QR Code Posters: An Effective way of promoting E-books?

Jodie.reeve@bthft.nhs.uk
Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust

Why I did this project?

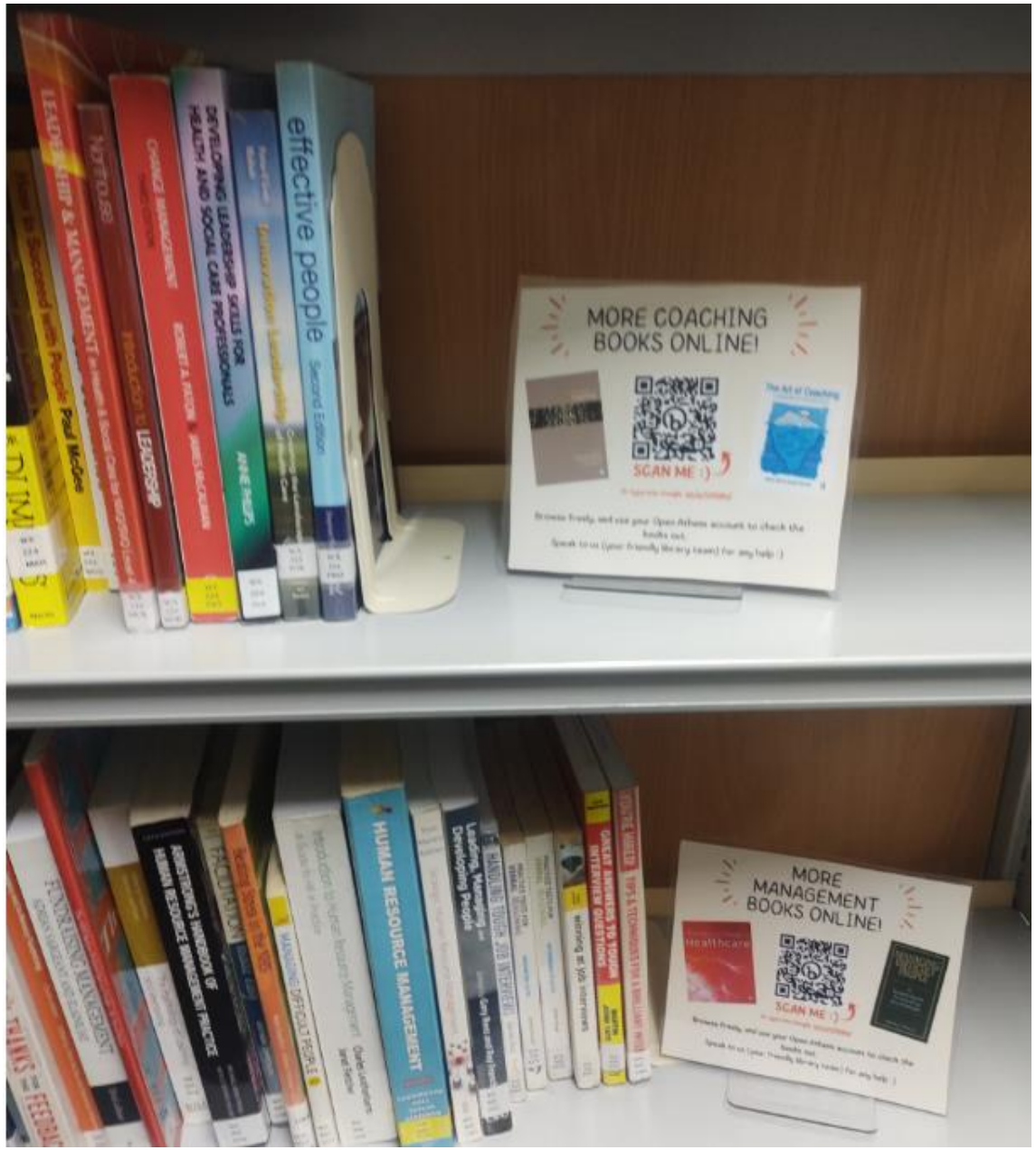
- We all know the benefits of e-books, but our library users at BTHFT do not really engage with them.
- Literature search + own observations highlighted two main barriers to why our e-book usage was stagnant:

1. **Discoverability =** People did not know they even existed, or how to get them if they did. Marketing was not reaching people who only read physical books.

2. **Accessibility =** Lack of usability, problems with authentication, and technical barriers.

