

Website Competitive Analysis Report

Libraries Analyzed	King County Library & Portland Public Library
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URL's	King County Library vs Portland Public Library

Project Goals/Objectives

The goal for this Competitive Analysis is to evaluate The Seattle Public Library website performance and structure compared to Portland Public Library and King County Library System websites. We will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the competitor sites to extract information and techniques that will benefit The Seattle Public Library website structure. Our team will gather data to inform a redesign of The Seattle Public Library website using usability methods. The research will be conducted to make recommendations benefitting the library economically and structurally.

Objectives

Our objectives for completing a competitive analysis of the two websites are to:

1. Gather data to for our teams re-design decisions
2. Identify Usability frustrations
3. Assess common design elements to recommend or not recommend

Categories our Team Assessed on the Websites

1. Information Architecture
2. Visual Design
3. Tasks/Interaction
4. Usability
5. Labels/Nav
6. Responsiveness (Viewable on different devices)

Usability Scale

1. Difficult
2. Moderately Difficult
3. Moderately Easy
4. Easy




☒ Catalog ☐ Website

[Saved Searches](#) [Advanced Search](#)
[Home](#) [Explore](#) [Research](#) [eLibrary](#) [For You](#) [How Do I...](#) [Locations](#) [About PPL](#) [Programs & Events](#)

Paused

Portland's *Sustainability* Series!

"Renewable Energy for Your Home" ReVision Energy presents an educational workshop on solar energy and heat pumps, Jan. 25, Main Library [Learn more](#)

[Adults](#)
[Teens](#)
[Kids & Families](#)

QUICK LINKS:

- [Downloadables](#)
- [Get a Library Card](#)
- [PPL Blog](#)
- [Renew Materials](#)
- [Pay Fees](#)
- [Donate Online](#)

LOCATION & HOURS:

UP NEXT AT THE LIBRARY:

CONNECT WITH THE LIBRARY:

Company	Portland Public Library
URL	https://www.portlandlibrary.com/
Scale of usability Scale = 2	Labels/Navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Drop menu is useful but it is overwhelming. The navigation scheme is not helpful in this instance and does not attractable, which is kinda boring because most of the are same as unclear or unnecessary such as Explore, Research, For you, How do I, and About PPL. Those are not good labels. Overall feel of the site: It looks like built for users who like to spend all day to click around without a purpose. There is not a calendar on the site.
Scale of usability Scale = 1	Responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Un-mobile friendly, but it responses on tablet on width 820 px. Any size smaller than 820 px does not responses. It's very tiny text and buttons on a phone. If use the search function on a phone would be difficult.
Scale of Usability Scale = 2	Usability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The layout of the website is very old-fashioned, and got a clinic-website feeling. The navigation is actually helpful and task oriented for users. However, there are a few abbreviations on the navigation make the site give a cluster overwhelming message.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It was fairly easy to find a book online within the website using the research bar at the very top. The feature of the e-library is impressive, but the resources in it are very limited. All the ebooks are categorized alphabetically with a filter engine on the side. If there were more resources put into the database, the current system would have been more successful.
Information Architecture Scale = 2	<p>Information Architecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ By taking a top down approach to analyze the organization of information presented on the Portland Public Library (PPL), we've concluded that the information presented on the PPL is poorly organized. The main navigation has a redundant home button, while there is a Site ID directly above it also linking back to the Home Page. ❖ The Main Category Sections do not go to pages, they open drop down menus for the Sub-Category Sections. The functional sequence hierarchy of Sub-Category groups need to be reorganized. ❖ The Sub-Category naming conventions are fairly straight forward, but the Main Category names need revision. The Sub-Navigation Menu is organized differently or isn't present depending on which Main Category you're in. This creates inconsistency throughout the website. ❖ The Utilities/Log In at the top right of the page is easily identifiable and well organized. ❖ The Footer is home to more Utility items. It would be nice if there were navigational items from the Main Nav. in the footer as well.
Scale of Usability Scale = 2	<p>Visual Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The logo is somewhat small and not very prominent, but the color scheme is consistent throughout website, with colors taken from the logo (though it is kind of an odd shade of green...) ❖ The navigation is consistent and fairly easy to understand, The dark background with light text helps make it stand out from the rest of the page. The navbar is responsive when you hover over links, and when you click on a link and open a page, the link is shown darker so you know where you are on the website. ❖ Social media icons are well sized and noticeable enough, though they are located at the bottom of the page, so their existence is not immediately apparent. - The website is not responsive and the layout is not suitable for mobile devices. ❖ The main page is laid out in a sort of grid format, with information each contained in its own box. There is a good amount of spacing between the boxes, which helps make the website look less cluttered - The search function is large and prominent at the top of the page. ❖ The font used throughout the website is a sans-serif font that isn't too small and easy to read. ❖ The website has a relatively modern looking layout. The colors aren't too obnoxious and are consistent throughout the site.
Scale of Usability Scale = 3 Scale = 1	<p>Tasks/Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do I order a Library card? Navigating to perform this task is fairly easy. On the Main page the sidebar has a menu that says Quick Links. Under that menu is a link that says Get A Library Card. By clicking on that hot link a User is taken

