DESIGN THINKING IN A DAY

AN AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE FOR ADVANCING YOUR LIBRARY

This at-a-glance guide, brought to you with funding from the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,* was designed as a quick primer on design thinking for libraries. It should take no longer than a day to complete. IDEO led the creation of this content in partnership with Chicago Public Library and Aarhus Public Libraries. We would like to thank the following organizations for their support in the making of the toolkit:

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To get a deeper understanding of design thinking, please visit:
www.designthinkingforlibraries.com
There, you can download our comprehensive toolkit which walks you through the design thinking approach with comprehensive reading material and exercises.

IDEO

WANT TO DESIGN GREAT PATRON EXPERIENCES, BUT DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME?

Design thinking is an approach and a mindset that can help you solve everyday challenges at the library. You can use it to develop better programs, services, spaces, and systems at your library. While it works best when practiced in a small team with a dedicated amount of time and space, we also believe you can create impact with design thinking in a single day!

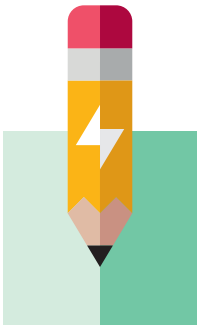
In the next few pages, you'll learn the basic steps of the design thinking process, from getting started to inspiration, ideation, and iteration. You can use this guide to get acquainted with the process. We encourage you to check out the full toolkit for a deeper dive into useful methods, helpful techniques, and detailed guidance.

INSPIRATION

is about framing a design challenge and discovering new perspectives on the opportunity.

I have a challenge.

How do I approach it?

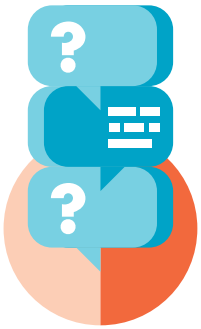


IDEATION

is about generating ideas and making them tangible.

I've learned something.

How do I interpret it and express my ideas?



ITERATION

is about continual experimentation based on user feedback.

I have a prototype.

How do I test it with users and refine it?

Before you embark on your day of design thinking, remember that *the key to making change is a shift in your mindset*. Remember how everything felt new when you first came to the library and how many hopes and dreams you had? Rekindle those hopes because *design thinking is all about approaching problems with a fresh perspective*.

Feeling optimistic? Ready to learn? Great! Let's get started.

CHAPTER 1

GETTING STARTED

In order to begin a design thinking project, first you have to choose a design challenge. What is something you have been wanting to change in your library? Is there a problem or an opportunity that you've been thinking about? Think of a few things you may find yourself complaining about or wishing could be better. These are all design challenges waiting to be tackled! For example, you may wish for a better way to engage teenagers in your library. Or maybe you have dreams of creating a co-working center. These are great places to start, and keep in mind, it's okay for your challenge to change throughout the day.

We always frame our design challenges as questions. Not only does phrasing our work in "How Might We" questions put us in the mindset of arriving at impactful solutions, it also helps us generate as many ideas as possible along the way. It's important to find a balance when crafting a good challenge. Ask a question that's too broad (How might we end poverty?), and you won't arrive at an actionable solution. Ask a question that's too narrow (How might we design a new plow that costs $25, is solar-powered, and can be repaired by someone with no skills?), and you risk constraining the kinds of solutions you come up with.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **8** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 1 GETTING STARTED

Define Your Challenge

1 hour

To define your challenge, identify a user group and a problem that needs to be solved.

x

USER GROUP ..... USER NEED/PROBLEM .....

Try out several *How Might We* questions that might best describe your challenge:

HOW MIGHT WE .....?

HOW MIGHT WE .....?

HOW MIGHT WE .....?

Write it **BIG** and hang it up in front of you so you keep thinking about your challenge for the rest of the day!

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **17** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 2

INSPIRATION

Creating meaningful solutions in your library begins with finding inspiration in the world around you and gaining a deep understanding of people's needs. The first phase of design thinking is called Inspiration, and it is about listening, observing, and being open to the *unexpected*. If you want to create new and innovative solutions, you need to find new ways to get inspired.

On the next page are a few ideas to get inspired now. Ask 2-3 people to join you in these activities.