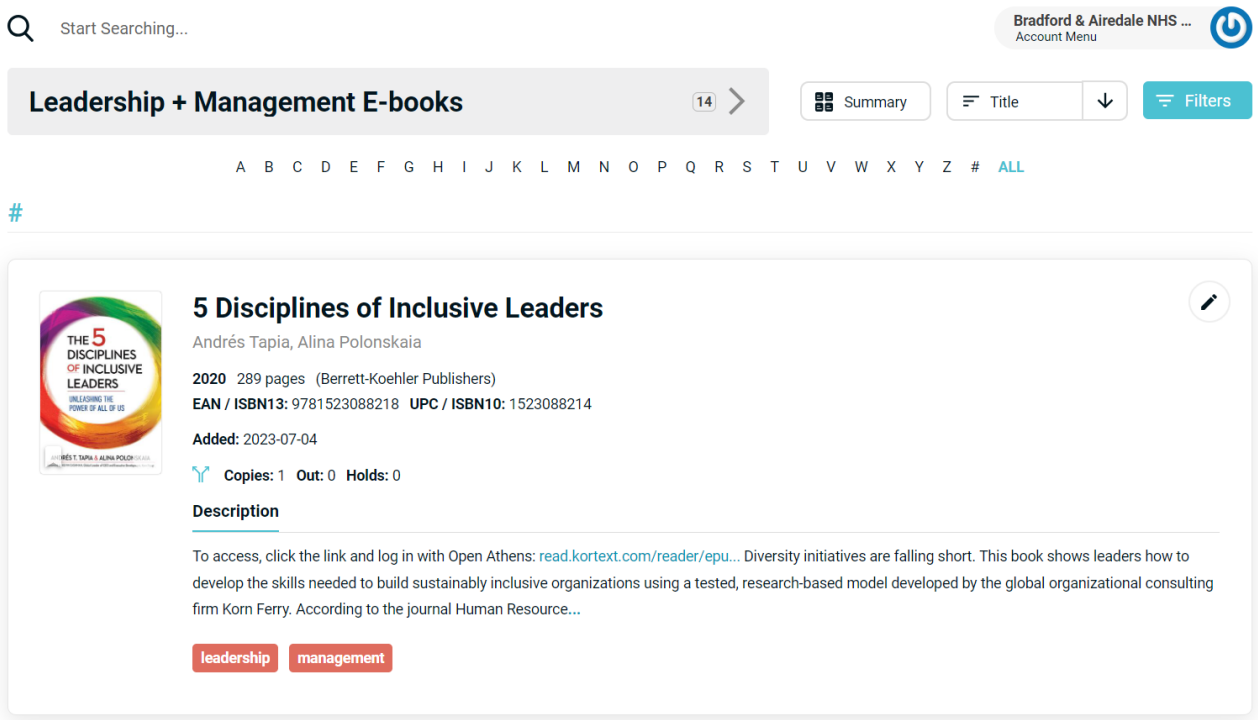
Adding QR Code posters

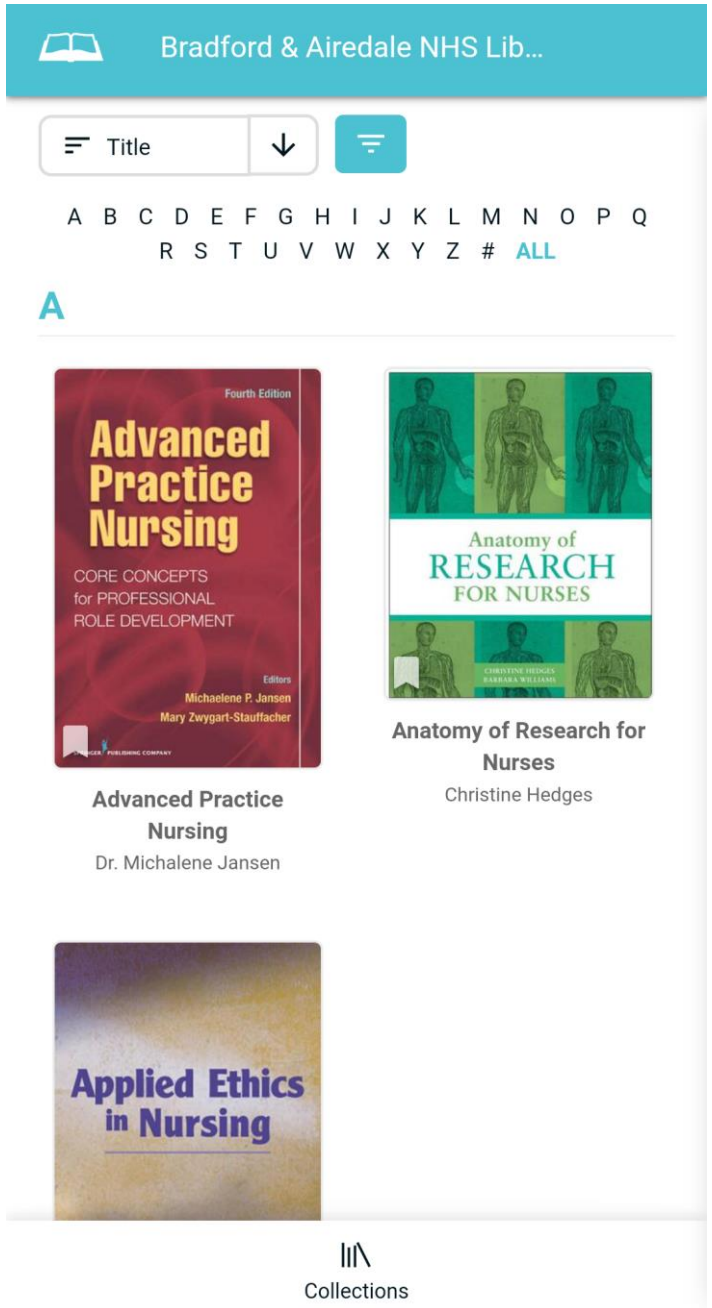
- Added to Leadership, Nursing and Research sections in the library.
- Sat alongside the physical books so people could extend their browsing to the full catalogue.



