Library Connect Digest 2019

Elsevier’s Library Connect program thanks the librarians, information professionals and scholars from around the world who contributed to the webinars and newsletters in 2019.
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From tradition to innovation: The evolutionary history of a library

CONVERSATIONS WITH GLOBAL ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH LIBRARY LEADERS |
FEBRUARY 15, 2019

The second goal was institutional reform that he believes is important for libraries to meet future needs. At the end of 2007, Chen boldly carried out the first round of reforms, streamlining the original 13 departments in four departments including Intelligence Research Institute, Reader Service Headquarters, Technical Service Headquarters and Administrative Management Headquarters. The new structure was intended to achieve flat management and improve service efficiency. In 2016, Chen made further adjustments to the departments, and the library is now divided into six departments including Resources and Public Service, Learning and Research Support, Culture and Special Services, Platform and Technical Support, Logistics Support and Literature, and Administration and Cooperation.

On April 11, 2007, Professor Chen Jin was appointed director of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) Library. That was the start of a “revolutionary” friendship between Chen and the library that has lasted over 10 years and resulting in the library’s growth and transformation. “If you want to do something, do it well,” said Chen.

When he first arrived at the library, Chen found that the library staff often sought perfection in their work, causing efficiency to suffer. After carefully observing the library’s operations and contemplating the problems and issues, Chen decided to carry out several reforms, hoping to improve the quality of library services and ultimately expanding the library’s influence with the university.

Implementing the “3+1” goals

The reform and service transformation project was divided into what Chen calls the “3+1” goals. The first goal was to reshape the service concept to become more user-oriented, emphasizing the importance of providing users with effective and efficient service. To put the service concept into practice, Director Chen requires all librarians to keep service top of mind.

The third goal was to create a pan-disciplinary service system. Compared with resource-based disciplinary service models, Chen notes that “we are directly communicating with professors and embedding disciplinary services into their research process.” To strengthen academic support and service efficiency, Chen successfully pioneered the IC² Innovative Service Model that has become a brand in the pan-disciplinary service system. The model consists of two programs, the IC² Innovation Support Program and the IC² Humanities Development Program. The model expands services from academic and cultural perspectives, achieving both vertical and horizontal integration which has enriched the culture of the library.

The final “+1” goal of the transformation efforts refers to the culture that is woven through the library systems. “Our cultural focus is on three components, including organizational, management and environmental,” Chen said. He feels that organizational culture is one of the most important aspects in encouraging enthusiasm of employees and guaranteeing the success of the library operations.

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“Without ideas, there is no direction; without institutions, there is no management of superstructures. The busier the team, the closer they are,” says Chen. Through the “3+1” transformation, the SJTU Library has completed a huge shift from passive to active service, and from “self-entertainment” to demand-driven.

Supporting the development of the university with subject services

The SJTU library is also the center for science and technology updated accredited by both the Ministry of Education and the Shanghai Science and Technology Commission. As the first of its kind in China, the SJTU Library runs a “Library, Information Science and Archive-Management” Master’s program, with issues of strong professional and academic value being studied.

Chen notes that by analyzing the literature data they can provide students and researchers with highly customized series of analytical services including decision-making information support, evaluation consultations based on factual data, scientific information, and more to aid in the development of research projects and academic study. “This is a true power and value of the library and we will develop our services according to the needs of the users and our school’s strategy,” Chen said.

Chen encourages the SJTU library to consider providing strategic and decision-making resources by addressing issues like: What are other schools doing in the current environment? What direction should our school’s development trend focus on? Which disciplines are worth developing? He feels that the library can support the school and college decisions by collecting data and integrating information to provide strategic analysis reports.

In addition, the SJTU library assists in the assessment of “talent” for both research and academic areas. “Basic talent assessment in the early stage is done by the library,” Chen said. The research focuses on the number of academic achievements, publication citations, and journal influence, and the library will perform quantitative analysis of researchers to determine whether a researcher’s output is falling or rising. This analysis not only provides a regular reminder to researchers, but also enable the school to understand their academic research progress and provide data support for managers.

For the development of disciplines in universities, the construction of interdisciplinary groups have important significance for academic innovation. Based on its professional advantages, SJTU Library has provided many analytic reports and suggestions for this school, which not only helped the school successfully build the Shanghai Urban Development Research Institute, but also helped some disciplined groups break through the bottleneck and directly promote the improvement of the overall academic research level of the school.

“We have risen to such a height that the results of our practice of subject services have fully supported the development of the university and we are considered to be ahead of the competition,” Chen said.

The road ahead | A profession that is respected and shared

For more than a decade, Chen has thought about how to integrate the library’s services into the school’s teaching, learning, research and organization. The library not only supports school management and academic development, but also provides many programs for the school, undertakes intelligence analysis and talent assessment, and develops electronic teaching and software tools. The overall goal is by continuously improving the library’s professionalism and service quality, the faculty and students will view the library as a place of ability and strength. “We are now merging many things together, overall and systematically. If the library can do this well, I think the future prospect of the library will also be very good.” Chen said.

In addition, to finding new ideas, methods, and technologies in library management and services, the library needs a platform for exchange of experiences. The annual “Library Management and Service Innovation Forum” was initiated by Chen and was founded in 2008. Focusing on the two key words of management and service, the forum includes two parts: the curator summit and academic discussion. “The purpose at that time was to hope that through academic discussions, we would find the direction of the future development of the library and promote the improvement of library service quality.”

Since its inception, each library management and service innovation forum has different themes, including culture, management, services, resources, and technology. Each topic is advancing with the times. In November of 2018, the 11th Library Management and Service Innovation Forum was held in Hangzhou. “We discussed the construction of smart libraries and the content of supporting the two-tier construction of the school, which is closely integrated with the current development of the country’s higher education,” said Chen.

In the future, the SJTU Library will continue to introduce advanced concepts and service technologies to provide teachers and students with a quality academic resources and knowledge service support so that they continue to their vision of building a world-class university library. LC
Setences
empowering them to succeed. It is about listening and learning. It means hiring fabulous, talented, creative, and engaged people, and giving them the tools and creating the context and organizational culture in which they can be successful. It means providing a vision for where collections are going, and then building an appreciation for how everyone’s work is playing a role and realizing that vision. That is my view on leadership and, by extension, that is why mentoring is so important. If leadership is about empowering others and that you get work done through others being successful, mentorship is a critical part of that.”

A majority of the library directors featured in this book consider transformational leadership to be a major factor in enhancing communication and building mutual trust and respect within their organizations. This, in turn, has the potential to foster a motivating and creative work environment that ensures personal and collective success and institutional advancement in the long run. Many believe that transformational leadership also contributes to an ability to adapt to a rapidly changing academic environment and promote sustained organization performance.

Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at the author’s book by providing a series of downloadable PDFs of chapters from the book:

Sarah Thomas, Vice President for the Harvard Library, University Librarian and Roy E. Larsen Librarian of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. Sarah Thomas candidly discusses the rewards and challenges of being Harvard’s library director as well as her experiences in being the first woman and non-British citizen to serve as the Librarian at the University of Oxford.

Greg Eow, Associate Director for Collections, MIT Libraries. Greg Eow discusses the changing and yet indispensable roles of a bibliographer in the context of collection development, as well as the values of diversity and inclusion in staff recruitment in academic librarianship—a profession that is increasingly driven by technological developments in a global context.

Susan Gibbons, University Librarian and Deputy Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communication, Yale University. Susan Gibbons shares how the current information landscape is reshaping service provision by the Yale University Library, as well as the kinds of qualities that they look for in young recruits who wish to join the Yale University Library team.

Richard Ovenden, Bodley’s Librarian, University of Oxford. Richard Ovenden discusses the “organic” organizational structure of this ancient library system, as well as his unique perspectives on the distinctive pedagogical approaches between the US and UK undergraduate students that have shaped the way libraries deliver their services.

Qiang Zhu, Director, Peking University Library. Qiang Zhu discusses his career journey from his humble beginnings after the Cultural Revolution to becoming a professional librarian in China. He offers his personal views and insight into the growth of the profession of librarianship in China, and upcoming challenges that academic libraries in China will face.

Gulcin Cribb, University Librarian, Singapore Management University. Gulcin Cribb shares with the readers the new and changing roles of academic librarians in the information age, as well as why she continues to write and publish even after she has already reached the peak of her career in the field of librarianship.

Peter Sidorko, University Librarian, the University of Hong Kong. Peter Sidorko discusses the ways in which he uses his participative management style to work closely with staff and faculty in supporting the unique academic environment at HKU. He speaks about the deep collaboration with other university libraries in Hong Kong and discusses the current challenges facing the field.

Philip Kent, University Librarian, University of Melbourne. Philip Kent shares his insights drawing on his experience leading the Library at the University of Melbourne, which consistently appears as the highest-scoring Australian university in international rankings. He also outlines the unique challenges for the library in serving a research-intensive university in the 21st century.

Howard Amos, University Librarian, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Howard Amos shares his unparalleled expertise in managing organizational change, that is including the transition to the fully digital library, the implementation of international benchmarking activities, and the development of quality frameworks for libraries.

If you liked this article, you may be interested in reading an article from Allen Cho, one of the co-editors of the book. The article, The Learning gardens at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, is based on his tour of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) Learning Garden, an award-winning inspirational collaborative learning and study space. LC
Conflict is inevitable in any workplace, and libraries are no exception. In fact, the team-based duties, close working quarters, and customer service focus of our work contribute to the potential for conflict among library colleagues. Some of the factors that can cause conflict—communication, working style preferences, tolerance for change, and feelings about work-life balance—may be similar within a generational cohort but can vary substantially across these broad age groups. For managers who lead intergenerational teams, an understanding of these differences can help them promote healthier relationships among team members and deal more effectively with conflict when it arises.

In today’s library workplace we have participation from four generations, which are represented in the table below. These generations’ differing attitudes toward work and communication styles can cause conflict, particularly when members of different generations work together on the same team or project. While this is useful information for a library manager, these traits cannot be universally applied to all members of a generational cohort. It is important to get to know people as individuals. This will allow you to recognize, utilize and acknowledge each team member’s skills and abilities, which will in turn help to build trust within your team.

When conflict does arise, your instinct may be to jump in and resolve it. As much as possible, managers should step back and allow team members to settle their own conflicts. This process can be tough at first, but ultimately it is empowering and strengthens the team. If you do need to intervene, it is important to get to the root of the problem. It may be complex or simple. It can also boil down to miscommunication, which can be amplified by generational differences. A simple statement like “Let’s agree to finish this ASAP” may not mean the same thing to everyone. For a baby boomer this might mean “Let’s work around the clock until it’s finished,” but for a millennial it might mean “Let’s finish this as efficiently as possible, taking into consideration all of our commitments.” While everyone may have agreed with the statement initially, differing interpretations can still lead to conflict.

There are also generational differences in communication preference. Boomers are accustomed to face-to-face meetings, and millennials may be comfortable with texting and using productivity apps such as Slack and Trello to collaborate and manage projects. If a conflict has arisen, a face-to-face conversation is the best route.

It’s important to note that conflict does not always need to be avoided. If teams or individuals work through conflict with reasoned discussions, it can lead to creative solutions and ensure that the whole team is on board with the final decision.

One strategy for creating more understanding among generations in a library workplace is...
cross-generational mentoring, where the participants are both mentee and mentor, learning from one another simultaneously. Unlike the traditional mentor relationship of a senior employee mentoring a junior, the individuals need only be from different generations and their place in the hierarchy does not matter. Cross-generational mentoring can also lead to more trust in an organization as people get to know one another as individuals.

In academic libraries, where librarians go through a tenure process, managers should be mindful that pre-tenure individuals may be hesitant to disagree with tenured colleagues. You may need to have one-on-one discussions about team processes and the openness of group conversations. Employees may need coaching from you (or someone else) about how to make their opinions heard without ruffling feathers. Cross-generational mentoring could work well in these situations.

Generational differences may be the cause of conflict or can add to a conflict that stems from another cause. Managers who are aware of generational differences in attitudes toward work and communication can apply this knowledge to help intergenerational teams develop effective strategies to deal with conflict. Cross-generational mentoring can also help team members from different generations find common ground and build trust. If conflict is handled in the right way, it can actually contribute to a team's overall health.

Sara Holder and Amber Lannon are authors of the book *Managing the Multigenerational Librarian Workforce* that presents information on the reality of multigenerational workforces in libraries and how to manage expectations and differences. Library Connect is pleased to offer their subscribers a look at the book by offering a complimentary download of the chapter "Managing Conflict" that goes into more detail in defining characteristics of the four generations that are in the workplace today and highlights the areas that may cause conflict in intergenerational work teams. LC
Thinking outside of the library: emotional intelligence for all

BY DEBRA LUCAS, D’YOUVILLE COLLEGE, NEW YORK | AUGUST 28, 2019

In his groundbreaking book *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace*, psychologist and emotional intelligence (EI) expert Daniel Goleman tells the story of an airline flight attendant who used emotional intelligence to calm a plane full of weary and agitated travelers (2001). In one of the chapters in the book, Goldman describes a situation that arose after a long and difficult flight. The passengers, who were arriving after a series of long delays, were understandably anxious to depart the plane—after all, the Super Bowl was about to begin! They rose from their seats before reaching the gate—an emotional reaction despite the fact that they were cognitively aware that they must stay seated until the plane comes to a complete stop. Instead of chastising them, the flight attendant picked up the intercom and stated calmly, in a sing-song voice, “You’re standing!” Her humor diffused the situation, calming the weary and anxious passengers.

