

Final Performance Report: Part 1, Narrative
LG-46-12-0475-12

Project title: Project Sheldon

Partners: Formal - City of Berwyn; Informal - Chicago Public Library, Cook Memorial Public Library District, Danville Area Community College Library

Brief overview:

Project Sheldon's primary goal is to facilitate online communication between libraries and their teen patrons. The project was developed out of a need for libraries to interact with teen patrons and offer programming that is responsive to their needs.

Sheldon includes event calendaring, email communication and social media compatibility. It is web-based and mobile responsive and is designed to offer users access to current library events, an avenue to broadcast events to their social media networks and direct access to programming staff from participating libraries, in which users can suggest future programs or critique current offerings.

The goal of the project is met through the design of an application that provides an additional communication avenue for libraries, offers two-way communication between libraries and their teen patrons and allows libraries to exponentially increase their reach into the worlds of teen users via social networks.

Narrative:

Project Sheldon was started with the following goals and objectives in mind:

1. Create a dedicated universal app that had the capability to integrate program calendars from multiple libraries across the state of Illinois, with the help of a skilled software developer. The app's source code would be open-sourced and allow for customization by individual libraries.
2. Recruit library participants from Illinois State Library's Project Next Generation as potential Project Sheldon pilot sites.
3. Engage and encourage Project Sheldon participants from additional public and academic

libraries.

4. Have a website that has downloadable graphics for posters, flyers, and bookmarks, as well as press release samples and print-ready graphics for libraries to compile into electronic press kits.

5. Raise awareness of Project Sheldon via list-servs to librarians and staff working with young adults; postings on popular teen and librarian forums; connecting with civic organizations that serve youth; and presenting at national conferences relevant to young adults and librarians.

Of these five goals, Project Sheldon has had mixed success. We were able to successfully create a universal app, EveryBranch, with the aid of software developer Polymathic. However, the time invested in locating our developer significantly cut into our launch timeframe. Within a month of receiving official confirmation of our grant, we had crafted a detailed RFP (see attached) to send out to potential developers. The RFP was created with insight and aid from various individuals within the City of Berwyn, Chicago Public Library, Danville Area Community College Library and from individual consultants. We had additionally sought guidance on where to post our RFP, and were advised to post on an online job board called GetaCoder.com, as well as placing it on our website (engagingones.org), Facebook and Twitter accounts.

We posted our RFP with GetaCoder on September 22, 2012. We received a few bids that were quickly revealed to be automatic bids, each being a generic response that did not directly address our specific RFP or the scope of our project. If a generic bid included a portfolio, we examined the included portfolio to determine whether the developers might fit our project. For those developers who seemed like a potential match for our project, we messaged for further information. However, despite reaching out to developers, we received no answers to any follow up query we posted.

Complications arose when our RFP was taken down by GetaCoder on September 27, 2012. We quickly determined that this was caused by one line in the RFP that identified Berwyn Public Library as part of the projected app -- GetaCoder requires secrecy as to the owner of an RFP, and the line was an oversight on our part. We modified the RFP and successfully reposted it within the day.

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Our RFP posting expired on October 9, 2012, and we spent the following two weeks examining all bids received and exploring the portfolios that were sent. A second attempt to contact relevant developers was again met with no response, and it became apparent that GetaCoder was not the ideal forum for our RFP.

We spent the next month researching more options for connecting with a software developer, once more asking our many library contacts for additional advice on how to locate a skilled and reputable developer. By the beginning of December, we had located two more online developer forums that came highly rated and recommended, AppTank and Freelancer. Given our bad experience with GetaCoder, we opted to post our RFP on both sites on December 1, 2012. At the same time, we began to pursue developers outside of these two forums, contacting developers recommended by other libraries and companies we knew. Of the two forums, we received three bids from AppTank, only one of which seemed semi-viable in meeting the standards of all of the entities involved with the project. We reached out to that developer, but unfortunately received no response. On Freelancer, we received bids that were mostly generic, but a few that were somewhat personalized. We sought further information from those bids, but realized that those who answered could not meet the full scope of our project.

