Samantha is a 1st year Engineering student on her first co-op term working as a junior IT support in a legal firm in Saskatoon. She usually takes courses on campus, but has started to enrol in some online ones too. This term she is taking a free MOOC CS course ahead of the next term so that she buffers the difficulty of an often-failed required course next term. She prefers to study in coffee shops with the occasional visit to local libraries.

Samantha understands that she may have access to library resources given how she was able to access to online library resources easily in her Residence just two months earlier from her room. Samantha used to be a huge bookworm in High School but first year was a huge challenge especially since she decided to take a 6th course in her 2nd semester. She did not make use of the physical university library other than studying for exams. Samantha only used the online library databases exactly once for finding a few references for bonus marks in Larry Smith’s ECON 102.

“I’m alone in another city. I have no idea what Library resources I can easily have access to when I’m off campus. Who do I talk to?”
Motivation

The syllabus for Samantha’s Computer Science course recommends all sorts of books to read. Given that she is strapped for cash, she is tempted to use free online resources. But, her first instinct is to use some sort of Library. And because she is physically off campus in another city with little support, her first instinct is to go to the local public library; a type of facility that she understands well given her previous life as a bookworm. Unfortunately, all the books that are recommended have been taken out; many people in the city are taking the MOOC course too! During her Employment Advisor’s visit, she asks for advice on what to do. He unexpectedly refers her to the Waterloo University Library website for its electronic resources via its Safari Tech Books Online resource.

Frustrations

Sam was grateful for getting referred to the resource by a knowledgeable person but was frustrated for not being made aware of the resource earlier. She feels that she wasted a considerable amount of time hunting for a book that was not locally available when it was so easily available. Except it wasn’t... she had to figure out how to use the proxy system – something she had never done before.

Ideal Experience

Ideally, Sam would be able to have all the information about using all library resources both remotely and locally in some sort of fun care package before going away.

- Information about borrowing rights
- Course-by-course subject guides with information about how to legally access relevant resources
- Access to general purpose online help including chat.