Emotional intelligence, Goleman says in his book, is the ability to “recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others.” “The model of EI as a variety of intelligence has a wide range of implications… particularly in predicting and developing the hallmarks of outstanding performers in jobs of every kind and at every level.” If Goleman’s theory applies to performers in jobs of every kind and at every level, then it follows that he believes that library managers, staff, senior administrators and strategic leaders also have the potential to manage or lead with emotional intelligence.

Business literature such as Goleman’s work has lessons for librarians. As a profession, librarians need to think out of the box with ingenuity and intellectual curiosity. Relying solely on library literature is a limitation that we put on ourselves, and it results in simply re-creating what other librarians have researched and enacted in the institutions where they have an affiliation. It’s the famed “same old, same old” situation.

Goleman says there is a great divide between the mind and the heart, i.e., cognition and emotion. “Other abilities integrate thought and feeling and fall within the domain of emotional intelligence, a term that highlights the crucial role of emotional performance,” he writes. The flight attendant who used humor to calm the anxious passengers, he explains, was able to “hit exactly the right emotional note—something cognitive capabilities alone are insufficient for, because by definition they lack the human flair for feeling.”

So how do we apply the flight attendant’s experience with a plane full of weary passengers to a librarian’s daily struggles? It’s simple, really. Librarians face unhappy patrons every day. College students, for example, are often tired, worried, or falling behind in their studies. Imagine that one of them has just arrived from the registrar’s office, where they were told they could not register for the next semester because they owe library fines. How would a librarian handle an encounter with this individual, who is probably irate? Let us hope it is with a healthy dose of emotional intelligence. The librarian would have to put themselves in the patron’s shoes. If you’re in this situation, be empathetic and mindful of your own emotions as well as the emotions of the patron. If you feel their anger is directed toward you (and in some cases it is), diffuse the situation. How? In this case, humor might not be your best option! This may call for using your best listening skills and “talking
them down.” When students break down into tears, your emotional intelligence must ignite.

Library literature will provide us with examples of how other librarians work. But when we expand our horizons and delve into literature outside of library science, including business literature, we forge our own future. Librarians must keep abreast of the changing trends and opportunities in business. If we disregard the business climate and conduct our research solely in a library-centric manner, we will continue to exist but not to grow. Transformational leaders must create a vision. The vision should not be based solely on the expertise of a few librarians who have published articles on what they accomplished in their unique situations. Delving deeply into the library literature can certainly help transformational leaders, but they need to read the expert business literature too. “While there is wide acknowledgement in the general management literature emanating from the business world that EI competencies are valuable, most literature in the library realm is limited in scope and has been focused on positions at the higher levels of leadership… with little research performed on non-leadership or entry-level positions within academic libraries” (Klare, et al., 2014).

Thinking outside of the library literature can enhance and expand one’s preconceived notions. EI is not specific to the business world. In fact, EI is not just for managers or leaders. Emotional intelligence is for all. LC

Bibliography


Building a university library into one of the most influential in China
AN INTERVIEW WITH MING NIE, HUAZHONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY, CHINA | SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

In July 2019, Ming Nie began his third year as the library director at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST). But he is far more than a library director. He loves books and regards reading as a way of life. Having studied and worked at HUST for many years, he has deep-rooted feelings for the university library and is working toward making it into one of the most influential in China.

“The first time I entered the HUST Library was 41 years ago. At that time, the staff members were close to retirement, so I may have been dealing with the library longer than anyone who is currently on the job,” says Nie. “It was my own choice to come to the work at the library, and after three years, I still have a sense of accomplishment.”

Years of university work experience have enabled Nie to understand the overall situation of the university and the needs of its scholars and students. In addition to considering traditional areas of librarianship, he looks at the future development of the library comprehensively and has been committed to promoting the transformation of the library. “From the perspective of the needs of top university libraries, it is not enough for the library to just serve as a resource information center. It must go deeper into research and teaching, and even get involved in management decisions,” says Nie. “What I have done is to turn the library into a ‘knowledge service center,’ letting it play a greater role in the development of the university.”

Data breadth determines value depth

Nie believes that the era of big data has arrived – data is processed into information, then transformed into knowledge. He feels that data-driven libraries face the challenge of optimizing their resource structure, but that this can be difficult because there is no one standard of choice. To meet the information needs of its readers, HUST Library has had to reduce the number of paper resources while increasing electronic resources, all while avoiding infringement issues through IP control and ensuring the regulation of intellectual property rights.

Elsevier is one of the major providers of electronic resources for HUST Library. “From the service value chain, the library and the content provider are integrated,” says Nie. “It is difficult for the content provider to directly face the reader, and the library hopes to effectively pass the reader’s needs to the content provider and thereby create more value for readers.”

Electronic resources currently account for about 70 percent of the library’s total resources. The goal is to satisfy users based on resources, information, and knowledge discovery. Director Nie has done a lot of work in this regard. He established a “research results library,” collecting the academic achievements of all the teachers in the school and providing them to the colleges to be used as one of the main criteria for annual teacher assessments.

The data provided by the library is 90–95 percent accurate, which helps teachers save time filling out forms. “In the past, database construction was wishful thinking on the part of the library,” says Nie.

“After being included in the reference for the annual assessment, teachers must take the initiative to ensure that the database is complete, there are no omissions, and the timeliness of the assessment has been updated. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that data is continuously updated.”
In addition to his library contributions, Nie has set up an international meeting approval system for China’s Ministry of Education. Every year, the Ministry of Education supports a large number of international conferences. In the past, colleges and universities submitted paper materials to the Ministry of Education for review and approval. Since the international conference approval system launched, all international conferences can be submitted and approved online through the platform, which greatly simplifies the process.

“The reason why I do this is to not only contribute to the Ministry of Education, but to improve the influence of the university. Secondly, we can learn about the information of many international conferences through the backstage of the website, such as the type of meeting, and participants,” says Nie. “As long as the data is related to school development, I hope to be able to collect it. I hope that the library will be built into a think tank in the future, not only in schools, but also in the industry or region.”

**Talent is the first resource for high-quality development**

In the past, the HUST Library focused on traditional library functions, such as providing literature resources for patrons. Therefore, school management paid insufficient attention to employee development within the library. After taking office, Nie put a lot of effort into optimizing talent and employee development within the library. “I believe that the development of the library ultimately depends on the efforts of all librarians,” says Nie.

When he first arrived at the library, he found that although there were enough librarians, their skill sets did not match his vision for the library. He actively worked to introduce more professionals to the school and to improve the library. For example, Nie will occasionally send librarians to other university libraries to conduct research or attend conferences, so that librarians can gain a better understanding of the industry. The librarians are asked to summarize and analyze other libraries after each visit.

With Nie’s efforts, the overall skill set of the library staff has been elevated. “Now the basic quality of librarians has been significantly improved, and they have basic capabilities in developing new businesses.” The school also supports the library staff and recruits high-quality talent from different disciplines every year.

Recently, the Ministry of Science and Technology released a guide to national major projects, one of which is to vigorously promote the key technologies of the mobile terminal. Nie believes that the project can be led by the HUST Library, joint colleges, such as the School of Computer Science, as well as research and development teams of some external companies, and other libraries in Hubei. “If everything depends on the librarian, the library can do very limited things,” Nie says. “As a first-class university, we have very rich academic resources, if we can coordinate and integrate these resources. Then the library can do more things.”

**Service-oriented knowledge services**

In the past few years, the HUST Library has vigorously carried out subject services by collecting, aggregating, analyzing and comparing resources and information.

Next year, the Ministry of Education will conduct a fifth round of discipline-specific assessments, and the library needs to provide relevant statistical analysis. These reports not only allow the college to see its own subject rankings, but also understand where there are gaps. They also help the school plan how to develop each discipline. “These things we do actually rely on the library’s information resources, but we no longer limit ourselves to the traditional business, but make full use of the advantages of information resources to cut into all aspects of the school. This is an example of more value-added services,” comments Nie.

At the beginning of this year, the HUST Library was designated as a National Intellectual Property Information Service Center by the Ministry of Education and the State Intellectual Property Office, a recognition of the library's intellectual property information service capabilities.

When asked about the library’s future development, Nie says that providing personalized service based on reader behavior is inevitable. He feels that it takes a lot of time for readers to find the right documentation in a resource-rich library, so he hopes to further enhance search efforts, thereby bringing more convenience to readers. “Although it is not difficult to achieve technically, the public concept hopes to obtain more, better and more accurate services. But on the other hand, it is not willing to be tracked by their behavior. This process will take time. Adapt slowly,” he says.

The term information literacy refers to the ability to reasonably judge the authenticity of information and effectively sift through massive amounts of information. The HUST Library plans to offer a course on information literacy and expand its existing document retrieval training to include information literacy. Many university libraries in China offer courses in how to find documents.

However, information literacy education is a broader concept, one that aims to help students improve their ability to collect, organize, and use information that will be valuable for future work and life. “Information literacy is a quality that people must have in the information society. We hope to open different courses for students at different stages and make information literacy education a system,” says Nie. “At present, our library is not fully equipped, but I hope to incorporate it into the library business as soon as possible.”

As part of its overall plan to build a world-class university, HUST puts two requirements on the library – to build a first-class service school and a first-class library. In this regard, Nie notes, “I have done a lot of work thus far and feel that I need to continue to create special and important things to accomplish these goals. I hope that through my efforts, I can lead the HUST Library into becoming one of the most influential libraries in the industry.”

**LC**

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Reimagining outreach to faculty: A tale of two Florida academic libraries

BY BARBARA G. TIERNEY, UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA LIBRARIES, AND LINDA K. COLDING, FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY | JANUARY 15, 2019

Textbook alternatives

In 2015, a group of subject librarians and instructional designers formed a "textbook alternatives team" to promote high-quality open educational resources (OERs) and library-sourced content to help reduce the cost of required course materials for UCF students. UCF subject and campus librarians reached out to their faculty to see if they were interested in providing free or low-cost materials to students by adopting an existing open text or replacing a traditional textbook with copyright-compliant OER materials or library-sourced content. From summer 2016 to fall 2018, this outreach initiative impacted 122 faculty, 274 course sections and 12,314 students. The total potential savings for students was over $1,000,000.

Research-intensive courses

In spring 2018, UCF rolled-out a research-intensive (RI) course initiative that invited faculty to redesign their existing courses to fit a RI profile, which emphasizes critical thinking, academic communication and research skills. Subject librarians reached out to the RI instructors-in-training to suggest strategies for redesigning courses, provide face-to-face or online instruction, and create customized research guides for each course.

Faculty cluster hires

In 2014, UCF began a series of faculty cluster hires (i.e. hiring multiple scholars into one or more academic departments based on their shared interdisciplinary research) to foster the development of interdisciplinary academic teams focused on solving complex societal problems. UCF subject librarians reached out to the academic departments supporting each of these clusters and offered to identify library resources for each topic. Subject librarians...
also reached out to the cluster hiring teams and offered to participate in campus interviews and order customized resources for each new hire as he/she came aboard.

Research and grants

When the nursing librarian reached out to UCF’s School of Nursing researchers, research coordinator assistants, and the UCF Office of Research and Commercialization (ORC) to offer his assistance in identifying library resources that supported research and grant writing, he was invited to create a “Research Funder Toolkit.” The resource that he created is now hosted on websites for the College of Nursing, ORC, and UCF Libraries (guides.ucf.edu/funder_tool_kits).

This partnership led the way for other subject librarians to reach out to the research coordinator assistants in colleges and academic departments all over campus to invite them to “meet and greet” events with subject librarians at the main library. This allows librarians and research coordinator assistants to strategize on joint research endeavors.

Curriculum-integrated library programming

From 2017 to 2019, subject librarians collaborated with faculty to present engaging, curriculum-integrated library programs. The titles included “Total Eclipse of the Sun,” “Observe the Moon,” “Explore Mars,” “Lunar Eclipse,” “Earth Day,” “Sea Turtle Walk,” “Dia de los Muertos,” “WomanFest,” and “Libraries Bridging the Gap Between Innovation and Entrepreneurship.” To ensure high attendance at these programs, the subject librarians invited selected faculty to bring their entire class to the programs.

Florida Gulf Coast University and library background

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is a teaching university with 80 percent of its classes taught by full-time faculty. There are 58 undergraduate programs, 26 graduate programs, and five doctoral programs, with just over 15,000 total students. The Reference, Research, and Instruction (RRI) department is home to seven subject librarians, a department head who also serves as a subject librarian to one program, and an instructional support specialist. Subject librarians conduct the bulk of outreach to faculty as well as students.

Communication with faculty

The subject librarians use a variety of methods to reach out to faculty. Newsletters are created and distributed in both print and electronic formats. These newsletters update teaching faculty about library services, databases, and other resources available for their own or their students’ research. Some subject librarians attend their academic department meetings to provide this information. Other faculty communication includes congratulatory notes and emails for promotion. This personal touch forms friendships and lasting bonds.