Our endeavours outside of online forums proved to be more fruitful. We were introduced to a software developer company called Polymathic, via connections at Danville Area Community College. Polymathic offered a complete package: not only could they develop our app, they could also aid with branding, as well as craft graphics for our app, something we had planned to send out to bid at a later date. Members of our advisory team met with Polymathic to discuss the scope and vision for Project Sheldon, and Polymathic agreed to create a complete project outline and quote for us.

On January 31, 2013, we received a full bid package from Polymathic, along with a detailed quote. The package encompassed everything we would need to make Project Sheldon a fully functional app, and it was clear that Polymathic had a good grasp on what we were trying to accomplish. We went into final

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negotiations with Polymathic, further outlining what could and could not be done within our budget, as well as setting into place secondary budget goals-- items not mandatory to an initial launch, but still desired. Budget, project, and contract negotiations took much longer than expected, set further back by the fact that once the contract was finalized, we had to seek approval from the City of Berwyn before the contract could be signed and the first payment delivered. Everything was officially finalized by mid-May 2013.

With Polymathic on board as our developer, work on Project Sheldon truly began in earnest. Within two weeks of starting work, we had a working prototype, as well as a new name, EveryBranch. The name EveryBranch was chosen to highlight the fact that this was a universal library app- any library, anywhere, can use EveryBranch. The app was launched as a web-based app, after much discussion leading us to believe that this was the more universally accessible (and financially feasible) option.

On June 29, 2013, the advisory team gave a presentation at the American Library Association's Annual Conference in Chicago, debuting the fully functional app EveryBranch. At the presentation, the mechanics of EveryBranch were demonstrated: showcasing the app's ability to locate nearby library locations based upon the gps location of the device accessing the site. Results could further be refined by category. The ease of adding new libraries to EveryBranch's databases was also demonstrated. Members of the audience were able to access EveryBranch during the presentation and test it out, offering live feedback for its use. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and several excellent suggestions were made to further improve upon the app. After ALA, the audience suggestions were noted and shared with the developers, to consider in future updates to the app.

By August 2013, of our 5 original goals, we have successfully accomplished the first goal, of creating a dedicated universal app that had the capability to integrate program calendars from multiple libraries across the state of Illinois, with the help of a skilled software developer. The app's source code will be open-sourced and allow for customization by individual libraries.

Of our second and third goals, recruiting library participants from the Illinois State Library's Project Next Generation and engaging and encouraging Project Sheldon participants from additional public and academic libraries, we have had some success. The Project Next Generation libraries are very much interested in helping pilot EveryBranch, and by speaking at ALA, as well as three state-wide Illinois library conferences, we have added to the number of volunteer pilot libraries. Yet, the long delay in bringing EveryBranch to fruition has meant that we have not had a full scale pilot launch. The fourth goal of having a website with downloadable graphics for libraries to use as advertising materials, is partially completed. EveryBranch is both an app and a website, and with Polymathic's help, we have an established brand and logo. The brand and logo are now being incorporated into promotional materials, but have yet to make it onto the website as a press kit.

The fifth and final goal, spreading awareness of EveryBranch among library professionals, we have been working towards nonstop. Beyond speaking at ALA, we also had a poster presentation at ILA 2012, and have an upcoming presentation at ILA 2013. Our app was highlighted at the On The Front Lines conference in August 2013, as well. There is also continued interest in the app from participants in all three cohorts of the Illinois State Library's ILEAD U (now ILEAD USA) professional development program. We continue to seek additional venues to further raise awareness of, and participation in, EveryBranch.

What's next?

EveryBranch continues to move forward. Having created a working app that meets our original project goals, we are ready to move forward with launching it with our pilot libraries. Our plan is to continue with the original project planned as outlined: roll out EveryBranch to pilot libraries, test the app out for several months under observation, examine our findings and establish new goals for refining the app, then bring those refinements back to the developer before launching a revised app to the state at large. We will potentially seek out more funding to finance the second development phase of EveryBranch, but

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for the initial advertising and piloting of the app, we can continue as is. EveryBranch is indeed going strong and will definitely be continued. The responses we have received from the library community have been overwhelming positive and show that there is an indisputable need and interest in a universal product like EveryBranch.

