

Design for the Clarion Free Library: A drawing activity for the local youth

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ABSTRACT

Public libraries have a long history of providing services to teens; however, research has shown contemporary youth have mixed feelings towards libraries. While teens have a positive impression of public libraries, they consider public libraries irrelevant to their everyday lives and do not use libraries frequently. Situated in this background, this project aims to study how teens perceive their public library and how they would design it differently. A total of 27 teens participated in a drawing activity, through which they expressed public library experience and designed their ideal public library space for teens. Teens' explanations of their drawings were coded inductively among three researchers. Preliminary findings showed three themes that teens cared about the most in designing their library space - affordances, emotions, and visual impact. They desired a library space that could afford them to hang out, to learn, to do free-choice activities, and to have books of their interests; they desired a library space that afforded convenience and comfort through amenities; they desired a library space where they could have positive affective experiences; they desired a library space that appeared to be colorful, bright, and open. This presented project is timely and necessary as libraries face an increasingly uncertain future due to the pandemic and lack of funding. Understanding teens' perspectives on what they wish to see in public libraries may help practitioners and researchers envision building a resilient future for the library community.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Public libraries; Young adult services; Community engagement.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Library design; Teen space; Drawing activity; Teen services; Youth services.