The subject librarians attend the New Faculty Orientation prior to each fall semester and give a presentation about library services and resources. The librarians are invited to lunch, where they are able to mingle and network with their new faculty. As these working partnerships progress, subject librarians find it easier to reach out to faculty to provide instruction and create course-related material for face-to-face and online courses. Every FGCU course has an online account through Canvas, FGGU’s learning management system. General and course-specific research guides are developed and automatically embedded in each Canvas account. The faculty member has the option to turn the guide off, but this rarely happens.

The FGCU Author Series

The Reference, Research, and Instruction department originated the FGCU Author Series. Each month, a recent book authored by FGCU faculty or staff is featured with an accompanying poster on the FGCU authors' bookshelf. The author and book are also featured on the library’s website and social media accounts and honored at an annual event hosted by the library dean. In addition to the FGCU president and provost, previous award winners, fellow faculty, and library faculty and staff attend. Now in its fourth year, this event is a time to celebrate the publishing accomplishments of the FGCU faculty.

The FGCU subject librarians are not the only library staff reaching out to faculty. Through the library’s Customer Services department, faculty can use the Library Express Document Service to pick up and deliver their library books, including those in the FGCU Library’s collection and materials obtained from interlibrary loan and uBorrow. Not only has this goodwill gesture brought nothing but positive comments, it has not lost a single book.

In addition, a space called The Study @ the Library is an area for faculty and graduate students to engage in collaborative research and writing. Faculty are welcome to meet with their graduate students for group research and writing projects or advising. The space is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Conclusion

Librarian outreach to faculty is critical for raising faculty awareness and understanding of library services and collections. Whether the outreach strategy entails printed or electronic communications, face-to-face or virtual meetings, presentations or programs, successful outreach adds to the library’s “return on investment” and “value of libraries” metrics and allows the library to move beyond its physical spaces to engage with its users wherever they are.
Reimagining outreach to students: A tale of two Florida academic libraries

BARBARA G. TIERNEY, UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA LIBRARIES, AND LINDA K. COLDING, FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY | APRIL 15, 2019

This article is the second of a two-part series highlighting outreach activities at two universities: University of Central Florida, which serves 68,000 students and 1,900 faculty; and Florida Gulf Coast University, which serves 15,000 students and 526 faculty. This article focuses on student outreach efforts to promote student success. The first article in the series highlighted outreach activities to faculty.

University of Central Florida and library background

The University of Central Florida (UCF), the nation’s second largest public university, enrolls over 68,000 students and offers 92 bachelor’s degrees, 83 master’s degrees, and 31 doctoral programs. UCF Libraries supports a subject-librarian service model that offers one-stop librarians to assist graduate and undergraduate students.

Twelve subject librarians and eight campus librarians, across seven campuses, cover 65 subject areas. (In addition, six of the subject librarians also have “engagement librarian” duties discussed below). Librarians reach out to their assigned students by providing face-to-face and online library instruction classes, workshops, one-on-one consultations, research guides, customized research videos, online “service checklists” for undergraduate and graduate students, and printed informational pamphlets. Also, to further support student success, UCF’s library director allocated an initial sum of $10,000 to create a print textbook collection that targeted high enrollment rate courses (such as GEP) and courses with high student failure or dropout rates. Subject Librarians publicized this textbook collection in their e-newsletters.

This model also prioritizes the visibility and accessibility of librarians, with strategies that include short welcome videos from subject librarians, research guides that include appointment scheduling modules, and consultation request forms linked from the library website’s home page.

Engagement librarians

UCF Libraries also allocates percentages of six of the subject librarians’ annual assignments for additional “engagement assignments” with specific student populations (such as graduate students, undergraduate research and honors students, first-time college students, transfer students, online students, and global/international students). These “engagement librarians” participate in student orientations and welcome events and frequently serve as a student’s first introduction to the library. Engagement librarians often refer students to an appropriate subject librarian for in-depth research assistance.

Both engagement and subject librarians also use other types of face-to-face opportunities (visits to student clubs and student sections of professional organizations) as well as online interactions (targeted emails to members of student groups, with the student’s name in the salutation) to reach out to targeted populations.

More ➤
Co-curricular library programming

Since 2017, subject and engagement librarians have been collaborating with their assigned academic departments and faculty to sponsor many co-curricular programs (on subjects such as STEM, business, or diversity) at the library. These usually involve a combination of faculty speakers, book displays, crafts, or a film screening, and are scheduled the same week as the related campus event.

For example, the science librarian collaborated with the physics and planetary sciences faculty on a “Total Eclipse of the Sun” program (main image in this article). She also partnered with biology faculty to sponsor library programs connected to Earth Day and the Sea Turtle Walk. The business librarian collaborated with her faculty on a “Business, Coaching, and Mentoring” program that was part of a larger series called “Libraries Bridging the Gap between Innovation and Entrepreneurship.”

Earth Day Seeding Program at UCF

The graduate student engagement librarian collaborated with the College of Graduate Studies to offer graduate workshops, and the patent librarian collaborated with UCF’s Blackstone Launchpad Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership office to provide patent and trademark programs. The campus’s Diversity Week was celebrated with a series of library-centered diversity programs. In addition, a weeklong series called “Become an Information Expert” was very successful.

Motivating students to participate in library events

To ensure high attendance, the subject and engagement librarians often invite faculty to bring their entire class to these library programs. They also motivate students to participate with “LINK Loot” incentives—a fun and profitable tie-in with the libraries’ website and app (Goosechase, LINK@UCF). To receive LINK Loot, students attend programs listed on the UCF Libraries website or app and check in using the app. It’s not hard to find a LINK program because one occurs practically every day. Students can use their accrued LINK Loot at end-of-semester events. Prizes at events typically include TVs, XBOXes, movies, video games, digital cameras, theme park tickets, UCF spirit items, and more.

Florida Gulf Coast University and library background

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is a teaching university with approximately 15,000 students representing 46 states and 87 countries. FGCU offers 58 undergraduate, 26 graduate, and five doctoral programs. The library’s Reference, Research, and Instruction Department is home to seven subject librarians, a department head who also serves as a subject librarian to one program, and an instructional support specialist. The subject librarians conduct the bulk of outreach to students as well as faculty.

Textbook Affordability Project

Student success is the focus of the FGCU subject librarians, and one important initiative is the Textbook Affordability Project. The initial $40,000 budget was provided by the provost and began with a reserve collection of undergraduate textbooks that could be borrowed for two hours and used in the library. The initial collection did not include every required textbook; the priority was purchasing textbooks that cost $100 or more or were for courses with high failure and dropout rates. The library worked closely with the campus bookstore to negotiate a 25 percent discount; the rationale was that once students opened the book and realized how much they needed it, they would purchase their own copy. The library is nearing completion of this project’s second semester and is eager to analyze the results. At the end of the first semester, textbooks loans represented just over one-third of all undergraduate loans. The subject librarians made it a priority to spread the word to faculty and students, and the faculty newsletters and research guides embedded into our Learning Management System Canvas courses provided information about the project.

Library Student Ambassadors

The FGCU Library Student Ambassadors support their peers’ research and information literacy needs. Initially, the ambassadors observed and shadowed subject librarians, but as they gained skills and knowledge, they began leading programs and instruction. The ambassadors shadow reference librarians, provide research assistance and mobile librarian services, observe instruction sessions and workshops, lead or co-teach activities and workshops, and create instruction activities. The ambassadors also represent the library at Eagle View Orientations, staff tables for Week of Welcome events, provide library tours, create promotional materials, speak with students at residential assistant meetings, and create library displays.

Welcome Event

The FGCU Library’s welcome event is held annually during FGCU’s Weeks of Welcome. Each year we create a themed scavenger hunt. Past themes include Pirates, Willy Wonka, Clue (based on the board game) and Travel (based on the TV show The Amazing Race). We greet students at the main entrance and give them a guide. At each stop, they receive information and get their guide stamped. The stops include the computer lab’s help desk, the reference desk, the stacks, the circulation desk, study rooms, and the archives and special collections. When the students have all six stamps, they turn in their guide and spin the prize wheel. This fun-filled event introduces new students to the subject librarians and our many services.

More ▶
Research Day

FGCU faculty guide students in conducting research, both inside and outside the classroom, that contributes to the local community, shapes policy within Florida, sets trends on the national landscape, and begins dialogues all over the world. Subject librarians have also assisted students with their research. Sponsored by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Research Day is a yearly event where students give oral presentations and present posters about their research. This has allowed subject librarians to form relationships with students and expanded their roles, including serving as judges for these poster sessions. The awards include the Dean’s Award by college for best graduate poster and best undergraduate poster and the Distinguished University Research Awards for the best graduate poster, undergraduate poster and oral presentation.

Outreach Events

The library's student engagement committee plans student-oriented activities such as the Library Escape Room, NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) Write-In, and Blind Date with a Book. While these activities may not directly relate to student research, they do encourage students to view the library as more than a quiet place to study or find a book. In addition, the outreach committee sponsors Move-In Day. At this annual fall event, librarians and library staff help students move into the resident halls by providing directions, water and a helping hand. It always helps to have family support when encouraging students to use the library. LC
Improving information literacy with an engaging library website

JORDAN KAUFMAN AND RACHEL FLEMING-MAY, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE | FEBRUARY 15, 2019

Information literacy skills gap and how libraries fit in

At the same time that they are enrolled as students, graduate students may also take on roles important in the academic exercise, including researcher, writer or teacher—and sometimes several of these simultaneously. However, support for these responsibilities is not always provided by their departments or faculty mentors, due to assumptions of graduate students’ skill sets or lack of time to teach these skills (Covert-Vail & Collard, 2012; Rempel, 2010). Conway (2011) looked at undergraduate and graduate students’ information literacy skills and found significant gaps. For example, 59 percent of graduate students were unable to identify the best method for article searching, and overall, graduate students scored only slightly higher than undergraduate students on Conway’s information literacy skills test. Cover-Vail and Collard (2012) found that “academic institutions have unrealistically high expectations about incoming students’ research and technology-related skill levels” (pg. 8) and instruction skills; graduate students’ lack of formal training in these areas can lead them to suffer anxiety (Pelton, 2013). By understanding that these knowledge gaps exist, libraries can become partners in graduate student success by providing services that address these needs. How often, though, are academic libraries reaching out to their graduate students to offer and inform them about services?

What we did

The purpose of our study was to explore Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members' offerings for graduate students. To do this, we randomly selected 25 ARL libraries and reviewed their websites for several elements of specific interest to graduate students. We chose to review libraries because many users consider them to be a “virtual branch” of the library, and they are often the first place students look for information and services. Choosing websites also gave us the opportunity to evaluate the information and services through the eyes of a student.
Website rubric

We created a website rubric based on our own prior research as well as literature related to graduate students’ needs and library use. We used the rubric to review the libraries’ websites for these nine components:

1. The presence of a graduate student library guide
2. Notice of physical space in the library specifically for graduate students
3. A librarian contact to provide services for graduate students
4. Support for graduate students’ publishing
5. Support for graduate students’ writing (general)
6. Support for thesis and dissertation writing
7. Support for graduate students’ teaching
8. Support for graduate students’ research
9. Other (e.g., workshops)

Heuristics evaluation

We also conducted a heuristics (guidelines-based) evaluation of each library website. Usability expert Jakob Nielsen (1995) has identified 10 general principles for interaction design (heuristics), but for the purposes of our study, we focused on five principles:

1. Match between system and the real world, or how well the language and navigation reflect what users might do or need “offline”
2. User control and freedom, or the adaptability and customizability of the site to users’ individual needs
3. Consistency and standards, or the extent to which elements and themes are presented consistently throughout the site
4. Recognition rather than recall, or the visual cues provided to guide users through the site rather than requiring them to rely on memory
5. Aesthetic and minimalist design, or the absence of busyness and unnecessary visual elements

What we found

Website rubric

The findings revealed that libraries are excelling in certain areas, including:

• Providing designated spaces for graduate students (e.g., research commons, carrels, or lockers)
• Supporting theses/dissertations needs (e.g., how to upload and format)
• Offering specific graduate student workshops (e.g., citation management)

There are also areas where libraries can improve. Only six websites provided a link to the graduate student library guide from the home page, and only six offered writing workshops or support specifically for graduate students. Several sites linked to the university writing center; however, the writing center only targeted undergraduate student needs.

Heuristics Evaluation

Of the 25 library websites, nine met all five heuristics. The biggest discrepancy was in the first heuristic, “Match Between System and the Real World,” meaning that the system should speak the users’ language and be free of jargon.

What did we conclude?