While we are ecstatic about the response from smaller libraries, we continue to try to get a committed interest from the Chicago Public Library. The library has shown some interest; however, with their calendaring system being proprietary, it is not as easy for us to evaluate whether they will be able to work with us. We continue to try and get XML or RSS feeds from CPL which would help us assess how well EveryBranch could work with larger systems.

What's Happening at Your Local Library?



Your library system hosts events for all ages nearly every day of the week.
 Fun, educational and inspiring - Find out what's happening near you!

FIND EVENTS ▾

Upcoming Events



FIND EVENTS ▾

Makerspace Mini Workshop
 Nov 4 - 3:30pm to 5:00pm
 Riverside Public Library

LEGO Mania Grades K - 6
 Nov 4 - 4:00pm to 4:45pm
 Park Ridge Public Library

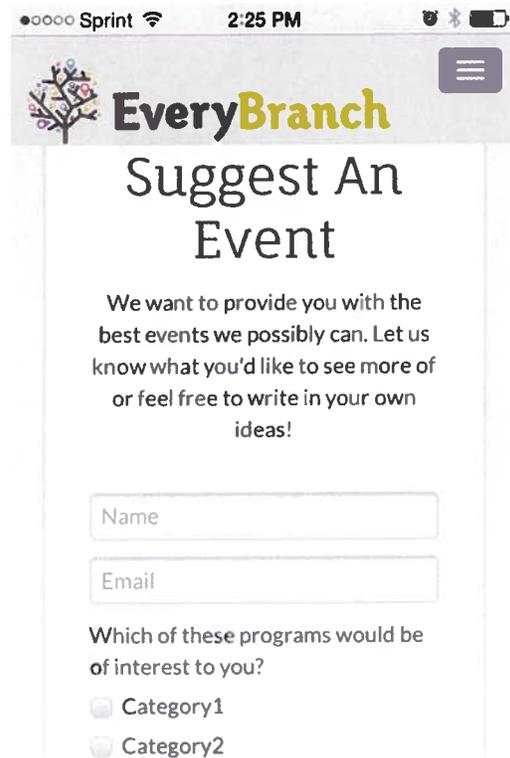
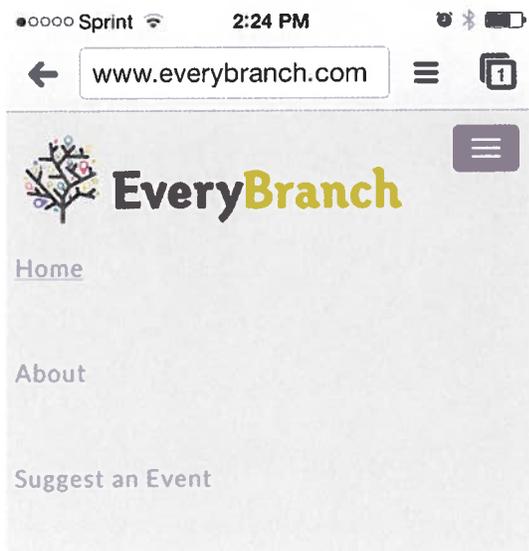
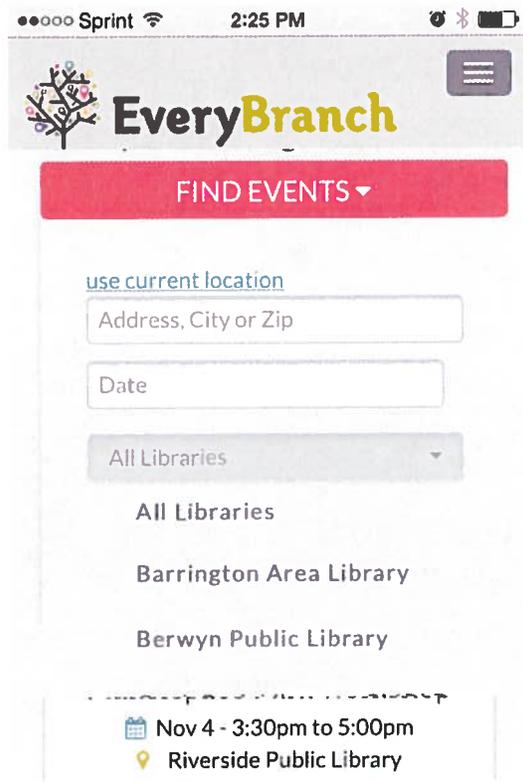
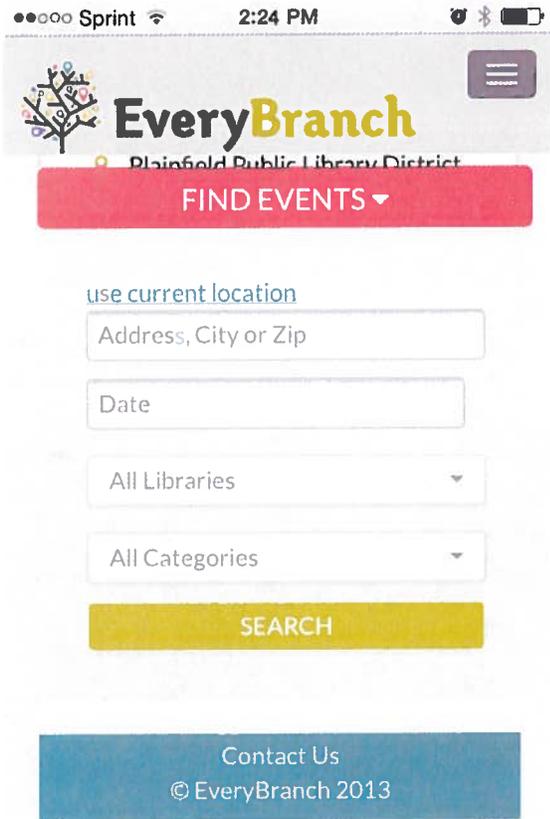
Game On! Wii and Xbox 360
 Nov 4 - 4:00pm to 6:00pm
 Mount Prospect Public Library