Once you have completed these activities, your group should talk about what you learned. What surprised you, and what was unexpected? What or who inspired you? Did you see any interesting patterns? Write down takeaways and themes from what you saw in the world.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **33** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 2 INSPIRATION

Get Inspired

1 hour

TALK TO PEOPLE

One of the best ways to get inspired is to talk to people. It is especially important to talk to the people who you are designing for. For example, are you designing a new program for teenagers? Don't just talk to them about the library—talk to them about their everyday life, their routines, and how they like to spend their time. What do they believe in? What drives them? To get started, spend time talking to people in your library who might be able to help you better understand your design problem. Try to talk to 2-3 people.

IMMERSE YOURSELF

Another great activity is to experience the world from another point of view. For example, if you are designing for a child, spend the day playing in the children's library or participate in a children's workshop. If you are designing for the blind, immerse yourself in that experience by trying to perform simple tasks while blindfolded.

VISIT A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED PLACE

Leave the library and visit an inspirational destination that you can learn from. This helps you see the world with fresh eyes and can help you find new ways of looking at your library. For example, if you want to create a better working environment in your library, visit a busy coffee shop to see what helps users to be productive. If you want to start an arts exhibition program at your library, visit a popular museum exhibition to see how the institution engages visitors.

Yulia, a librarian from Ukraine, wanted to better understand the needs of handicapped users. Her team visited a local rehabilitation center and discussed the users' hobbies and interests over lunch.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **43** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 3

IDEATION

The next phase of design thinking is called Ideation. This is when you generate a lot of new ideas in order to create a design solution.

One of the most important activities from this phase is brainstorming, which is about coming up with lots of ideas based on what you've learned so far. The key to having a great idea is having a LOT of ideas; don't get hung up or too attached on your first couple ideas–focus on just getting them out there for now!

Brainstorming is a design thinking method, and it has its own rules. The rules are important because they allow everyone in the group to have creative freedom. During lunch or a period of about an hour, hold a brainstorm that focuses on a few of the needs that you uncovered during the morning. Include 2-3 people in the brainstorm, and make sure everyone is well-fed and energized before you start!

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **53** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 3 IDEATION

Come Up With Ideas

lunch hour!

BRAINSTORM RULES

DEFER JUDGMENT
There are no bad ideas at this point. There will be plenty of time to narrow them down later.

ENCOURAGE WILD IDEAS
Even if an idea does not seem realistic, it may spark a great idea for someone else.

BUILD ON THE IDEAS OF OTHERS
Think “and” rather than “but.”

STAY FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC
To get more out of your session, keep your brainstorm question in sight.

ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME
All ideas need to be heard, so that they may be built upon.

BE VISUAL
Draw your ideas, as opposed to just writing them down. Stick figures and simple sketches can say more than many words.

GO FOR QUANTITY
Set an outrageous goal— then surpass it. The best way to find one good idea is to come up with lots of ideas. For example, come up with 50 ideas in 10 minutes.

Jeppe (center) and his team at the Aarhus Public Library brainstorm ideas around a new music service for the library.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **59** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 3 IDEATION

Bring Your Ideas to Life

1 hour

Now that you have come up with lots of great ideas, it's time to choose a favorite to bring to life. Do this with your brainstorm team or on your own after your brainstorm session. The fastest way to learn more about how to make your idea better is to build it. This process of making your idea tangible, or prototyping, can seem scary. There's no reason to be scared; all it takes are materials that you have on hand—like paper, pens, and scissors–and some imagination!

SUPPLIES YOU MAY NEED:

PAPER
construction paper, poster board, heavy weight paper, foamcore, cardboard, boxes

ADHESIVE
gluesticks, hot glue gun, tape

PENS
markers, crayons

CRAFT SUPPLIES
popsicle sticks, paint, brushes, string, pipe-cleaners

FABRICS
cotton balls, felt, cloth

TOOLS
rulers, scissors, measuring tape, staplers

The purpose of the prototype is get an idea that is in your head out into the world, so that other people can react to it. Do not worry about making the prototype perfect. It will never be perfect on the first try, and it will evolve over time. The most important thing about the prototype is that it can start a conversation with your users.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **67** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 3 IDEATION

Bring Your Ideas to Life

1 hour

WAYS TO PROTOTYPE

A MODEL

Create a simple three-dimensional representation of your idea. This could be a scale model or an actual-size scale experience that you can walk through with your team.