It is clear that academic libraries are making an effort to reach their graduate student population. Only three of the 25 ARL libraries we reviewed did not have a graduate student library guide, and almost all of the websites offered specific research, teaching, and/or thesis and dissertation preparation help for graduate students. However, there was little evidence that libraries are offering or connecting graduate students with support for their writing needs. A 2010 study conducted by Rempel found graduate students had difficulties with literature reviews due to lack of instruction. This is a perfect example of how libraries could address a knowledge gap and contribute to graduate student success.
As more libraries focus on the usability of their websites, we felt a heuristics evaluation was a necessary component of our study. Even though only nine websites passed all five usability heuristics, more than half met four out of the five. However, there is room for improvement in regard to the first heuristic, “Match Between System and the Real World.” Thirteen of the 25 libraries did not meet this heuristic, primarily because they used system-oriented terms or jargon. When describing the benefits of using plain language, Hoa Loranger said, “Not only is complex language hard to understand, but it also lends the copy a pretentious, cringeworthy tone of voice, that can sound patronizing and can alienate your audience” (paragraph 17). When users encounter jargon, they can feel unsure and excluded, and this drives them to other, more accessible sources. For this reason, it is imperative that information professionals evaluate the services we provide to ensure they are accessible to our users. Unless we do this, we will not know what our users truly need.

**What we recommend**

So, what is a fast, efficient way to get feedback and enable you to make a difference for your university’s users? First, we recommend conducting a website usability study. In addition to generating valuable feedback about user needs and behaviors, a usability study demonstrates to users that we care about helping them use the library’s valuable resources. It is also less resource-intensive than many assume! A usability study does not require fancy equipment, and according to usability guru Jakob Nielsen, you need only three participants to generate findings you can use to make improvements. The goal of a usability study is to make improvements, not just document the issues. Five participants will be able to find 90 percent of the usability problems (2000). Second, consider doing other types of studies, such as a space assessment. Assessment allows libraries to gather evidence they can use to more directly meet users’ needs and demonstrate the library’s value to the university and community. Libraries are in the people business, and we can use assessment to improve the user experience.

**References**


Building good relationships: Exploring the “hangout factor” in liaison work

ELLEN HAMPTON FILGO AND SHA TOWERS, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES | MAY 14, 2019

For the last few years, we have been exploring an aspect of liaison work that we call the “hangout factor.” Fittingly, this exploration began while we were hanging out in each other’s office doorways and recounting success stories in our work with our liaison departments. These successes included semester-long experiments in embedding into a class, faculty who sought out our assistance with literature reviews for new research projects, and events that were crowded with faculty and students exploring special collections materials.

As we discussed why these activities were successful, we began to see that many had their beginnings in simple social and informal situations, whether they were random and serendipitous (like running into faculty at the library coffee shop) or deliberate (like stopping by a faculty member’s office for a chat). These types of interactions seemed to lay the groundwork for the good relationships that led to our successes.

We quickly came to call these interactions “hangout” activities, because it seemed like all we were doing was just hanging out with these faculty members. However, because they involved our liaison departments, they were still relevant to our work. As we began to examine the activities more closely, we noticed several things:

• They were often unplanned
• They were often informal
• They often happened in social situations
• They could take place anywhere, but usually happened outside the library

To better understand these hangout activities and evaluate their value, we classified and then visualized liaison interactions into a matrix of formality and location. The horizontal axis plots activities by type on a scale from planned to unplanned. The planned activities are more formal and structured, possibly even agenda-driven. Unplanned activities are informal and unstructured, perhaps serendipitous. The vertical axis indicates where the activity takes place: either on the librarian’s turf or venturing across campus to the faculty’s turf.

The types of activities that we describe as “hangout” occur most frequently in the upper right quadrant, high on the vertical axis (toward faculty turf) and to the right on the horizontal axis (toward more informal and unplanned interactions). Many of these were chance encounters that occurred outside the librarian’s usual domain, but often beyond the faculty member’s as well. These might include casual interactions at the grocery store or book shop, for example. Often the librarian’s attendance at such things as departmental events results in enthusiastic and appreciative responses linking this type of participation with significant support of the department, the individual faculty member, and students in ways that go beyond the traditional expectations of the librarian’s role. This response may be the result of moving beyond the traditional and narrow perception of the relationship with librarian as transactional, in which the librarian might only interact with the faculty member to meet a particular need expressed by the faculty, such as teaching students about library resources and services or ordering library materials to support teaching and research.

A Baylor librarian “hanging out” with a faculty member
As we continued analyzing the results of these activities, we noted that many activities in the upper right quadrant had direct connections to liaison activity in other quadrants as well — in other words, hangout activities often resulted in increased activity of other types. In these informal interactions, faculty members would say things like “I’m so glad I ran into you. I’ve been meaning to contact you about [insert traditional liaison activity roles here].” Hangout moments also led to casual relational conversations: “Great to see you, what’s going on in your world?” “How are your classes going?” “How is your research project going?” It’s no wonder that these kinds of questions elicit good conversation and insights. People like to feel that others are interested in them and what they’re doing. It’s not that we ask those questions merely as an inroad to more liaison activity, but because we genuinely care about others. We demonstrate that through conversation, creating a safe and welcoming space that is fertile ground for more conversation and more collaboration. Even if the conversation doesn’t immediately lead to an invitation to teach a class or collaborate on a research project, the conversation may be preparing the soil and planting seeds for the future. A brief word of greeting, a small conversation, or a gift of a cup of coffee acknowledges the presence or value of another person, and even if nothing more comes of the encounter, building good relationships is good in itself.

### Best Practices

As we have explored what these hangout activities mean to our liaison work, we have arrived at a few best practices:

- Keep your eyes open to recognize hangout opportunities as they arise – perhaps you haven’t even noticed them in the past!
- Stretch outside your comfort zone and experiment with different kinds of hangout activities. We don’t advocate for every liaison doing the exact same things; however, being aware of where your comfort zone is and where you may need to take risks is critical.
- View hangout activities with a long lens to see the cumulative effect. One cup of coffee today may not mean a successful collaboration tomorrow.
- Record and assess the hangout activities as you would other more traditional liaison activities. If you record them, you are more likely to notice any long-term results.
- Accept hangout activities in and of themselves; embrace them as “real library work.”

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Gettysburg College is a four-year, residential liberal arts college located in Gettysburg, PA. The institution serves 2,600 undergraduates and welcomes a cohort of around 700 first-year students each fall. During the first week of classes, new students participate in an extended, campus-wide orientation called “Charting Your Course” (CYC), which includes both required and optional activities.

Because the library’s CYC activity is required for students, it represents our largest first-year outreach connection. Musselman Library’s Research & Instruction Department traditionally planned and organized a scavenger hunt-style activity before recruiting library staff from other departments to help with staffing for the event. In the summer of 2018, two librarians (the authors) were tasked to reevaluate the CYC activity for the upcoming fall semester.

Orientation activity changes and library buy-in

In our initial planning, we consulted the literature to learn how other colleges and universities had structured their first-year student orientations. Among our findings were two recurring, major sources of students’ library anxiety: confusion about the location of library service points and uncertainty about who to approach with specific questions (Vrbancic & Byerley, 2018; Collins & Dodsworth, 2011). The findings caused us to question whether Gettysburg College students would benefit more from an orientation that emphasized library departments’ different roles instead of treating the library as a monolithic space. To attempt this, we decided to decentralize our orientation activity’s planning process.

Collaborative orientation planning

After meeting with library departments to discuss past orientations, we asked for one or two members of each department to serve on an orientation activity planning group, which met monthly over the summer. This planning group refined the library activity’s learning outcomes and pitched a cohesive vision for the activity’s overarching structure while leaving the details of each department’s involvement to the individual departments. In the interim, we coordinated with campus partners in College Life and handled other orientation-wide logistics.

Orientation passport activity

For the revised orientation, students could visit the library at any point between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday of the first week of classes. After entering the building, they received a blank passport document from the check-in desk and were required to visit the following five stations throughout the library, where they would receive a passport stamp after completing a short activity:

- **Scholarly Communications**: Watch a short narrated video about how The Cupola, Gettysburg College’s institutional repository, improves the visibility of student scholarship and speak with Scholarly Communications staff about affordable textbook initiatives
- **User Services**: Play a brief memory-style matching game designed to advertise various items available for loan at the Check Out Desk (e.g., chargers, course reserves, and umbrellas)

First-year students explore an exhibit in Special Collections and College Archives


MALLORY JALLAS AND KEVIN MOORE, GETTYSBURG COLLEGE | JUNE 12, 2019
• **Research & Instruction:** Spin a wheel at the Research Help Desk and learn about the sort of assistance librarians can provide or the various ways of contacting the Research Help Desk.

• **Technical Services:** Visit the Technical Services offices and learn about the breadth of the library’s print and digital collections, including streaming film and music, while having an opportunity to activate their New York Times pass.

• **Special Collections & College Archives:** Students were asked a question (Why wasn’t a college yearbook printed in 1919?) that could be answered by consulting the College History collection or by browsing the featured exhibit on World War I.

Once students got all five stamps, they could return to the check-in desk, have their ID card scanned, and receive their choice of library swag items. Similar to previous years, the activity could be completed individually or as part of a small group.

**Feedback, changes for next time, and key takeaways**

During the three afternoons, 643 first-year students participated, which represented 85 percent of the first-year class. The library gathered student feedback by reusing the same follow-up survey questions used to assess previous years’ CYC activities. The online survey was administered two weeks after the event and had a 15 percent response rate. While the responses were collected solely for internal use, we were pleased with the results.

Library staff members were enthusiastic about the revised format, especially in departments that had been underrepresented in previous orientation activities (i.e., Scholarly Communications and Technical Services) and now had a more equitable platform. Every member of the library’s CYC planning group expressed interest in retaining this format for future orientation activities.

In the next iteration, the planning committee will address bottlenecking issues by designing activities that better accommodate small groups or by adjusting the activities to allow students to join midway.

The experience of redesigning the library orientation activity with all departments provided us with more in-depth insight into our colleagues’ perspectives on students’ information needs. Overall, this experience enhanced the interaction of library staff with first-year students during their orientation.

**Citations and Further Readings:**


A deadly disease once considered eradicated in the U.S. has reemerged. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 1,123 cases of the measles in 28 states between January 1 and July 11, 2019—the highest number recorded since 1992 (CDC, 2019). In June, while fans excitedly watched premier athletes compete in the FIFA Women’s World Cup, France reached its all-time highest temperature, 45.9°C (Henley, Chrisafis, & Jones, 2019). At the same time, in the US many remained anxious as the hurricane and wildfire seasons loomed, fearing more deadly natural disasters after formidable 2018 seasons. The United Nations recently released a report stating that 1 million species worldwide (about one in four plants or animals) face extinction over the next few decades unless immediate action is taken to reverse this trend (United Nations, 2019). Almost daily reports emerge about another data breach, demonstrating the fragility of the technology upon which we all rely.

As these snippets demonstrate, science and technology pervade our lives. Even those who claim no interest in it cannot deny that at least a minimum level of science and digital literacy is necessary to navigate today’s world. While a recent survey on science facts showed that American adults answered more questions correctly than incorrectly, only 39 percent had “high science knowledge” and only 32 percent had “medium science knowledge” (Kennedy & Heffron, 2019). The same survey showed discrepancies based on gender and race, with men scoring higher than women, and whites scoring hiring than African Americans and Hispanics. Other studies on science literacy have found similar results (Funk & Goo, 2015; National Science Board, 2016).

Knowledge of basic scientific facts, however, does not represent the whole story. Politics, religion, emotions and levels of trust often come into play when people make decisions related to environmental issues or health concerns, as shown in the current outbreak of measles cases (Hamblin, 2019; Nisbet & Markowitz, 2016). Also, in a 2016 survey, 93 percent of Democrats with a high level of science knowledge correlated climate change mostly with human activity, while only 49 percent of Democrats with low science knowledge did. Among Republicans, however, those with a high level of science literacy were not more likely than those with a low level to say that climate change is mostly due to human activity (Funk & Kennedy, 2016).

In addition to scientifically literate citizens, however, the US also needs a more diverse and larger STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) workforce to meet the various environmental, health-related and technological challenges we face. Many young people, however, are not pursuing STEM degrees. Also, of those who start out in STEM majors, many, particularly women and minorities, switch to other fields, often due to social and institutional barriers. In the 2015-16 academic year, of all STEM bachelor’s degrees awarded at postsecondary institutions in the US, 64 percent went to males and 36 percent went to females, even as females earned more bachelor’s degrees overall (58 percent vs. 42 percent). In this same year, African Americans earned 12 percent of all STEM bachelor’s degrees, Hispanics earned 15 percent, and whites earned 18 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).
Many financial and human resources have been put into educational programs and science communication initiatives to help foster science literacy and increase interest in STEM fields, particularly among underrepresented groups. Organizations like the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology and the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science strive to translate science research for a general audience. Since throughout their lives, people spend more time outside of school than in it, informal educational arenas, such as museums, zoos and national parks have become important sources for science learning. Libraries can also fall into this category.

People often refer to academic libraries as the “heart of the campus.” They bring people from all disciplines together to access, share and create knowledge. Many US academic libraries also exist within land-grant institutions, which have missions to give back to the citizens of the state through their research and workforce development initiatives. For universities and colleges that are not part of the land-grant system, many still include community engagement as part of their missions and strategic goals. Researchers on all campuses often have requirements as part of the grants they receive to demonstrate the broader impacts of their research. This can entail engaging with the public, something that scientists might be reluctant to do because of time constraints or lack of confidence around effectively communicating about their science to a lay audience.

