Steven

15 years old
high school student
lives in Thornhill

"I love animals…I wonder if the zoo would let me volunteer there?"

Steven needs to complete volunteer hours for his high school diploma. His favourite class this year is biology, and he wants to use his volunteer hours to explore interests related to either animal health or conservation. He's made a list that includes various environmental NGOs, the humane society, and the Toronto Zoo.

Steven has never had a job, and is a little nervous about approaching organizations to ask about volunteer opportunities. He will feel better if there is a clear application process he can follow, and would rather not have to make a phone call to get answers to his questions.

Chances are he'll be using both a computer and a tablet to view the site. He'll prefer the computer if he has to fill out online forms or submit files, but he'd rather read on the tablet. His open browser tabs sync between the two devices, so he's used to moving easily from one to the other in the middle of a task.

Reasons for being on the website:

- **Find out about volunteer opportunities:** Steven's first concern is whether he'd qualify to volunteer at the zoo, and whether it would be very difficult to be accepted. Is he too young? Do they require their volunteers to have special qualifications? How competitive is it? What is the application process, and what materials do they need to receive? Can he submit everything online? Is he better off going in person? (He'd really rather not, but his parents are pushing for face-to-face contact.)
- **Find out about the volunteer experience:** He'll be looking for a sense of what kinds of things zoo volunteers get to do. What will his experience be like? How does the zoo operate? Do volunteers get any special benefits?
- **Apply to volunteer:** If he thinks the volunteer opportunities are accessible to him, he'll want to apply - preferably online.
- **Find out more about activities and careers associated with the zoo:** Whether or not he volunteers, he's curious about careers in conservation or animal care, and would love to know about what kinds of jobs you can get at a zoo.
- **Find out how easily he can reach the zoo by public transit:** He also needs to work out travel logistics.

Steven is willing to work hard and learn from his volunteer experience. He'll be easily intimidated by a difficult or ambiguous application process though.

Sarah

- lives in Mississauga
- works as an accountant
- has two daughters: Amy (10 years old) and Samantha (8 years old)
- oldest daughter Amy is visually impaired

"Make things accessible and fun for my children."

Sarah always has an eye out for activities and programs that her children might enjoy. She was discussing summer camps with another parent, who mentioned one that the zoo runs. Sarah wants to check it out.

As the parent of a child with a visual impairment, accessibility issues are always at the front of Sarah's mind. Her daughter Amy isn't able to read text on a screen, and uses both a refreshable braille display and a screen reader program called VoiceOver to surf the web, use social media, and write and edit school assignments. The program works on both their desktop computer and their tablet. Sarah has never considered herself a "techie," but has done a lot of research on web accessibility in an effort to understand why her daughter's assistive software works or doesn't work. She gets angry at avoidable website issues, and is very pleased with the new legislation mandating digital accessibility.

Reasons for being on the website:

- **Research programs and activities for her children:** Sarah wants to know more about educational programs - especially zoo camp - and whether accommodations could be made for Amy. She'd like to see a list of programs, but would prefer to talk about details over the phone.
- **Decide whether the web experience would be fun for her kids:** If the programs look promising, she'd like to encourage her kids to explore the site. She'll check it out herself first, though, and see if it works well with Amy's assistive technology.

Sarah wants both her daughters to have fun learning about wildlife, but she'll take a dim view of the zoo if accessibility issues aren't addressed, or if the zoo fails to live up to its promises of inclusivity.

For more information on Amy's assistive technologies:

VoiceOver screen reader - https://www.apple.com/ca/accessibility/osx/voiceover/
* This program has been included on Mac operating systems since version 10.4, so Mac users can check it out. Windows comes with software called Narrator.

Example of a refreshable braille display: http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/for-job-seekers/careerconnect-virtual-worksites/retail-worksite-for-blind-users/refreshable-braille-display-3652/12345

Deniz

- 13 years old
- lives in Izmir, Turkey
- father is an architect, mother works at a bank
- is going to Toronto with his family to visit relatives
- goes to a good private school and is learning English
- parents speak a little English, but aren't proficient

"I don't want to feel stupid."

Murat is excited about his family's upcoming trip to Toronto. Murat knows it's important to his parents that he learn English and get international experience, and he's looking forward to showing off his knowledge. His parents put him in charge of researching attractions, so he's looking at the zoo, the CN Tower, the ROM, and the aquarium.

Murat spends a lot of time surfing the Internet and playing games on the computer. Turkish sites are easiest, but he's used to finding his way around English-language sites when he needs to. He doesn't mind if he fails to understand every detail, but if he can't even get the gist or navigate effectively he'll get frustrated. He knows how Internet sites are usually laid out, and will scan for familiar headings and anything that looks like the information he wants.

Reasons for being on the website:

- **Explore features of the zoo:** he wants to know what kinds of animals he can see, and if there are any special events. If the website is engaging and the content isn't too difficult to understand, he'll spend time exploring and getting excited about his visit.
- **Find hours, directions, and admission fees:** once he gets to Toronto, Murat's relatives will loan his parents a cell phone with a data plan. Murat will probably be in charge of finding out hours, directions and admission fees for all the attractions they visit. He'll be doing this on the go, and while he's used touch-screen mobile phones before, he'll be getting used to a slightly different interface on this visit. Compared to his relaxed exploration on the family computer at home, he'll be a bit more impatient and potentially stressed when he's looking up this information on the go.

Murat will have a great experience if he's able to navigate the site and understand enough of the content to find what he needs and have fun on the site. If he can help his parents with the language barrier during the trip he'll be proud of himself, but he'll get frustrated if he runs into technology or language issues.

Carolyn
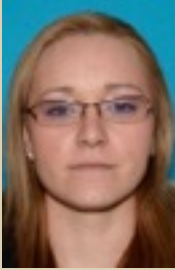
- grad student
- grew up in Toronto, and still lives there
- loves animals
- reads up on the issues she cares about

"Business interests shouldn't stand in the way of animals getting the best possible care."

Carolyn studies English literature at the University of Toronto, and lives in an apartment with a roommate and two cats. Even though her studies keep her busy, she remains very involved in student life at the university. In one of her volunteer roles, she helps plan trips to Toronto landmarks for out-of-town students.

Carolyn used to love going to the zoo with her family, but lately she's been following some of the controversies in the news. She loves animals and thinks it's important for the public to understand wildlife conservation issues, but she's no longer sure that zoos are the best place for many types of animals. Before she goes back to the zoo, or recommends it to others, she's going to catch up on the big news stories (especially the elephant controversy), look for research that seems well thought-out and objective, and visit the zoo's website. She will probably do most of her research at her computer.

Reasons for being on the website:

- **Get the zoo's side of the story:** Carolyn wants to know the zoo is taking critics' concerns seriously. She wants to see if there is anything written about the animals'

daily lives, the challenges of keeping warm-weather animals in Toronto, or responses to the elephant controversy. If the tone is upbeat and positive throughout, she won't trust that she's getting the full story.
- **Evaluate the ethical benefits of the zoo:** She wants to know what the zoo is doing to educate the public on environmental issues.
- **Possibly check admission fees and hours of operation:** If she decides that a visit to the zoo is worthwhile, she'll want to know about logistical details, including whether a group rate is available.

Carolyn is going to the website to find out about the zoo's side of the animal captivity issue. She's skeptical, but if she's reassured by what she reads online she'll recommend the zoo as a Toronto attraction.

Examples of what Carolyn is reading:

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/01/19/elephant_tug_of_war_the_story_of_the_toronto_zoo_transfer.html

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/08/24/torontos_elephants_get_back_to_basics_in_california.html