	<p>to a page with the information on how to obtain a Library Card. While a User cannot order one online, there are clear directions on how to obtain a Card at a local branch of the Portland Library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ How do I download Audiobooks? There are two ways to perform this task from the main page. From the main Nav click the menu option eLibrary. By clicking this the User is presented with a large drop down menu that offers options for eBooks, eAudiobooks, Streaming Music/Videos, eResearch, etc. This is where the ease of use may stop however, because a User is then presented with a Gateway page that gives them several 3rd party options; Hoopla, Overdrive, & several Public Domain sites. ❖ The second option to access downloading Audiobooks from the Main page is under the Quick Link Menu. A User needs to click Downloadables and they taken to the same Gateway page that offers third party options.
Scale = 3	<p>How do I pay a late fee?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This task can be performed from the Main page by accessing the Quick Link Menu. Under this menu in the sidebar a User can click the option Pay Fees. This option will then take a User to what appears to be a Landing page where they need to enter Account Login information to access a database. It is not entirely clear if this page is third party or if the Library had this payment Database built from scratch.
Scale = 1	<p>Can I rent or book a room for use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ I am not sure how often a User would want to perform this task, but it is not easy to access from the Menu system. I timed myself and it took me just over a minute to click on three different drop down menus from the Main Nav. I was able to find this option under “How do I” on the main Nav. When I clicked on the option Room Rentals I was taken to a Landing page where I could not book a room through the website, but I could call or email someone at the Library to book a room. The Landing page did give me a list of rooms, their capacities, and rental costs. There was no calendar of availability.

King County
Library System

Catalog

Books & More ▾

Online Library ▾



Calendar ▾

Kids & Teens ▾

Search


EVENT SPOTLIGHT
South King Repair Café »[Auburn](#)

Jan 26 | 3:00PM

Count Us In »

Snoqualmie

Jan 27 | 11:00AM

Super Smash Bros. Melee Tournament »

Foster

Jan 27 | 3:00PM

[View All Events »](#)

NEW FICTION

NEW NONFICTION

NEW FOR KIDS

NEW FOR TEENS

NEW IN MOVIES

Company	King County Library System
URL	https://kcls.org/
Scale of usability Scale = 4	Labels/Navigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The navigation is very modern, up-to-date, very organized, and very helpful for the user. This easy to really gives the user a clear way of finding information without confusing. The calendar has a list of events in order as its main content. It shows more details about that event by clicking. ❖ The website attractable for all audience by simply using 5 major topics. First, both logo and home logo link to home page; Catalog leads to the search function with drop down second categories, however, the second categories search does not include audience type of the reading. ❖ The labels of the navigation structure is the wisest by using Kids & Teen, which is the largest user population of libraries plus the calendar next to it. It is just perfect for whether parents looking event or reading for kids, or using by kids themselves. ❖ Overall feel of the site: Great!
Scale of usability	Responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mobile friendly nicely any size of device.