My recent book, Academic Libraries and Public Engagement With Science and Technology (2019) from the Chandos Information Professional Series, highlights ways that academic libraries can get both on-campus and off-campus populations excited about STEM, provide a forum for researchers to share their science, and support retention in STEM majors. After an introduction to the status of science literacy and STEM education in the US and an overview of science communication theories, the book contains chapters on different ways libraries can connect people to STEM, including through makerspaces, workshops, classes, science-related events, citizen science, data services, and the open science movement. Each chapter includes background information and case studies of initiatives at various institutions. Libraries might not immediately come to mind as a place for public engagement with science and technology, but hopefully this will change as more and more people realize the potential of libraries and librarians to play a pivotal role in this arena.

Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at the author’s book by providing a PDF of Chapter 1 – Introduction that gives a more in-depth overview of science literacy in the US, issues around retention in STEM fields, public engagement with science research, and the roles that academic libraries can play in this arena. LC

Download the chapter

References


Producing digital tutorials on a shoestring budget

BY DANIEL FITZROY AND ULA LECHTENBERG, SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY | OCT 16, 2019

At Sacred Heart University (SHU) we have a small library staff serving a rapidly growing institution with a growing number of online programs, so we needed to move beyond face-to-face interactions as our only form of instruction. We decided to focus on creating digital learning objects (DLOs), particularly videos and tutorials, to meet the needs of our key users, including distance and self-directed learners, faculty, and library staff. In May 2017 we initiated a project to create and deliver nearly 40 DLOs.

Creating DLOs

In order to complete such a large project, the library staff needed to collaborate. This ultimately strengthened our project, because we incorporated multiple viewpoints and harnessed the various strengths of team members.

Together, we brainstormed and selected ideas for videos and tutorials, and each team member wrote at least one script. Using Google Drive at first and then Office365 to facilitate content sharing, everyone on the team helped edit the drafts of the scripts. After volunteers provided their voice talent to the videos, two team members were responsible for “screencasting” (recording the action taking place on a computer screen) and editing the videos. Team members then reviewed the videos and put them online.

Having a limited budget forced us to be creative and carefully consider the tools we used, including technology that was already available to us. The SHU library subscribes to Springshare’s LibApps suite of products, including the LibGuides content management system (CMS) and LibWizard, a tool for creating surveys, forms, quizzes, and stand-alone and embedded tutorials. We did not create video content for database instruction, since that is often available from database vendors. Instead, we used LibWizard to create stand-alone tutorials, which seemed to be the perfect medium for database-specific instruction.

To develop the videos, we had to find free or low-cost editing software that allowed us to edit and export videos to the necessary platforms. The library decided on Active Presenter, which is a free tool with a paid upgrade option.

With multimedia content, accessibility should be considered from the start. When designing video content, our best practices for accessibility include:

- Create short videos. Videos for students should be one to two minutes. Videos for faculty can be slightly longer.
- All videos use screencasting with high-quality voiceover. We used a recording studio on campus, but soundproofing a small area and using a pop filter would also work well.
- Include subtitles on all videos. Active Presenter creates a separate file for subtitles that can be uploaded to YouTube, so you don’t need to rely on YouTube’s captioning.
- Transcripts with screenshots are immediately available to those who need and/or prefer them. Transcripts are included in an HTML “accordion” link below the video or with a link to a PDF file.

More ➤
By the end of summer 2017, we had a sizable collection of DLOs. However, because the tutorials were available in different formats and across a variety of platforms, librarians could not point students and faculty to one place to find all of them.

Creating a tutorials portal

We quickly realized that we had a discoverability and access problem, so we decided that we needed to bring all the DLOs into one browsable location—a tutorial portal built with our users in mind.

Building off our recent experience of designing the DLOs, we developed a process that loosely resembled a user-centered design model. Before we built our tutorial portal, we spent a considerable amount of time analyzing the needs of our users. We focused on three questions:

- Who are the potential users?
- What are the potential use cases?
- Are there ways that the design can facilitate use?

By allowing the answers to these questions to guide the design of our tutorial portal, we decided on a few key design elements:

The portal should be built to allow for different learning preferences. We wanted to make sure we used a mix of textual and visual elements.

- The portal should be browsable. Our tutorials covered many learning needs, so we wanted to quickly lead users to the information they needed.
- The design and look of the portal should be simple, clean and easy to use.
- Each tutorial needed its own page.

Throughout the design process, we constantly thought of our users. If we identified a problem, we immediately began redesigning the element to improve the user experience.

Before we wrapped up the design process, we began to consider what technology we would use to build the portal. While keeping the users in mind, we evaluated tools in three areas: availability and cost, added value, and customization.

While Springshare’s LibGuides CMS was the immediate favorite, we fully evaluated the product to ensure it was the right choice. This allowed us to discover aspects of the technology that helped finalize the design. For instance, the LibGuides CMS has an API that can embed LibGuide pages directly into learning management system (LMS) course shells, which provided more evidence for the need to house each tutorial on its own page.

After we had identified the key design elements and selected the technology, it was time to build the portal. We were successful in this complicated project because we followed three strategies: leverage the capabilities of existing technologies; learn and use simple CSS tricks; and be flexible enough to incorporate ongoing learning into the design.

To help manage this large project, we also used a few free online tools, including Slack for team communication and a shared Google Sheets checklist as a project status dashboard.

By the end of 2018 we had a live portal showcasing the DLOs we had created for our patrons. Our Sacred Heart University Library Tutorials portal provides enhanced access to our DLOs with a few special design features:

- Browsable landing page that allows patrons to quickly navigate to the tutorial that they need out of the nearly 40 options
- Easy-to-follow instructions on single-tutorial pages that we can direct patrons to or push into their LMS course shells
- Transcripts provided in an HTML “accordion” (when users click the button, the transcript is shown, but otherwise the transcript does not clutter the page)

As we continue to market this new service, we are seeing modest increases in usage. We learned a lot as we built the tutorials and created the portal, and we are happy to see that work paying off. In the future, we plan to enhance our content and the portal by carefully selecting the content we create, continuing to improve search engine optimization, and performing usability testing. LC
Using social networks for personal branding

DANIELLA SMITH, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS | MAR 21, 2019

Defining Your Personal Brand

Each year, hundreds of new library professionals enter the job market, while seasoned library professionals look for opportunities to upgrade their careers. All of them have something in common: Their ability to stand out from the competition relies on how they showcase their talents.

Today, showcasing your talents goes beyond providing a simple paper resume and hoping that the layout and the content will convey your abilities. Today’s technology means seeking a position or marketing your services is much more dependent on establishing a public profile. Hiring managers are likely to search for potential job candidates, collaborators, and stakeholders. Social media also offers an effective way to network 24 hours a day without paying for conferences. Each social network has unique qualities that professionals can explore to promote their careers. Here are a few ways that social networks can be used for personal branding.

Developing a personal brand is the process of marketing and defining unique skills. Every library professional should have a career plan and a personal brand strategy. This personal brand is essential when competing for a promotion or a new job, or even when redefining perceptions of your skills and establishing professional credentials, because it enables you to influence how your work is viewed. In addition, a personal brand is an excellent way to set an example for employees that you supervise. And if self-improvement is a priority, personal branding can enhance how people assess your professional status and help influence how you are viewed.

The Benefits of Social Networks

Creating profiles on social networks can open up a stream of communication with potential employers, collaborators, and stakeholders. Social media also offers an effective way to network 24 hours a day without paying for conferences. Each social network has unique qualities that professionals can explore to promote their careers. Here are a few ways that social networks can be used for personal branding.

LinkedIn is particularly good for making connections with others with similar professional skills. If you identify someone that you admire professionally, you can find them on LinkedIn and request to connect with them. LinkedIn is also useful for exploring profiles of the individuals that are associated with others. This can help you examine career paths and find inspiration for changing your own. In addition, LinkedIn allows you to:

• Review job postings at organizations you’re interested in
• Examine the skills of people whom you would like to emulate
• Read articles written by other professionals
• Build a personal learning network by creating and joining LinkedIn groups
Although Facebook started as a social platform for college students, it has evolved into something other than an outlet to explore hobbies or to connect with family and friends. Many professional organizations and thought leaders have Facebook pages or groups that you can join so don’t miss one of their posts. You can also promote your personal brand by:

- Sharing live video
- Completing a profile or “About” page to share your skills
- Linking your profile to related pages or other social media sites
- Deciding who to share content with
- Creating a public or private group to discuss topics
- Commenting on other users’ posts

Twitter is a microblogging platform that limits users to posts of 280 or fewer characters. However, you can also link to additional content to extend posts. The impact of Twitter can be monumental, even if the posts are only a few words. Millions of Twitter users have become influential by sharing, re-tweeting and commenting on posts. Twitter allows users to:

- Participate in chats about topics of interest
- Identify trending topics
- Interact with individuals that you normally would not be able to
- Organize chats about topics to seek assistance
- Interact in an environment that embraces novices and experts
- Find news shared by organizations and individuals
- Gather tweets for research

Considerations for Using Social Networks

Some caution is required before using social media for personal branding. First, there are many social media sites beyond Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Consider each social media network and the types of groups that it caters to. The networks mentioned here represent a variety of viewpoints, and you can be selective about how you engage. However, some social media networks only support select viewpoints. Be mindful of the mission of the social media network before joining. Monitor the people and organizations that you follow on social networks to ensure that you agree with the posts that they are making.

In addition, it is essential to use a recognizable, appropriate profile on social media. Some people decide to separate their personal and professional content; others feel that their personal content can integrate well with their work profiles. If you are going to mix profiles, be mindful not to post something inappropriate for your personal or professional followers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, personal branding is an important part of enhancing a career. One way to get started with personal branding is to use social media networks. Social media is often free and offers a way to connect with like-minded professionals and to explore trends. Three of the most popular social media networks for personal branding are Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Each social network has its own unique characteristics that appeal to different people. If a professional decides to use these social networks, links to other websites and social network pages can be shared in the profile pages to enhance visibility.

Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at the author’s book, Growing your Library Career with Social Media, book by providing a PDF of Chapter 3, “Using social networks for personal branding.” This chapter give a more in-depth look at how social media can be used for personal branding and includes tips for developing your personal branding plan and expert options on the value of social media and personal branding. LC

Download Chapter
Creating social media committees to increase your library’s social presence

NINA VERISHAGEN, SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY | JUNE 12, 2019

It’s summer, a time of year for academic librarians to reflect, assess and revamp. For me, it’s a time to reflect on social media, which has become an essential way that our academic library connects with students. In the past couple of years, I have experienced both successes and failures managing our social media channels. But the secret to our successes, big and small, has been our social media committee (SMC).

At our institution—a technical college serving 27,897 students across five distinct geographic locations—our social media strength is entirely driven by the SMC. It has taken several years to conceptualize and create efficient administration for this group, but the reasons for its existence have always been clear. The library’s social media voice is that of its staff. It must represent employees at various levels and from different locations. Communication with patrons should encompass a sense of camaraderie, individuality and creativity.

This team’s work allowed us to run a successful “gain likes” contest on Facebook that resulted in more than 800 student likes over five months. Over time, the longstanding members of the team have developed essential skills in programs like the graphic design tool Canva and an understanding of how to promote the library’s voice and brand. Members often contribute to creative efforts outside of social media, such as email promotions and internal newsletters.

Here are some tips for creating an effective SMC. They can be applied to many types of organizations that are looking to up their social media game.

1. Harness and share your library’s voice

Although all SMCs will have technical functions, their main focus is developing and sharing an organization’s voice. Ensure membership represents your library’s workforce. Our committee consists of six members, including four from technical service departments (reference, interlibrary loans, marketing and branch management) and the marketing and user experience librarians. There is at least one member from each campus library location. The library’s voice is defined in our social media guidelines:

Most team members joined voluntarily. That said, throughout the lifetime of the SMC, some members have been “volun-told” to join in an effort to fill locational gaps. If you need to recruit employees into membership, try to give them less intimidating roles that don’t include administrative duties. Include them in conversations and use their ideas. Over time they may want to start creating content and administering platforms, but don’t force it.
2. The user or target audience informs all things

Not all platforms are worth your time. Don’t try to be all things to all people or to have a presence on every social media platform. Assess your audience, in formal or informal ways, and choose your platforms accordingly.

I often use an informal assessment strategy. When I have face-to-face interaction with students, I simply ask them what platforms they prefer. This usually occurs when I am facilitating library orientations at the beginning of fall and winter terms. My method is simple: I ask them, “By show of hands, who uses Facebook? Instagram?” Over time I’ve seen fewer hands for the former and more for the latter, and lately I’ve received many an odd glance that I would even suggest a student does not use Instagram daily.

The SMC also takes advantage of more formal feedback channels, by submitting questions to our Library Advisory Council and to the library’s biannual institutional survey.

What have we learned? Since 2013, when we started collecting feedback, our students have been and remain heavy Facebook users, and Instagram is edging in swiftly. Therefore, these are our platforms of focus for reaching out to students.