FIND EVENTS ▾

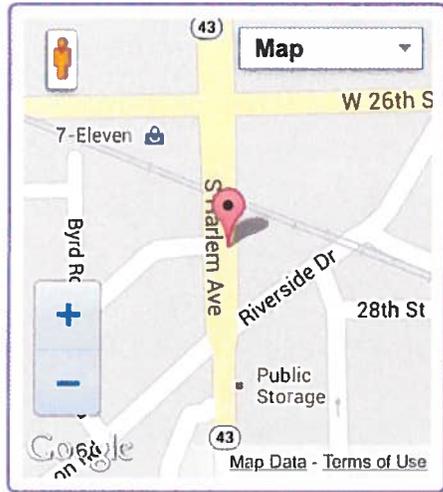
Foreign Flicks: "A Separation"
 Nov 4 - 5:30pm to 7:30pm
 Quincy Public Library

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Your library system hosts events for all ages



Math Study Group
Oct 18 - 10:00am to 11:30am

Math Study Group
Oct 18 - 10:00am to 11:30am

Learn and review basic math concepts including whole numbers, fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, percents, basic algebra, basic geometry, measurement, graphs/charts, and word problems. The topics covered in this study group are represented on most standardized tests such as the TABE, GED, SAT/ACT, COMPASS, Accuplacer, ASVAB, GRE, and the GMAT. Berwyn residents receive priority registration in this drop-in group. Adults 18 and older.

