iDesign 2013 - "Going Mobile"

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An explanation of the problem you are attempting to solve

One of the primary functions of a library is to enable users to find and borrow books easily. We aim to solve the problem of library patrons not able to locate books easily. Students, and library visitors in general, often encounter problems when trying to locate a book in the stacks after finding it in through Mirlyn. This issue is not confined to novice users, students, or people of any segment. The experience starting with the finding of a book's call number and ending with finding the physical book is at question here, and it is within this realm that many users may get lost or experience frustration. Our design process will seek to address this problem.

How generally you plan to solve it

Our general plan revolves around the installation of barcode scanners and viewscreens (or touchscreens) throughout the library, particularly at key wayfinding locations such as elevators and high-travel hallways. The user, after finding the book or books they are looking for using Miralyn, would print out a list of barcodes (or have them sent to a phone) and would be able to use these barcodes at the scanners to receive useful and pertinent wayfinding information.

What user group you are targeting (ex. your target user group may be everybody, students of a particular discipline, users with visual impairments, faculty members...)

In general, we are targeting anyone that utilizes the physical library system and has trouble locating books within the building.

Questions that you need answered for your design

Some of us discussed issues dealing with the barcode generation and storage. I think the structure of the barcode system solves this issue, but we should get that clarified. It would be useful to examine what other digital wayfinding systems have been implemented in order to learn of best practices or other facets of the idea that could be utilized. Also, questions about design feasibility or cost would be important. And lastly, contextual inquiry into library use methods would be helpful in verifying the existence of our assumed problem, as well as uncovering secondary functionality that we could include.

The names of your team members (you may still make adjustments to your team after you submit your proposal)

Ray Alexander, Graduate SI
Karthik Shivaram, Graduate EE

Key points of our design:

- Assumes no previous effort on the part of the individual (no smartphone, not an app)
- Opportunity use (it's on the wall....anyone can use it)
- Relatively cheap compared to other systems as it uses a barcode scanner and screen
- Does not rely on interior phone mapping for wayfinding
- Existing book location mapping could be utilized (we are assuming such a thing exists)