3. Meet regularly

This is essential. Regular meetings ensure a forum for discussion, brainstorming and (oftentimes) grievances. We meet monthly via videoconference to prepare for the following month. When we meet in January, posts for that month have already been planned and scheduled, so we are discussing February’s content and post assignments. Here is our standing agenda:

- Successes and loose ends from the previous month
- Post ideas for the following month
- Post assignments
- Additional miscellaneous items

We also meet once each spring to discuss successes and failures from the past year and our plans for moving forward.

4. Be flexible

Have conversations and listen to your members. Allow them to try new things. The key strength of the committee is that it harnesses the creativity of each member, so if a team member has an idea for a new post, let them try it, as long it doesn’t contradict your library’s mission. Don’t micromanage. Nothing kills creativity like rigidity.

5. Use analytics

We use Hootsuite to pre-schedule posts, work collaboratively and pull analytics reports.

It’s crucial to pull analytics from all platforms to assess the previous year’s performance. Discuss what worked and what didn’t. Make sure the team is included in decisions.

Final thoughts

Social media is not a one-person job. There was a time when I attempted to run our library’s social media alone. I found it stressful and couldn’t make an impact. The reason we have experienced our various successes (for instance, a gain of more than 1,000 student likes on Facebook since 2016) is largely because of this team.

Additional Information:

Social Media Committees

- Verishagen & Nann: Social Media Committees: Sharing Your Library’s Voice

Assessing your patrons

- Sich & Polger, 2019, How to Assess Student Social Media Preferences: A Comparison at Two Academic Institutions.

Social Scheduling Software

- Paul & Holt – Using Scheduling Apps to Streamline a Social Media Workflow.

Platform selection

- Swan - The Right Social Media Platform for Your Library).

Facebook Gain Likes Contest

- Verishagen & Liang: Buying Likes: How Our Library Jumped from 200 to 1000 (student) Likes in 8 Months

Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at one of the chapters from the author’s edited book, Social Media: The Academic Library Perspective. Use the link below to download a complimentary PDF of Chapter 2, Social Media Committees: Sharing the Library’s Voice. This chapter gives a more in-depth look at social media committees and provides examples from two universities on what it took to develop, operate, and sustain these committees.

Download the chapter from the book
Instagram: the new way to connect with students
NINA VERISHAGEN AND HANNAH ELLIOTT, SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY | JULY 16, 2019

This is the second of a three-part series on social media activities for academic libraries. The other articles are “Creating social media committees to increase your library’s social media presence” and “Using Twitter to connect with faculty.”

At our institution, a technical college in Canada, Facebook has always been the frontrunner for making social media connections with students. However, it’s become quite clear in the past year that Instagram (IG) is quickly making gains among younger students, including Millennials (25- to 34-year-olds) and post-Millennials (18- to 24-year-olds). A 2017 Ryerson University study found that among these already-heavy social media users, 67 percent and 62 percent, respectively, have recently adopted IG (Grudz, Jacobson, Mai & Dubois, 2018). Case studies out of U.S. academic libraries also reflect this trend.

Accordingly, in the spring of 2018, our social media committee (SMC) began efforts to reinvigorate our dwindling IG presence. We defined our purpose, refined our IG personality, and made purposeful steps towards engagement.

Reinvigorating the feed
A focus on the personality and look of the feed, as well as a concentrated effort to create meaningful posts has increased engagement and resulted in a number of organic follows.

The personality
Our IG feed is targeted directly at students. The focus is on organic content, incorporating fun elements alongside academic ones. We’ve adopted a casual voice and have attempted to showcase the library’s collective personality. One way we do this is by featuring photos of staff. This helps students make a positive association with the library and reassures them that they will be greeted by a friendly face when they visit us. These posts are among our most popular.

The look
To make the feed cohesive, colorful and attractive to our user demographic, we harness the power of two online tools: Canva and Unsplash.

Canva is a free drag-and-drop graphic design program. Its pre-designed image layouts for Instagram mean that in most cases, we only have to edit the text on the images. We can also manipulate the hex codes of the templates to match our institutional color scheme. Unsplash is a free database of high-quality, curated images generously donated by professional photographers—which means no more fumbling with Google’s image search. Combining both of these tools helps us create an attractive feed.

Our posts
We post a wide variety of content, including but not limited to book displays, library and campus events, holiday closures and hour changes, informational posts, and promotional posts for online resources.

Here are some examples of content you’ll find on the @saskpolytechlibrary feed:

- Informational post advertising free software for students
- Post notifying followers of annual summer hour changes
- Demonstration of Makerspace equipment during Science Literacy Week

Methods of engagement

Contests: Gaining followers

This work would be for nothing if we didn’t increase our engagement. Therefore, we had to think strategically about gaining followers. In 2016, our Facebook page had been successful with a student “gain likes” contest. We decided to replicate it in 2018 and include IG. By utilizing our in-person promotional capabilities (library orientations, welcome day events and word-of-mouth marketing via front desk staff) we were able to gain 336 IG (student) followers in one month. The contest was inexpensive, simple and required minimal effort.

Contests: Keep the followers engaged

You win some, you lose some: This phrase applies not only to the patrons who enter the contests, but also to our success in hosting them. In January 2019, a contest proved to be a valuable learning experience for our SMC.

On January 3 we held two contests simultaneously on Instagram and Facebook (see images below). The graphics for each contest were identical except for the instructions.

The outcome? The Facebook contest was a huge success, with nearly 130 GIF replies. In contrast, the Instagram contest was a flop, with only 13 comments.

Why? Our team thought of several possible explanations.

Historically, with social media contests, we have found that the less effort required from our followers to win, the more entries we receive—particularly if a larger prize is at stake. GIFs are easy to post, humorous, and build a positive momentum that results in more people wanting to engage and participate. We guessed that our IG followers just didn’t want to type out full sentences for a $5 prize. We also speculated that many people may feel that New Year’s resolutions are an outdated concept, or that the question was too personal.

Types of contests that work on Instagram

Low-effort entry requirements are a must. We’ve also found that students enjoy tagging their friends. Below is an example of an October 2018 contest that did surprisingly well, particularly considering the prize was only a $5 coffee gift card.

Instagram stories

Pulling direct informal feedback: Priceless

In August 2016, Instagram introduced Stories, a feature that allows users to upload photos and video to a temporary slideshow (it disappears after 24 hours) on their profile. Instagram Stories are extremely useful for on-the-fly content; for example, we use this feature to promote events taking place in the library or elsewhere on campus (e.g., visits from therapy dogs). In the past two years, Instagram has rolled out additional Poll and Questions features for users to incorporate in their stories. We have taken advantage of these new features to boost engagement and assist us with making decisions—e.g., posting a poll to see if followers would be willing to bring reusable mugs to coffee events. (Spoiler alert: They’re happy to!)

Metrics: Our greatest difficulty

Recording IG Story metrics has proven to be difficult, and we are still struggling with it. IG doesn’t have sophisticated built-in analytics like Facebook and Twitter do. For the 2018-19 academic year, we didn’t make a formal record of our insights and later learned that Instagram Story metrics only record the previous two weeks. In the future, we hope to find a more efficient way of recording these numbers. Exporting Instagram Story analytics to a desktop format (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) is difficult, requiring the use of third-party software. Currently, we are considering the platform Later as an analytics manager, as we estimate that manually inputting this data would be a time-consuming task.

Focus on students

Instagram has been a beneficial addition to our library’s social media platforms, serving as an effective channel for promoting library resources and events and gathering direct student input. Adopting Instagram as a platform has shown us how important it is for our team to adapt to social media trends, apps, and technologies to stay on top of the game and meet students where they are.

References


Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at one of the chapters from the author’s edited book, Social Media: The Academic Library Perspective. Use the link below to download a complimentary PDF of Chapter 6, Case Study: Using Instagram to Engage Students During Library Orientation.

Download the chapter from the book

Using Twitter to connect with faculty
BY NINA VERISHAGEN, TASHA MADDISON AND ALEXANDRIA DELORME, SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC | AUG 20, 2019

This is the third of a three-part series on social media activities for academic libraries. The other articles are “Creating social media committees to increase your library’s social presence” and “Instagram: the new way to connect with students.”

Every spring, our marketing librarian and our social media committee (SMC) evaluate our social media efforts from the previous academic year. In 2018, expecting that Facebook might be losing ground to channels that are more popular with younger populations (such as Instagram and Snapchat) we decided to analyze each of our platforms. Until this point, the content created and posted on all three of our active platforms—Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—was targeted at students enrolled at the institution.

Over the years, through informal feedback channels, we had learned that our students were not connecting with us on Twitter in any substantial way. Conversations with our institution’s communications strategist revealed that this is not uncommon in our geographic location. Our institution utilizes Twitter to connect with the community, as well as to broadcast news and updates to stakeholders in local industry. Ultimately, the target audience is not students.

Because we do not actively communicate externally in the same way as our parent institution, when we began to review our Twitter analytics, we expected that we might ultimately discontinue activity on that channel completely. However, the data revealed something interesting: of our 375 followers, while only three were identifiable as students, 49 were identifiable as staff members (faculty, professional services or upper management). We decided that this 13 percent was enough to warrant moving in a new direction. We shifted gears, making faculty our new target audience on Twitter.

Tweeting has become a popular trend among post-secondary educators, who use it for research, professional development, sharing, building networks and career advancement (Atkins, Koroluk & Stranach, 2017). With this in mind, we began a targeted campaign with tweet themes, posts featuring staff content and tweet “takeovers” by faculty. Our content was directly connected to the work our faculty was engaged in, and we slowly began to see an impact. Currently we have 409 followers, and 62 of them are identifiable as staff members and 41 as faculty. Our team is analyzing data for an article highlighting these efforts. But this increase of 13 followers, with no efforts outside of a change in content, exceeded our expectations.

At times, engagement has been unexpected and, in the case of the event described below, fell outside of the scope of our study. This past March, we experienced high levels of engagement at an event hosted by our copyright librarian, which confirmed for us that faculty and educators are interested in connecting on this platform, and that we should continue with this work.

Live tweeting at an open access event
The library, in partnership with our institution’s Instructional Leadership and Development Centre (ILDC), invited a guest speaker to discuss open pedagogy. This presentation was our first major event for Open Education Resources Week.

More
Because we are situated in four campuses across a province, it was necessary to offer two back-to-back in-person sessions at one campus, accompanied by a live Zoom stream to the other locations.

To encourage dialogue between the presenter and the audience, we invited questions through the chat feature in Zoom, as well as through the Twitter handle @saskpolytechlib. We used the same handle to live tweet during the presentations and monitored notifications. Participants asked questions via chat, not through Twitter, because Zoom was the more convenient option.

Even though no one asked a question on Twitter, we were surprised to find that we gained four Twitter followers during the session; two were faculty members from the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community.

We live tweeted for two hours, authoring 24 tweets. Throughout the live tweet session, we had a total of 6,683 impressions and 24 engagements (16 likes, three user profile clicks, one URL click, two hashtag clicks, one detail expansion, one media view, and one media engagement). Our library director retweeted a post advertising the session that was then liked by our parent institution.

This was also the first time that the library experimented with a live and simultaneously streamed session. We had 49 people attend, 31 in person and 18 via streaming. In addition, to live tweeting the session, we posted content on Twitter throughout OER week. We gained two unique followers, averaged 266 impressions per post, and received 14 likes across the 24 tweets.

We think this was significant as we engaged with our target audience for a specified period about a topic that was most likely new to them. We gained a few new followers, had a retweet from our organization, and booked an in-person OER session at another campus.

**Twitter takeover by a faculty member**

Spurred on by the success of the first initiative we tried a faculty “takeover.” We invited a member of the nursing faculty to submit eight tweets about National Nursing Week to be posted on our channel. She sent them in advance, and we scheduled them and included her personal Twitter handle in each post. We averaged 432 impressions, nine engagements, 10 retweets, three replies and 16 likes.

**Little gains make a big difference**

The ease and success of these activities will dictate our Twitter direction for the 2019-2020 academic year. We hope that by connecting faculty with each other through live tweets and takeovers that we will gain more followers, initiate academic Twitter use for those not currently using the platform, and generally increase the impact of this communication channel for the library. Sometimes social media wins are huge and result in viral posts and a multitude of new followers, but in this case, the win is small yet meaningful. Connecting our academic community with concepts like open access and participating in events like National Nursing Week fall completely within our library’s strategic plan and enable us to fulfill our professional goals. We anticipate many more small wins in the coming months!

**References**


Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at one of the chapters from the author’s edited book, *Social Media: The Academic Library Perspective*. Use the link below to download a complimentary PDF of Chapter 7, Tweeting to Success: Managing an Academic Library’s Twitter Campaign to Enhance User Engagement.

**Download the chapter from the book**
Research Data Management Librarian Academy (RDMLA): A global online learning community

LIBRARY CONNECT | JUNE 12, 2019

Many librarians are active participants in their institutions’ research life cycles, yet their skills with managing research data varies. For librarians to effectively lead the application of research data management (RDM), they may require additional training and support, but practicing librarians often find it difficult to take time from their day jobs to get such training.

In 2018, a group of university research librarians partnered with Elsevier to study the need for an educational program to offer RDM training. This project team is co-led by Elaine Martin, MLS, DA, Director and Chief Administrative Officer, Countway Medical Library, Harvard Medical School; Rong Tang, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University; and Jean P. Shipman, MLS, MSLS, VP, Global Library Relations, Elsevier. The team includes librarians, library educators and an information analytics company—a unique partnership and collaboration.

