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## Understanding the Needs of Library Users in a Digital Age

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Some of the habits of the “Google generation” may be new, but many of the core behaviors of this group - of searching for information, collaborating with others and expecting rapid fulfillment –are not. In fact, they have been around for a long time, and are at the heart of what libraries offer. What IS new is a digital arena which makes the discovery of content and interaction with other people faster, easier and more accessible to a wider population in places and ways that did not exist before. The challenge before us is to recognize and understand our various users’ needs in a digital age to enhance and extend libraries.

OCLC works in collaboration with libraries to develop, assess, and improve access to information. In this session, we’ll explore recent findings about users of academic and public libraries. We’ll talk about the methods and research that produced this data, and the changes that resulted.

We’ll share findings from library users about:

- Relevance ranking
- Expectations about local, group, and global scope
- Works, editions, and FRBR
- Collaborative and social features
- Expectations about digital delivery

We’ll talk about some of the methods we’ve used:

- Creation of personas to capture and communicate knowledge about various kinds of users
- Formative testing with prototypes to inform designs
- Summative testing to confirm designs

At the end of this session, we hope to leave you with some useful information about users like these, and a discussion of what has been fruitful and what has been challenging in our efforts to gather and use this information.

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