Berwyn Public Library
Learning Lab Two
2701 South Harlem Ave, Berwyn, IL
60402

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Did this program/event meet your expectations?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Would you encourage someone you know to attend a similar program/event?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

New Library

* Name

* Address line1

Address line2

* City

* State

* Zip

Contact email

* Feed url

If feed url is a google calendar, modify it to end with "/full-noattendees" (instead of "/basic")

Website

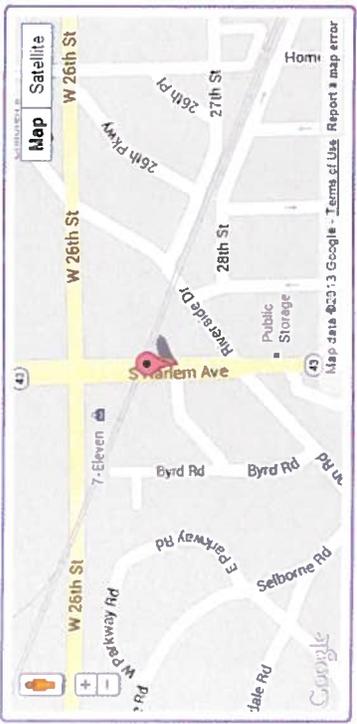
Notes

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Learning Lab Two
2701 South Harlem Ave, Berwyn, IL 60402

Math Study Group

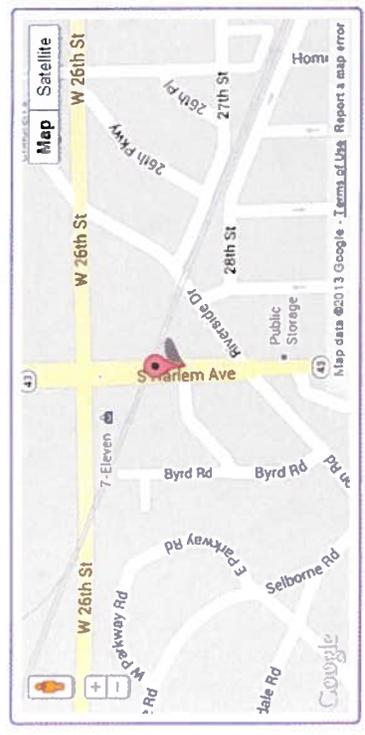
Oct 18 - 10:00am to 11:30am

Learn and review basic math concepts including whole numbers, fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, percents, basic algebra, basic geometry, measurement, graphs/charts, and word problems. The topics covered in this study group are represented on most standardized tests such as the TABE, GED, SAT/ACT, COMPASS, Accuplacer, ASVAB, GRE, and the GMAT. Berwyn residents receive priority registration in this drop-in group. Adults 18 and older.

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Did this program/event meet your expectations?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Would you encourage someone you know to attend a similar program/event?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Name (optional)

Additional comments

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Feedback

Questions

Created	Respondent	Event	Met your expectations?	Would promote?	Additional Comments
5:29pm 11/21/2013	ronny normy273@hotmail.com	Math Study Group @ Berwyn Public Library	Yes	Yes	pQbdXP http://www.MHyzkpN7h4ERauv57jUbdlOHeKxuZom.com
5:29pm 11/21/2013	ronny normy273@hotmail.com	Math Study Group @ Berwyn Public Library	Yes	Yes	pQbdXP http://www.MHyzkpN7h4ERauv57jUbdlOHeKxuZom.com
5:28pm 11/21/2013	ronny normy273@hotmail.com	Math Study Group @ Berwyn Public Library	Yes	Yes	pQbdXP http://www.MHyzkpN7h4ERauv57jUbdlOHeKxuZom.com
8:17pm 10/15/2013	Dennis	Teen Drama Club @ Plainfield Public Library District	Yes	Yes	Joe is awesome, aww yeah

Suggestions

Created	Respondent	Event Suggestions	Additional Comments
8:26pm Nov 4, 2013	Michelle Vanis Mvanis@midlothianlibrary.org	how do we add our rss feed to the everybranch calendar? Thanks Michelle Vanis - Midlothian Public Library	
2:02pm Jul 30, 2013		Category1	