The team compiled an inventory of existing courses for academic librarians, analyzed job skills requested in position descriptions, and conducted a needs assessment through interviews, surveys, and focus groups to identify both gaps in current training offerings and what librarians and researchers need to contribute to their success. The resulting reports on the inventories and needs assessments are available here.

“Many librarians are looking forward to the convenient training opportunity the RDMLA will offer.”

As a result of this exploration, the no-cost CC BY licensed online Research Data Management Librarian Academy, or RDMLA, will launch in late 2019 and be available to anyone with interest in improving their skills. It includes eight curricular units that can be taken individually or as a complete program. The RDMLA is available globally and is delivered via the Canvas Learning Management Platform. The eight units are:

- Foundations of Research Data Management (RDM)
- Navigating research data culture
- Advocating and marketing the value of RDM in libraries
- Launching data services in libraries
- Project management and assessment (as relates to RDM services)
- Overview of data analysis and visualization tools
- Overview of coding tools
- Overview of platform tools (Open Science Framework, Mendeley Data, and others)

Simmons University School of Library Science will offer continuing education credit for unit completion on a cost-recovery basis starting in 2020. “This project is a wonderful example of what a collaboration among practicing librarians, library school faculty and industry partners can achieve to advance data management education,” says Martin.

“We have a truly remarkable team of RDMLA faculty with kindred spirits and shared purposes of contributing to free and openly accessible learning content in the area of research data management,” says Tang. “We hope that through RDMLA, there will be a global community of practice where data librarians and other data professionals work together to exchange information, share experiences and expertise, help one another to grow, and strive to advance RDM practices around the world.” LC

If you would like more information or are interested in being informed when the RDMLA launches, leave your contact information here.
Does the title Data Management Librarian intrigue you? Do you want to deepen your engagement with the research lifecycle of your institution? Do you want to refresh or learn data management skills? If you answered yes to any of these questions, the Research Data Management Librarian Academy (RDMLA) is for you!

The RDMLA is a free online program created by a team of expert librarians in the Northeastern United States. It is intended primarily for librarians, but several units are also applicable for researchers. The program consists of eight units, which can be taken in total or separately. Each unit takes an average of an hour to complete and consists of videos, slides, demonstrations, reading resources and self-assessments. The information is practical and meant to be applied, with demonstrations of some of the key software and RDM platforms. The eight units include:

- Foundations of Research Data Management (RDM)
- Navigating research data culture
- Advocating and marketing the value of RDM in libraries
- Launching data services in libraries
- Project management and assessment (as relates to RDM services)
- Overview of data analysis and visualization tools
- Overview of coding tools
- Overview of platform tools (Open Science Framework, Mendeley Data, and others)

The faculty of university research librarians developing the RDMLA program is co-led by Elaine Martin, MLS, DA, Director and Chief Administrative Officer, Countway Medical Library, Harvard Medical School; Rong Tang, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University; and Jean P. Shipman, MSLS, VP, Global Library Relations, Elsevier. The team includes librarians, library educators and an information analytics company—a unique partnership and collaboration—with Elsevier financing the program.

Jean Shipman, Dr. Elaine Martin and Dr. Zhan Hu presenting their RDMLA poster at MLA 2019

The RDMLA content is based on an extensive needs assessment and inventory of existing training. It is now available to English-speaking individuals at no cost. The Simmons University School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) will start to offer continuing education credit for completing the entire program starting Spring 2020. There will be a small administrative fee charged for these credits.

“This Academy is a terrific way for individuals to acquire knowledge about data-related services librarians can offer to their researchers. Experiences of those who have implement data services are shared as well as key lessons learned. One can take the units at their own pace and earn a certificate to indicate to future employers their skill development in RDM,” Jean Shipman commented.

Don’t delay, visit the RDMLA website and take a few moments to explore what the big fuss is about!

Editor’s Note:

Are you interested in raising awareness of best practices in research data management and use of Mendeley Data within your institution? Download a librarian toolkit with flyers, infographics, posters, sample newsletter templates, customizable training event posters, social media sample messaging and more. LC
n the business world, firms sometimes change their primary product or service in response to customer needs, markets, product obsolescence, new technologies or a combination of these factors. Often companies change direction in pursuit of a higher return on investment. A few notable examples of businesses moving into a different area:

- General Motors expanded from manufacturing cars into financing them;
- Apple added media content and streaming to its hardware operations;
- 3M began with manufacturing sandpaper and later developed masking tape and Post-it® notes;
- Amazon started with online retail sales and moved into web services, logistics franchising, media production and streaming.

All of these firms changed direction in order to thrive. The many that don’t change course unfortunately face consequences, including bankruptcy. Today in the US, Toys R Us, Sears and others teeter on the verge of insolvency, due largely to an inability or unwillingness to change their products and services to meet changing needs.

Libraries have responded to their own “customers” by beginning to provide services that had previously been outside their scope. For example, some public libraries now circulate materials besides books and media, including board games, cookware, toys and tools. Other libraries, including those in the academic world, now contain non-collections areas such as makerspaces that may include 3D printers and other digital tools. These services may be in demand, but they are largely outside the traditionally defined realm of libraries as collections of print materials.

While it is often not apparent to the general public, library vendors are beginning to diversify their products and services as well. Because traditional library vendors have often collected and managed publishing data, their new services include tools to measure and evaluate citations and other research metrics, as well as other products that provide comparisons of research activity, collaborations and outputs. These products tend to be targeted to research administration, not libraries. Likewise, many commercial publishers have developed and now sell or support tools for scholars as authors rather than readers.

All of this means that librarians are increasingly encouraged to be entrepreneurial. Although many of us work in a not-for-profit setting, academic librarians are not immune to the influence of business, sales, markets and other commercial forces. The scholars who use research libraries may be insulated from these factors by their labs, courses or field work, but we librarians cannot avoid dealing with the products, vendors and discounts that ultimately affect them. Certainly, with regard to scholarly communication services and the regular journal cancellation exercises that many libraries undertake, librarians have been forced to think about the business models of publishers and vendors (and even library operations) like never before.

This movement by libraries and library vendors follows similar paths established in the business world. An example somewhat analogous to libraries might be the video rental industry. Most millennials probably don’t remember driving to a video rental store and looking through its shelves to find a movie.
you wanted to watch, paying to rent it, and then returning it on time to avoid a late fee. Netflix pushed that business model aside with DVDs by mail and, later, online streaming. Although there may have been social benefits to visiting the video store (and before that, going to the movie theater) most of us undoubtedly prefer the in-home streaming—on demand at a flat price—that has largely replaced the video store experience. In fact, our cumulative preference is demonstrated in the near-disappearance of video rental shops.

Librarians may not be immune to the same forces. While it may not be directly applicable to libraries, a 2015 report from the Brookings Institute\(^1\) that illustrates the workforce transition in the video rental business is worth pondering:

“When the video rental chain Blockbuster was at its height in 2005, it had over 80,000 employees working in 9,000 brick-and-mortar stores across the U.S. Today Netflix, with a market capitalization of over $50 billion, has only 2,189 full-time employees and rents server space for its streaming video service from Amazon.”

The same adaptation to user preferences could be happening in libraries. Their new services branch off from the traditional collection-building and reference activities that have until now defined libraries. Online access offers a convenience comparable to that of streaming movies, and as a result, users—particularly science library users—visit the physical library less often. And along with services to visitors, librarians are encouraged to explore services in publishing, data management and scholarly communication consultation, all of which may require a more entrepreneurial approach.

The push to be entrepreneurial probably comes from the perception that technology has changed the way all organizations conduct their operations. The implication is that librarians could learn some things from the business world, where the introduction of new products and services—successful or not—means that someone is planning for the future. LC

Reference


Alvin Hutchinson is the author of the book *Science Libraries in the Self-Service Age* that suggests ways in which libraries can remain relevant to their institution. Library Connect is pleased to offer their subscribers a look at the book by offering a complimentary download of the introductory chapter “Science Libraries and Service Innovation” that summarizes current trends that indicate the necessity for libraries to develop new services to remain relevant to their parent institution.

Download the chapter
Saluting our key library liaison as the outreach continues

BY LIBRARY CONNECT | SEPT 16, 2019

Jean Shipman, Elsevier’s Vice President for Global Library Relations, will retire from Elsevier as of November 30, 2019. With knowledge from a 37-year career in librarianship and a lifelong learner mindset, Jean approached her role with a keen desire to create greater alignment between Elsevier and the library community. She revitalized library relations at Elsevier and is helping to continue this important work by participating in the search for her replacement.

In her tenure with Elsevier, Jean was an important listener and voice at librarian conferences around the globe. Toward the end of November she will make a final trip to China and Japan to discuss the Research Data Management Librarian Academy (RDMLA), one of her key initiatives in partnership with several librarians and educators.

Set to launch in October, RDMLA is a free online training program that will be offered globally. The curriculum, with units such as Foundations of RDM and Launching Data Services in libraries, is designed to enhance research data management skills of librarians. Sponsored by Elsevier, the RDMLA is a partnership among several librarians in the US Northeast, led by Jean along with Dr. Elaine Martin, Countway Medical Library, Harvard Medical School; and Dr. Rong Tang, Simmons University School of Library and Information Science. Discover more about the RDMLA at https://rdmla.github.io. The RDMLA is already generating much interest across the library community and is a testament to Jean and the team’s commitment to advancing librarian education and opportunities.

Jean presenting the RDMLA at a recent MLA conference Reflecting on the joint effort with Jean and Elsevier, Jean’s RDMLA co-leaders commented: “It has been a very positive and pleasant experience working with Jean Shipman, Elsevier’s Vice President for Global Library Relations, on the RDMLA project. With a shared purpose of developing the Academy and building a global community of practice in RDM, the partnership with Elsevier has been the key to the success of RDMLA. Elsevier recognizes the importance of research data management in libraries and information services, and is willing to support and promote the advancement of such an endeavor through free and openly accessible delivery of RDMLA learning contents.”

Though she was based in the US, Jean engaged with librarians around the world and presented at events in Japan, China, South Africa, Taiwan and Europe, as well as across the United States. She served as Elsevier’s liaison to preservation organizations such as CLOCKSS and Portico, and was an active member in a spectrum of professional associations, including ALA, MLA, SLA and SSP. She also organized the Hunter Award in conjunction with the Hunter Forum at ALA Midwinter in the US. Established for a librarian or librarian team, the Hunter Award recognizes collaborations between librarians and publishers or exemplary experience with advancing information dissemination via technology.

“We have been so fortunate to have Jean as a colleague, mentor and friend,” says Ann Gabriel, Elsevier’s Senior Vice President of Global Strategic Networks. “Her invaluable experience and insights into libraries and librarianship have led to stronger partnerships with common goals and mutual understanding.”

Jean joined Elsevier after a successful career as a health sciences librarian. In her previous employment at the University of Utah, she served as Executive Director, Knowledge Management and the Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library, and Director for Information Transfer, Center for Medical Innovation. She also served as Director, MidContinental Region and National Training Office, National Network of Libraries of Medicine. She remains an adjunct faculty member with the Department of Biomedical Informatics, University of Utah. Jean is a former president of the Medical Library Association (MLA) and past member of the Board of Directors for MLA and the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP). She has served on advisory panels of the New England Journal of Medicine, The STM Association, and SPARC, and has held many other professional offices and committee appointments.

As one chapter closes, Jean is looking forward to enjoying more time with her family and friends at her new home in Virginia. Please join us in wishing Jean all the best in her next adventures and stay tuned for an announcement about her successor. We look forward to welcoming a new colleague to continue vital collaborations and lead us in novel avenues of engagement. LC
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Makerspaces: High-tech and low-tech locations to expand creativity in the academic library

BY KATY KAVANAGH WEBB, J.Y. JOYNER LIBRARY, EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY | JANUARY 02, 2019

This article is the sixth and final in a series about creative spaces in libraries. For a definition of library creative spaces, read the first article in the series.

When one hears the phrase “creative spaces in academic libraries,” a makerspace is probably what comes to mind. For the uninitiated, makerspaces are places where the focus is on building, producing or constructing something, whether that creative work takes the form of 3D printing, woodworking, circuitry, or even creative problem solving. The people who use such spaces are considered part of the so-called “maker movement.”

Makerspaces are as likely to be high tech as they are to be low tech. Low-tech makerspaces will have equipment like markers, paint, fabric, LEGO blocks, clay, power tools, and even (non-electronic) hand tools. Other makerspaces may focus on the technological side of making by purchasing virtual-reality headsets, 3D printers and scanners, Makey Makey or Arduino circuitry kits, or video game consoles. The best way to determine which kind of technology is most likely to be used is to conduct a needs analysis before moving ahead with a project. Another important step is to talk to patrons using the space and assess the offerings in the space once it opens.

