update / delete inventory?: No
* Are there multiple branches? : Yes, but we cannot search across branches for inventory
* Do you have any barcodes? Can they be scanned? Yes
* Do you want the ability to take pictures of book cover (front, back, ISBN number)?: Yes
* Do you want search and filter functionality: yes

DEFINITION OF PROBLEM

**Background**: The respective client is a bookstore services company that specializes in managing rare book collections. The company have multiple branch locations but each location independently operates its own inventory. Each location accesses an excel file, which tracks the inventory of rare collection items. Items are entered into the spreadsheet when collected and can be deleted when they are sold or where there is no more inventory of the item.

**Problem**: The inventory process is inflexible due to only accessing the system one employee at a time at each branch. In addition, the process cannot perform searches for collection items in a more efficient and effective manner, either internally at the branch or over multiple locations. Also, there is a lack of control for entering, updating and deleting collection items at each branch. Hence, there seems to be no presence of an audit trail or logs that may not only be useful for internal operations, but may be necessary for discovery or compliance purposes

IDEATE

Possible solution: The Ernst and Young Team web unit proposes a web solution called Book-em to offer the following functionality:

* Security controls by implementing a login system. Users will be divided in respective groups:
  + Employees – This group will have entry (update), search and checkout privileges. These users will not have delete permissions
  + Managers – This group will have search, checkout and delete privileges.
* Ability of multiple users at each location to enter (update) and checkout items in an efficient manner
* Online entry (update) and checkout ability at the specific branch location
* Online search capability for rare collection items over multiple branches
* Audit trail which can keep track of users and the management of rare collection items
* Logs to act as a back-up for activities surrounding rare book items
* Additional reports that managers can utilize for enhancement of bookstore operations