Scale = 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The search function works great on a phone. ❖ The loading speed is somewhat slow, but not too bad. Great font size on mobile devices.
Scale of usability Scale = 4	<p>Usability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The design of the website is very consistent and have a modern taste. There are a great collection of ebooks, and grouped by themes, such as, biography, mystery, fiction, travel, etc. ❖ The overall experience of browsing is delight. The search engine on the top right corner is a great feature, and I can access to it in every single page of the website. ❖ In addition, the library carry a great updated video/audio collection. The layout of the website encourage me want to explore more in the library, and all the standing-out headers make the structure of the website crystal clear.
Information Architecture Scale = 3	<p>Information Architecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ By taking a top down approach to analyze the organization of information presented on the King County Library System (KCLS), we've concluded that the information presented on the KCLS is moderately well organized. ❖ The main navigation has a redundant home button, but it isn't as intrusive as the word "Home". It is a small house icon, which is directly to the right of the Site ID, which also links back to the home page. The house icon is consistently present across all devices and Main Menu layouts. The Main Category Sections do not go to pages, the open the drop down menus for the Sub-Category Sections. The functional sequence hierarchy of the Sub-Category groups are well organized. There is unfortunately one dead link in the Sub-Category Section of the Calendar Section. The naming convention for the Main Categories is good, but a few could be improved and the Sub-Category naming conventions are good. ❖ The Sub-Navigation Menu is consistently located on the left side of the screen and well organized. ❖ The Utilities/Log In at the top right of the page is easily identifiable and well organized. ❖ The Utilities in the Footer cover a range of other categories and incorporates a few items also found in the Main Menu. This information is well organized.
Scale of Usability Scale = 2	<p>Visual Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The website does not use many colors, opting for a black and white color scheme, but occasionally uses red and blue to make certain features stand out. The red comes from the logo, and helps keep the branding consistent, somewhat. The minimal color scheme gives the site a slightly more modern look. ❖ The main page is very busy. The sections are in a tightly spaced grid format, and the amount of information is a little overwhelming. It is busy with too much to look at. ❖ The navigation is simple and easy to use. Most of the main links have a submenu that opens when you click on it, but the submenus are very large and take up most the screen on smaller monitors (such as mine). It doesn't go away when you click outside the menu, and you have to click the main link again to close it, which can be bothersome. ❖ The footer is large and the footer navigation is extensive, with a lot of links. ❖ Social media icons aren't too small and are relatively easy to find. ❖ The sans-serif font used throughout the website is well sized and easy to read.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ When viewed on mobile devices, the website is technically responsive, but when the main page is viewed, it takes all the boxes containing information and arranges them vertically. This makes the page very long and you have to scroll a lot to get to the bottom of the page (at least there is a 'back to top' button) ❖ The nav bar is condensed in the mobile version. It replaces the worded labels with icons, and while the icons' meanings may be obvious to some, other less experienced users might be confused as to what the icons mean. ❖ Overall, the website has a modern design and color scheme, though the way the information is arranged, it looks a little cluttered and busy
Scale of Usability Scale = 2	<p>Tasks/Interaction_How do I order a Library Card?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Navigating on the King County Library website to order a Library Card is not straightforward. A User can find this under two Menu options. Under the Help menu at the top Utility Navigation or at the bottom of the page the Footer Utility Menu has an option. What is great about the King Co. website is that once a User finds their way to the Card ordering Landing Page they can fill out a Form and order a Library card online.
Scale = 4	<p>How do I download eAudiobooks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A User can Navigate to download Audiobooks by clicking on the Books & More option on the Main Nav. Once there a User selects Audiobooks and is taken to a Gateway page that offers a User a way to search for an Audiobook of their choice. If the King Co. Library offers the book in Audio form then the User is taken to a Landing page where a User has two choices; if the CD's are available a User can place a hold for pick-up at a location. Second, option is if all copies are checked out a User can place a reservation for when a copy becomes available. Whichever option is chosen a User then gets a pop up menu where they can enter their bar-code and pin number.
Scale = 1	<p>How do I pay a fee?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It appears that the King Co. Library website does not allow Users to pay fees online. If they do offer this option then Users cannot Navigate to a Gateway page for this option. It is possible that once a user logs into their Account this option becomes available in their User Profile
Scale = 3	<p>Can I rent or book a room for use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A User can find this option under the main Navigation as well as in the Utility Footer. Under the Main Navigation a User would click Books & More. A large drop down menu expands with an option under Services for Meeting Rooms. Clicking this option takes a User to a Gateway page where there are two options; book online or call a branch to reserve a room. If a User selects the option to book online they are taken to another page with a list of all King Co. Library branches and an interactive Google map. By selecting the branch a User desires to book a room at, the User is then taken to a Landing page where one can view a calendar and the meeting rooms available for booking. This calendar also includes a same day function where users can see exactly what hours during a day a room is booked for.

Elements of the KCLS & PPL site recommended	Elements of the KCLS & PPL site not recommended
Labels/Navigation	
<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Highly recommend DO NOT take any element of PPL. <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The navigation is very modern, up-to-date, very organized, and very helpful for the user. This easy to really gives the user a clear way of finding information without confusing. The calendar has a list of events in order as its main content. It shows more details about that event by clicking. The website attractable for all audience by simply using 5 major topics. First, both logo and home logo link to home page; Catalog leads to the search function with drop down second categories, however, the second categories search does not include audience type of the reading. The labels of the navigation structure is the wisest by using Kids & Teen, which is the largest user population of libraries plus the calendar next to it. It is just perfect for whether parents looking event or reading for kids, or using by kids themselves. Overall feel of the site: Great! ★ It would great idea to using KCLS as a reference to redesign a library website. 	<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Drop menu is useful but overwhelming. The navigation scheme is not helpful in this instance and does not attractable, which is kinda boring because most of the are same as unclear or unnecessary such as Explore, Research, For you, How do I, and About PPL. Those are not good labels. Overall feel of the site: It looks like built for users who like to spend all day to click around without a purpose. There is not a calendar on the site. <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ It would great idea to using KCLS as a reference to redesign a library website.
Visual Design	
<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Overall good website. It's not amazing in terms of design but it's better than the SPL's, at least. ★ The color scheme is fitting and consistent throughout the website and should be kept to help with the overall branding of the company. ★ The current font is readable and should be kept ★ The layout can be kept as it keeps the information nicely spaced and doesn't make the site look too busy ★ The navigation's color and design helps it stand out and can be kept <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The simple, modern layout is nice and doesn't need to be changed ★ The color scheme is consistent throughout the website and can be kept 	<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The company needs to make their website mobile friendly for easier viewing on mobile devices <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The main page is a little cluttered, and the information could be spaced out a little more so it doesn't look as busy ★ A couple of the links in the navigation have icons beside the labels. They should make it so either all of the links have icons or none at all, to keep it consistent ★ The current footer is larger than is probably necessary and could be condensed ★ The company should redesign their mobile site for easier viewing and usability ★ They should condense the navigation into a hamburger icon or something instead of using potentially confusing icons in place of words

