Website Discovery, Design & Development

General

How many firms are you asking for responses from?

We are seeking responses from as many firms as wish to submit proposals. We have posted our RFP to our website and LinkedIn.

Do you accept proposals outside of your country?

Yes

Do you have any reservations about working with an agency who isn't local?

No

Will the Discovery phase be shared Web developers?

Yes. The findings of the Development phase will become property of HCLS.

Will the bidder who participates in both phases of this RFP have an advantage over the ones who bid for only one phase?

No. If separate vendors are selected, we will ask the Discovery team to share their findings with the Development team. Bidders may explain why they think it is an advantage to conduct both phases.

Can you tell us more about the team we'd be working with at HCLS?

Addison Landers

project lead and main point of contact.

Web Development Team

an internal team of decision makers
(6 individuals in IT and communication)

Web Steering committee

A larger group with members across the organization
(about 12 members)

Selection Team

review proposals, conduct interviews, and make vendor(s) selection.
(five members across the organization)

Is it okay to reach out between now and September 13?

Yes. We will post all questions and answers to our website to ensure equity in the decision-making process.

Budget

Can you please share the budget for the proposed project scope?

The experience and deliverables of each bidder will result in different budgets. To help us spend taxpayer dollars wisely, please provide an itemized budget with expected costs.

Do you have a sense of what budget you want this version of the website to fall within? We line item all the options in a proposal, so there is a natural range.

We prefer to see the available options upfront and select what fits within our budget.

External websites

When you write "incorporate into new site," are you looking to have the content and features consolidated into the new, website with a single CMS? (Chapter Chats, Created While Isolated, etc.)?

We would like to incorporate the blog content. We have been creating initiatives outside our main website, and need flexibility in adding content/initiatives under the http://hclibrary.org/, domain

Your external sites have very different branding and designs. Would you want them to be redesigned with a single brand design and look and feel on the new site, or retain their unique styles as "microsites" within the main site?

We would like the ability to co-brand initiatives/parts of the website, for example Evening in the Stacks or Brave Voices, Brave Choices.

Would each of these external sites continue to have their own navigation and domain name, even if they are rebuilt to be part of the new, main site?

No, although they may need supplemental navigation.

Discovery

For the discovery portion, how many internal library stakeholders do you imagine taking part, and to what degree? Usually there's a core group, and one or two leadership team meetings, but sometimes there's specific meetings / workgroups with kids' librarians, other resource librarians, etc.

We have a very engaged staff and customer base and want them to be engaged in the discovery process. Our web steering committee has 12 members across the organization to help clean up the existing site in preparation for migrating content to the new site and to provide feedback about proposed changes.

For user research, do you have a sense of what kinds of users you'd reach, how you'd reach them and how you would compensate them for their time? Or are you more imagining survey-based and finding a few groups / people within the surveys to contact?

We would consider either or both options. Please include itemized costs / proposed compensation in the budget.

Personnel & Location(s)

Can you please describe in more detail the volume of content and features accessed through password-protected portals.

We do not currently have this feature. We are planning future pages, which would need to be password or user permission restricted.

You've made mentions of workflows in the RFP (small team as managers but a wider team to add/edit content, and ability to send notifications to authors) – does this follow a methodology that you can provide, or have you seen these kinds of features in tools you can share?

Currently we only have a few staff members who can edit the pages, and we need tiered permissions so more staff can edit their assigned pages.

In addition, we would like authors/stakeholders to receive automatic notification if content is older than a certain date. We are open to other suggestions on how to keep our content up to date.

You mention 508 compliance, is there a specific version you know you need to attain? Do you have outside validators or other outside requirements here?

As an organization committed to inclusion, we need to meet the most recent requirements. Our goal is to ensure our site is accessible to everyone.

What do your library lab computers or catalog computers have for the starting URL? Are there specific ideas for these machines to help in terms of wayfinding, contextual help, etc.?

