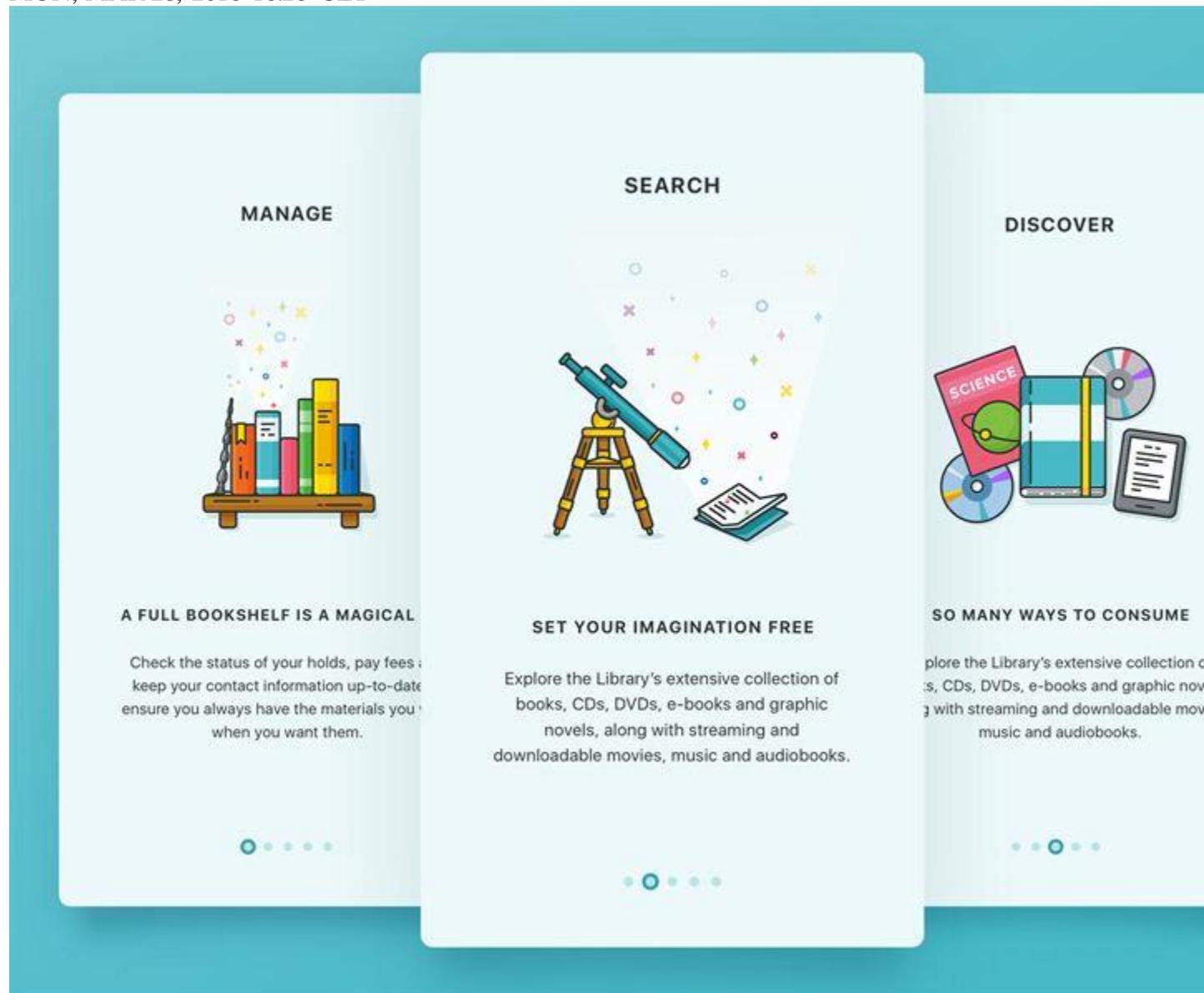# New mobile app makes using the library more intuitive and experiential

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to pilot a mobile app for the iOS platform that includes a digital library card, easier experience getting to content, and service highlights "beamed" to users' mobile devices as they move within branches.

In March, 2016, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library will launch a new and innovative mobile application for the iOS platform, developed by Skookum and funded by an LSTA Project Access and Digitization Grant. This new app is an extension of the Library's ongoing commitment to serving customers who are increasingly using mobile technology. It includes a pilot to assess the benefits to customers of

receiving "push" notifications on their mobile devices informing them of library services as they enter and move about a library branch.

The growth of mobile devices as portals to information means that Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is taking new approaches to providing access to its wealth of free information and services. According to recent findings from Pew Research Center, the share of Americans with broadband access at home has reached a plateau, and more rely only on their smartphones for online access. Many cite cost as the reason for not having home broadband, with 37% saying that lacking broadband at home is a major disadvantage for learning new things that might enrich their lives. These findings reinforce the need for public libraries to provide better access to services to mobile device users, including those who rely on smartphones as their only connection.

"We continue to improve the customer experience, making it easier for customers to find and use the content they want and need," said David Singleton, Director of Libraries. "With better technology integration, we're offering customers the ease and flexibility we know they seek, so they can be free to learn and explore, no matter how they're interacting with their library."

Last fall, the Library redeveloped its cmlibrary.org site to be fully mobile-responsive and last month adopted the BiblioCommons catalog which has a mobile-responsive update in development. The Library's new iOS mobile app continues this effort, offering the following new features:

- The convenience of a digital library card.
- Mobile access to the catalog that allows users to not only search the catalog, but also quickly conduct account functions, like placing and canceling holds and viewing checked out materials, directly in the app.
- Seamless, in-app access to digital library resources—ebooks, audiobooks and more—from digital library vendors like Overdrive and Hoopla.

The new mobile app is also designed to work in conjunction with iBeacon technology in order to increase and extend the user experience while inside the library. iBeacon is the name of "indoor proximity system" technology that enables a smart phone or other device to perform actions when in close proximity to an iBeacon device. A mobile app user near one of the installed devices in a library branch can receive personalized notifications to their mobile device. As they enter and move about the branch, they'll learn about resources, services and programs that may be beneficial to their visit. During the pilot phase, the app will integrate with devices located in three branches: Main Library, ImaginOn and Hickory Grove.

These enhancements support two of the Library's strategic initiatives – to increase community awareness and engagement, and to innovate to support 21st century access. A pilot will run from March 1 to June 6, 2016, to measure the user experience of the mobile application and iBeacon technology. The Library has commissioned Seismic Partners to assist with the focus group and data aggregation portion of the pilot.

The new app will be available for download to iOS mobile devices from the App Store beginning March 1, 2016. (Download from this link.) The iOS platform is currently the only platform included in the pilot project.

This initiative was supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the federal Library Services and Technology Act as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

About the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to create a community of readers and empower individuals with free access to information and the universe of ideas. www.cmlibrary.org

About Skookum

Skookum is a full service software development company with offices in Charlotte, NC and Denver, CO. Skookum provides product strategy, UI/UX design, development and support services across a variety of domains. From mobile apps to enterprise systems and the Internet of Things, Skookum creates software solutions to affect real business change. www.skookum.com

About Seismic

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ios , **north carolina** , **NC** , **Charlotte** , **OverDrive** , **Charlotte Mecklenburg Library** , **Main Library** , **David Singleton** , **iBeacon** , **Mecklenburg County** , **imaginon** , **Seismic** , **public libraries** , **digital inclusion** , **BiblioCommons** , **Skookum** , **Institute of Museum and Library Services** , **Library Services and Technology Act** , **State Library of North Carolina** , **Hickory Grove** , **Hoopla**