Adding QR Code posters

- QR Codes took them to Libib which contained e-books only to make browsing e-books as simple as possible.



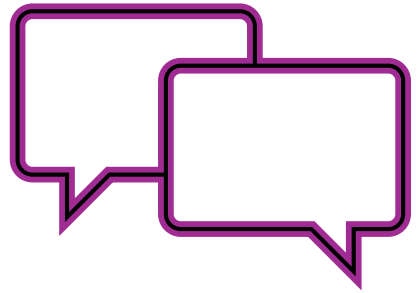


Methods for evaluating their effectiveness

- Recruited 9 participants, and used two approaches:

1. **Usability test -** Involving observing participants complete 4 tasks around using the QR codes, implementing the think-aloud protocol to access their thoughts as they did so.

2. **Follow-up Interviews –** After they completed the usability test to gain insight into their experiences & general e-book usage.



Interviews Revealed

- Users are aware of the benefits of e-books – citing how they were accessible from anywhere, easier to search within, not as cumbersome as thick medical textbooks, + many more.

Yet 7 out of 9 said they preferred physical books.

5 out of 9 said they regularly used our library books…

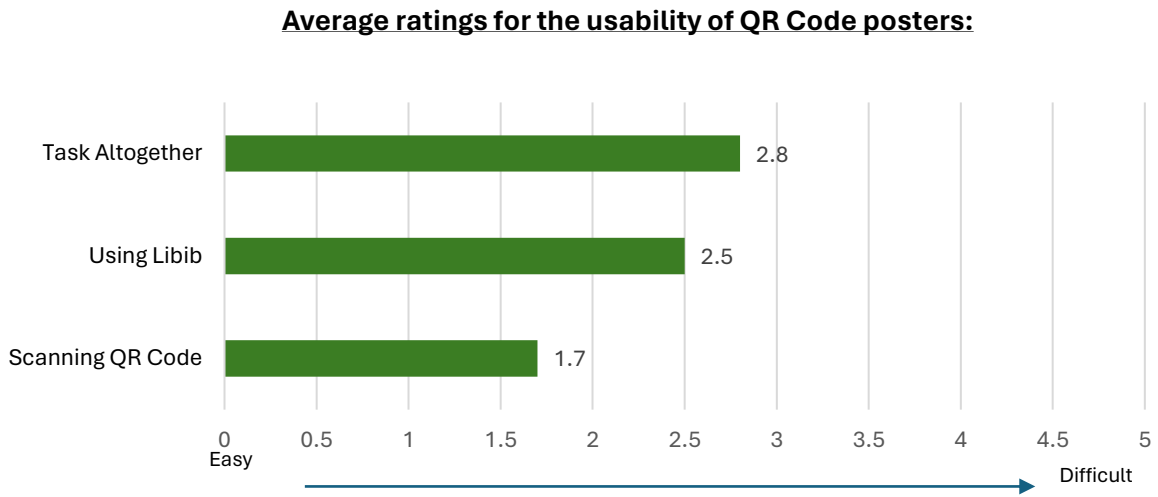
…but only 1 had sought out e-books before.

Usability Test - Discoverability

Big leaps for overcoming Discoverability…

- 7 said they would notice the QR code posters when browsing – and 8 found the QR posters without prompting during the usability study.
- 5 agreed that the QR posters made the eBooks more discoverable and were more likely to use them.

"Like that [the QR code posters] were at the eye line rather than on the walls, next to the books you were looking at, makes sense."



Usability Test – Accessibility

Not so much for accessibility…

- Whilst most participants liked the simple process of scanning the QR code, and seeing the e-books listed together in Libib….
- …None of the participants were able to access the e-book through the QR code in the usability test, due to authentication issues – mainly not remembering their Open Athens details on the spot. 5 said they would ask for a librarian's help, but 4 said they would have left it, highlighting major accessibility issues.

"[The QR posters] make it less complicated to find an E-book, something that I scan in a rush."

"Biggest problem is having to log into Open Athens. If I saw I needed to log on, I would just think 'bugger it' and walk off. I just think 'Why cant I have it?' and it annoys me."

Conclusion + Going Forward

- QR codes help with discoverability of e-books, but not accessibility.
- **To better address accessibility =** Need a bigger push on how to use Open Athens. 4 of the participants mentioned having posters in the library instructing how to use Open Athens.
- **To increase discoverability further =** Most of the participants mentioned they think it would be beneficial to put the QR code posters on the wards.