A DIGITAL MOCK-UP

Mock up a digital tool with sketches of screens on paper. Tape the paper to the screen of a device like a phone or computer to mimic the context of a digital interaction.

A ROLE-PLAY

Act out the experience of your idea. Play the roles of the people in the situation, asking the questions that they might ask. Consider gathering simple props, uniforms, or other tools that someone in a service role might need while engaging a user in the library.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **71** of the toolkit.

Bring Your Ideas to Life

1 hour

WAYS TO PROTOTYPE *(continued)*

AN ADVERTISEMENT

Create a mock-up of an advertisement that promotes your idea, whether it is a program, service, or space. Think about how you would build awareness of what you are offering and how you would communicate its value to different users.

A REVAMPED SPACE

If your prototype concerns the design of space, see if you can prototype within that existing space or create a scene that describes what the environment should feel like. Feel free to build off of existing furniture and desks, and remember things can be representational. In the world of prototyping, cardboard boxes can represent chairs, and carts can act as bookshelves! In other words, do not feel like you need to run out and find new furniture to prototype your idea.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **71** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 4

ITERATION

Congrats on making your idea tangible!

Now it's time to put your program, service, space, or system in front of your users to hear what they think. This is a critical part of Iteration, the third phase of the design thinking process, as it enables you to learn what's working, what's not, and what could be improved.

Find a handful of users in your target group who will help by giving you feedback. Don't be afraid to reach out to people you do not know in the library. They will be so thrilled that someone at the library is thinking about how to improve library services they will likely be more than happy to help. The trick is to make sure you are getting honest, critical, and constructive feedback, alongside any positive reactions, too.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **84** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 4 ITERATION

Get Feedback on Your Idea, and Evolve it

1 hour

SHOW USERS YOUR PROTOTYPE

Then ask questions to gather valuable feedback to help you move forward. Some suggestions are:

- Can you describe what excites you the most about this idea, and why?
- If you could change one thing about this prototype, what would it be?
- What would you like to improve about this idea?
- What do you not like about this idea?

With your design challenge in mind, think about what participants got excited about, and parts of the idea they valued the most. Also review what parts did not work, and what new questions you would like to explore through the next iteration of your idea.

MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNED SO FAR

Also aim to keep adding to that list as you continue prototyping several different iterations of your idea. Set a goal for yourself for what is next. For example, you could:

- Build a team to develop the idea further over some period of time
- Ask for more funding or resources based on your initial prototypes
- Set aside time and a schedule for yourself to keep developing your idea
- Aim to make a sustainable change in the library and observe its progress over time

Marianne, a staff member at Aarhus Public Library, asks passersby at the library what they think of her idea — a communication flyer with app recommendations.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **86** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 5

GETTING TO SCALE

Often the best way to scale your idea is to tell its story: What was the problem you saw, who were you designing for, and what did you come up with? The more people hear about what you are hoping to accomplish, the more they can feel involved and invested to participate. As you think about nurturing the growth of your idea from a concept into a sustainable solution in the real world, you will likely be advocating for it over and over.

This is not a standard project update. Think of it as a pitch for your work, and ask for the resources you need to move it forward. Here is where good documentation along the way pays off. The best project stories are supported by great visuals and photos of your progress along the way.

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **104** of the toolkit.

CHAPTER 5 GETTING TO SCALE

Spread the Story of Your Idea

1 hour

A SUGGESTED NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF
Who are you?
Who is your team?

2. DEFINE YOUR CHALLENGE
What problem did you see,
and for which users?

3. INSPIRATION
Who did you talk to and observe,
and what were the top learnings?

4. IDEATION
What concepts did you come up with,
and how did you prototype them?

5. ITERATION
What feedback did you receive,
and how did you build upon
that feedback with continued
experimentation?

6. A CALL TO ACTION
What's next? How can others
get involved, and help?

FOR MORE DETAIL See the methods on page **104** of the toolkit.

By now, your day is winding down, and you have had a full day of diving deep into design thinking. Great job on picking this up and bravely venturing to try out different methods to improve your library. Make sure your learning does not end here, though. *Read the rest of the toolkit, with in-depth case studies, examples, and activities that will guide you through your next design challenge.*

Send us your stories of change, and spread the word.

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