Responsiveness	
<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Highly recommend DO NOT take any element of PPL. <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ KCLS is a Mobile friendly nicely any size of device. The search function works great on a phone. The loading speed is somewhat slow, but not too bad. Great font size on mobile devices. 	<p>PPL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ PPL is an nu-mobile friendly, but it responses on tablet on width 820 px. Any size smaller than 820 px does not responses. It's very tiny text and buttons on a phone. If use the search function on a phone would be difficult. <p>KCLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Not recommend the speed of page loading on KCLS.
Information Architecture	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The PPL and KCLS both have better overall Information Architectures than the Seattle Public Library (SPL). ★ SPL should redesign their Main Navigation and implement drop down menus for certain categories, opening up multiple well organized Subcategories like the PPL and KCLS have done. ★ KCLS in particular did this very well. SPL should also look at how KCLS named their categories. ★ They aren't perfect, but they are a huge step in the right direction. SPL should also redesign their Utilities/Log In similarly to PPL and KCLS, they both did a very good job on making these easily identifiable and organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ All three websites have redundant "Home" buttons in their main navigation. ★ We would like to see the "Home" button disappear and rely solely on the Site ID as the way to navigate back to the Home Page. ★ The Main Category names like "Books & More" should not be kept. Certain categories need to be broken apart and reorganized. ★ The KCLS did a decent job with their footer Utilities, but we believe most all of the Main Navigation options should be placed in a hierarchical fashion above the Utilities in the footer.
Tasks/Interaction	
<p>For Ordering a Library Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The King Co. Library (KCLS) gives its users a great way to interact with their website when it comes to ordering a Library Card. Our Team would recommend that the Seattle Public Library (SPL) setup an online Form for Users to order their Library cards via the SPL website. <p>Ordering Audiobooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Our team would like to see the SPL use a similar approach that the KCLS used to allow users to download and/or reserve Audiobooks. <p>Pay Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Our team found that the PPL website had an acceptable method to navigate to and pay Library fees. We would like to see this on the SPL website. <p>Booking Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The KCLS website has a very robust interaction for Users to rent & book rooms at various Library locations. Our team would recommend a similar interaction for SPL Users. 	<p>Ordering A Library Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Our team would not like to see the SPL use the Portland Public Library method of having to only be able to order a Library card in person, via email, or over the phone. <p>Ordering Audiobooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The PPL 3rd party approach to downloading/reserving Audio material is not recommended. <p>Pay Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ It is still unknown if the KCLS allows users to pay fees. Our team would like to see any easy to navigate to payment option for Library fees. <p>Booking Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ The PPL website gave Users the contact information and cost information about how to book a room, but the ability to do so online was not available. Our team would not be recommending the PPL way to book a room.

Usability

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Overall, both KCLS and PPL are all good website for public library system.★ As users, our team find them both very hands-on and self explanatory. There are no needs of manual for using the websites. We would like to feel the same way when we browse SPL website in the future.★ Compare to PPL, KCLS has a much larger resources for online users, and categorized in a user friendly way. We would like to see this categorizing method for books and any other resources on the SPL website.★ Meanwhile, we would like SPL to have a modern design and consistency on all the pages so that users are more encouraged to explore more on the website. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">★ We would not like to see the SPL clusters information on the homepage like PPL did.★ An essential purpose for library website is to provide support and services for the online users. And all online users will access the pages with different platforms and computers. The PPL website shows some user friendly features, but being not responsive to different sizes screen is definitely a minus. We would not to see this kind of problem with SPL website.★ The PPL website does not have a clear “What’s new” section. As a user, I would like to see if there are any new books/movies in the library, and feel that I am browsing an updated website. Our team would not prefer using PPL’s design in this field. |
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