Our public access computers (PACs) start with two tabs: google and hclibrary.org. Most customers go right to google, and this has been working well for us. We have not used PACs for wayfinding, but ideas for contextual help arise occasionally. We are open to ideas.

Do the libraries have TV screens for library information, or do you have a screen management system?

We have monitors in every branch that use Mac minis to display webpages. We are also undertaking a comprehensive wayfinding/signage plan, which will address the monitor system.

Technical

Right now, your site does not seem to have any deep connections to the ILS — does HCLS own and manage the ILS, or is that a separate group?

The software is Polaris, but we host it on our servers and manage the ILS with support from Innovative.

There is an autocomplete (lookahead) in the search — what is that hooked up to?

Autocomplete is tied to Polaris. This is a real-time search for autocorrect/autofill.

You have requested federated searching, mixing in everything into one search. Do you have a sense of what API calls your ILS can do, and if the results include relevance and/or subjects/taxonomy that can help us deliver the right results when someone searches the site directly?

Once we choose a vendor, they can work with us and Polaris (Polaris ILS) for APIs.

Do you have searching APIs for your other digital products? Are there any you know you'd like in the federated search?

Library Market does not have APIs, but they have tags/search results that display in an XML.

The Polaris API is used by NoveList Select to provide enriched content in the online catalog. It is also used to authenticate users for both cloudLibrary and SimplyE/Palace econtent providers.

The site uses Library Market for events, but I'm assuming you're hoping to move that to be an on-site platform. Any specific features you'd like to add, like SMS reminders, user accounts so people can see all their upcoming or previous events, etc.?

We recently switched to Library Market for our events and like the platform for its ease of use, great customer support, and record of accomplishment. At this point, we are not looking to switch to a new system.

You also mention Eventbrite — what do they do for you, and are there API calls needed, or is this just an external resource with potential embed on your web site.

We use Eventbrite for select events. We are open to incorporating this feature into our website/branding.

The current site has a space reservation tool but I xsee it in the RFP, I assume you'd still want to have those features? Any additions to what you have now for those?

Study and meeting rooms have been closed due to COVID restrictions. Starting August 30, we will again take online reservations for these rooms via LibraryMarket.

Looks like you have a good process for contests, with pages on FAQs, qualifications, etc. Are those just pages, or do you have a system where people can add/upload entries, permission forms, you can choose the finalists, opens to voting, and winners are computed for you to announce, etc.?

For some events, customers can complete online forms. Everything else happens offline.

I love the DIY and art collection. Are there tools or interfaces you've thought about that can make those easier to browse or reserve? (Many of them seem to have broken links to the catalog, for example.)

These are in the catalog. We are open to suggestions on how to enhance browsing; however, the collections must remain in the catalogue.

I was curious about the copyright alert on the art images and that led me to see they're hosted on Amazon AWS — is there an Amazon connection in the site we should know about?

We do not have the rights to show the artwork digitally. Most of our images are hosted on Amazon. The copyright is not with AWS.

Do your forms have any special powers, like the ability to know if a library book barcode is a correct ISBN or ILS ID, say, or validate library card numbers or types?

Some forms do, for example, the contactless hold pickup checks barcodes and connects to Polaris. We have the ability if needed, and typically make our own calls.

Do you have an internal IT group that manages the site's server, or a company, or is hosted by a vendor? Who takes care of the updates, security, and backups?

We manage our own servers and complete patches and security updates. We also use AWS and Library Market (events and classes). The Polaris software is also hosted onsite on 5 servers and is managed by library IT staff.

What parts of the website would be in Spanish and Korean? Are you imagining machine translation or starting pages for people in these languages with native speakers editing them, or something else?

We are open to suggestions; however, a complete translation may be beyond our abilities. Machine translation will likely be used. We are not tied to google translate. We like how the San Francisco Public Library makes translations easy.

Innovative/Polaris provides the capability to display the online catalog in Spanish and Korean by selecting from the Language dropdown at the top of any catalog page.