In the US, makerspaces have often been found in K-12 schools and public libraries. Recently, however, academic libraries’ status as the “third place” on campus where people come to gather and share ideas has led them to start offering makerspaces for their students. In a university setting, makerspaces are usually associated with entrepreneurship and innovation efforts on campus. Unlike the other creative spaces that have been discussed in this short article series, makerspaces may charge a small cost for the use of materials. Space for events is sometimes included, and these can host outreach activities such as workshops, “maker faires,” and design competitions. A showcase space is usually available to show off projects created in the space. Some libraries are clearing out microform rooms or areas of the stacks to make way for a makerspace, while others are creating mobile spaces. At Elon University, the makerspace is a metal cart that can be rolled to dormitories and other campus locations.

Student workers, community members, and trained volunteers tend to work in makerspaces, bringing expertise in different forms and functions of making. It is not likely that one librarian can staff the makerspace and answer all patron questions. Georgetown University, the subject of one of the case studies in my book, uses a community service model in which community members volunteer to help others in the makerspace in exchange for receiving 24/7 access via a keypad.

My book, Development of Creative Spaces in Academic Libraries: A Decision Maker’s Guide (2018) from the Chandos Information Professional Series, includes case studies of a few of the many academic institutions that have decided to offer a makerspace in their library. This democratic focus on teaching people to use the space’s materials and tools is commendable and could be repeated at other institutions.

We are pleased to offer our Library Connect readers an exclusive look at the book by providing a PDF of Chapter 26, “Case Study: East Carolina University, Teaching Resources Center’s Ann Rhem Schwarzmann Production Center.” Download PDF.

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Inside East Asian librarianship: managing information and cultural collections

BY PATRICK LO, UNIVERSITY OF TSUKUBA, JAPAN | AUGUST 29, 2019

Cultural institutions, such as galleries, librarians, archives and museums (known collectively as GLAMs) began mainly as collecting organizations with a mandate to both preserve valuable primary and secondary sources and make them accessible to researchers, scholars, students and the general public.

In the past few decades, the nature of East Asian librarianship has undergone drastic change on both social and professional levels. According to Asato (2009)1, East Asian studies librarians are usually solo librarians who oversee small but expensive collections of East Asian materials in small- to medium-size academic or research institutions. In a typical East Asian studies library, the librarian or curator has a background in East Asian studies; Chinese, Japanese and Korean (CJK) languages; history; or a similar field. “Twenty years ago, East Asian Studies librarians were often sequestered in branch libraries and their methods of acquisitions, cataloguing and user services (reference and instruction) were not those of their mainstream colleagues” (Troost, 2009)2. Today, training and cooperation have become key professional elements for many East Asian librarians.

The current generation of East Asian librarians not only organize and teach highly specialized knowledge in different areas of East Asian Studies, but also see a growing emphasis on developing other knowledge and skills, including information literacy, creation of digital resources, awareness of digital humanities, new forms of document delivery and exchange services, grant writing, and fundraising. An open attitude toward international collaboration is also highly desirable.

In archives, galleries and museums, the librarians manage preservation and access of history and culture; meanwhile, the missions and goals of their cultural institutions continue to converge. In the past decades, museums and art galleries have seized the opportunity to take on new roles and responsibilities, including stimulating a new knowledge- and cultural-based economy, raising civic pride, and positioning cities as tourist destinations. This has created new challenges for communities to engage in cross-cultural and cross-issue communication in a variety of formats. LC

References


Launching a library digital humanities center: reflections and lessons learned
PAMELLA R. LACH, SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY | OCTOBER 28, 2019

User design sketches from fall 2016 (left) and fall 2018 (right) design workshops

In January 2018, San Diego State University (SDSU) Library officially opened its Digital Humanities Center (DHC). This space was created in collaboration with the campus-wide Digital Humanities Initiative, DH@SDSU, which began as a grass-roots, faculty-led, interdisciplinary community and is now a formalized effort that includes a faculty research cluster. As a partner in the growth of digital humanities (DH), the library committed resources to build a DH space under the leadership of the new digital humanities librarian. Since opening, the DHC has become an interdisciplinary hub that brings people together in support of humanistic research, teaching, and learning in the digital age.

Design process

We created the DHC using an iterative, user-centered approach to build broad community buy-in. Library administrators identified the existing Media Center as the site for the DHC. They relocated the media collection and its associated services while the DH librarian collaborated with DH faculty and students to develop a vision and design for the space. Following the completion of renovations in summer 2017, the DHC informally opened with a “soft launch” in November 2017.

We intentionally adopted a minimalist design for the center, envisioning a blank canvas that would invite imaginative uses. We wanted it to be flexible and reconfigurable, so that it could evolve alongside the DH Initiative. In fall 2018, we launched a second design round for a virtual reality production studio (in partnership with SDSU’s School of Theatre, Television and Film), a podcasting studio, an electronic literature studio, and an active learning room for instruction, workshops, and ongoing project work. This phased approach ensured the strategic stewardship of one-time funds and resulted in a user-centered space that adapts to a range of needs.

A programmatic service model

Unlike many library-based digital scholarship centers, SDSU’s DHC does not provide formal services such as equipment checkout; digitization, digital collection management and digital preservation; data curation, management, analysis and visualization; or 3D modeling and printing (Vinopal & McCormick, 2013; Mackenzie, 2016; Anne, et al., 2017). Rather, it supports human relationships and community through programmatic partnerships (Muñoz, 2012 and 2013; Vandegrift and Varner, 2013; Posner, 2013 and 2014; Shirazi, 2014; Schell, 2015; Miller, 2016). To signal this service shift—within the library and to our users—we removed the Media Center’s service desk during the renovation. Dismantling the desk was a visual cue that the DHC was not a place to do things for patrons, but a space to partner with users.

Our programmatic service model continues to evolve and mature as we test out approaches. When we opened, we organized one-off activities and co-hosted events, many of which were not explicitly DH in nature. In those early days, our usage request policy was quite loose because we hoped to attract broad disciplinary engagement. We refined our policy in summer 2018; we now require public events in the space to have a direct link to DH. In spring 2019, we developed a more coherent set of programs organized around four tracks: creative workshops, DH tools workshops, lecture series, and research & development activities.

Our current services are articulated through a range of formal and informal programs and community-building activities, including:

- public-facing lectures, symposia and events
- tool-based workshops
- class showcases and our annual campus-wide showcase
- networking events
- faculty reading groups
- formal DH instruction
- project consultations and instruction partnerships
- DH core faculty engagement, including recurring office hours
Successes and challenges

In just a few semesters, the DHC has established itself as the home of the DH Initiative. Early successes include wide-ranging engagement across the disciplines, broad faculty buy-in, increasing pedagogic partnerships, and creative experimentation, particularly among faculty who find the space’s flexible possibilities a source of inspiration for curricular innovation. Another measure of success is the steady increase in projects submitted to our annual showcase.

With these early successes came many challenges, both within the library and across campus. Although library administration committed two full-time employees for the DHC, we struggled to hire and retain people in those positions, which hampered operations and capacity despite efforts at cross-training. Secondly, the introduction of a programmatic service model distinct from other library service points, coupled with physical isolation from other service desks, led to confusion about where the DHC should fit organizationally. A general lack of understanding about DH on campus and in the library compounded these issues, despite regular efforts to make our work legible. Our service model combined with our physical layout still confuses many users who enter the space. Thirdly, the departmental partnerships so central to the DH Initiative and the DHC further set us apart from library spaces controlled by other units (such as the Writing Center or the Math and Stats Learning Center). Moreover, these crucial partnerships potentially expose us to space grabs. It has been challenging to continue growing broad appeal and buy-in across campus while balancing competing interests and needs, especially as the library tries to increase general study spaces for students. The continued success of the DHC depends on the success of the various partnerships that went into creating the center, partnerships that will have to be rebuilt after recent administrative turnover.

Lessons learned

The biggest lesson learned in the first few years of operation is the importance of maintaining buy-in with internal and external partners. This requires constant attention and cultivation to make sure a diverse range of perspectives are at the table, genuinely heard, and validated as compromises are made. Threats to long-term capacity and sustainability can be mitigated by creating partnerships that grow distributed expertise, cross-training within the library, and investing in the people responsible for growing community (Posner, 2014). Equally important, the space—as much as the services—needs to be user-centered and designed to meet its institutional context while being responsive and adaptable to changing user needs (Goldenberg-Hart, 2016).

In short, space matters when building and sustaining community (Lewis, et al., 2015; Dinsman, 2016). The DH Initiative would continue to grow without the DHC. But the DHC makes it possible for faculty and students to get out of their silos, connect with each other, build capacity, and imagine new possibilities. LC

Acknowledgment


References


Development of Creative Spaces in Academic Libraries

A Decision Maker’s Guide
How COUNTER’s fifth will pass the baton to librarians

JANUARY 08, 2019

Library Connect talks to Jean Shipman, Vice President, Global Library Relations, Elsevier, about the new Code of Practice.

Are you attending the UKSG Conference in April? Elsevier is hosting a one-hour session on COUNTER COP5 on April 9, 5:30 pm, in Wenlock 4. During the session you will learn about the key changes to your usage reports, new tools available to you and ask questions in an informal setting.

DA-DA-DA DAAAAAA! There’s a tradition in the world of classical music that, from Beethoven onwards, a composer’s fifth symphony represents a sort of coming of age, a distillation of all that is most unique in his or her work. After some appropriately portentous fanfares – the development and consultation process has taken over two years – the usage standards body COUNTER officially launched its fifth Code of Practice on January 1, 2019.

As with any mature work, COP5, as it is known, builds on years of experience. COUNTER has been providing librarians and vendors with shared protocols for electronic resource usage reporting since 2003, and the consistency and clarity of the new Code of Practice reflects this long history as much as the changing information environment in which we now find ourselves. It is also the product of collaboration on a grand scale. As Lorraine Estelle, COUNTER’s Project Director, explained to us:

“The development of the new COUNTER Code of Practice was undertaken by expert volunteers, who formed the Technical Sub-Group. Members of this group are librarians, publishers, vendors and other service providers in the area of scholarly communication. The group’s objective was to seek the balance between addressing changing needs and reducing the complexity of the Code of Practice to ensure that all publishers and content providers can achieve compliance. The Technical Sub-Group devoted hundreds of hours to the design and development of the new release.”

The resulting release embodies COUNTER’s hallmark drive towards inclusiveness and objectivity. To take one prominent example, the additional full text usage metric, Unique Item Requests, facilitates comparison between vendors and makes it easier for smaller publishers to comply with COUNTER standards. It does this by offering a simplified counting mechanism that consolidates HTML and PDF usage. Currently, when a user lands on the HTML full text version of an article and also downloads the PDF version of the same article, two article requests are recorded. While this will continue to count as two Total Item Requests, the new metric will now also record this activity as one Unique Item Request.

The importance of inclusiveness

As Jean Shipman, Elsevier’s Vice President, Global Library Relations notes, this is both a simplification and a sophistication. “It’s a simplification because it conflates both formats into a single number, but it’s also a sophistication because it provides libraries with another core usage metric – two different ways of looking at the same thing – enriching the types of analysis they can perform.” I wanted to talk to Jean about COP5 because, within Elsevier at least, she seems uniquely well qualified to assess its possible impact, having served with distinction as both a librarian and an information provider. She highlights inclusiveness as a key theme of the release, not just because of the drive to increase participation among vendors, but because of the coverage of aspects of journal and book value that haven’t previously been tracked. For example, the Code includes a new Item Investigations metric that measures the value of content interactions beyond the full text (e.g. use of abstracts, videos, research data) – while Distributed Usage Logging (DUL) provides a framework for publishers to capture the usage of DOI-identified content items that occur on other websites. “You can get better idea of the use of the article with DUL, because it’s more than just one platform count, it’s every platform count,” Jean enthuses.

A new perspective on your collections

At this point it’s worth mentioning that Elsevier is a founding member of COUNTER and with the other key stakeholders in the Technical Sub-Group helped to develop and define COP5. “This doesn’t mean that Elsevier and other vendors have dominated the process,” says Jean. “What you still see is a group of stakeholders – librarians and publishers – working together to serve the best interests of the community as a whole. It’s all about reconciling different points of view to find the best available solution”, she adds, echoing Lorraine Estelle’s comments.

This seems like a good cue to talk about the way the new Unique Item Requests metric will complement the current Total Item Requests, which is also being retained. Jean tells me that “librarians are basically getting a new perspective on their collections”, but I wonder how much they actually need this. Couldn’t it be argued that one simplified content usage metric is enough and that anything else just risks creating confusion? Jean smiles and reflects that some of her former colleagues might once have felt the same way about the Impact Factor as

More ▶
a measurement of journal prestige until, useful as it is, new metrics became available that did a better job of addressing the disparities between different scientific disciplines, or that covered areas beyond citations, like shares or media mentions.

“Something similar is true here,” she avers. “It’s still important to look at HTML and PDF downloads separately because they represent distinct use cases”. What might those use cases be?, I wonder. “Well,” says Jean, “a lot of publishers, Elsevier included, are enriching their HTML pages with new features – recommender systems, interactive maps, 3D viewers, etc. – that are designed to help researchers work smarter, so when you look at your Total Item counts you’re also looking at a proxy for the value of the platform your articles are based on. You don’t get that with Unique Item counting, but both approaches are useful if you’re evaluating collections, or if you’re reporting upwards about the value the library provides.”

Beyond usage

Driven by the continuous need to assess, report and act on both collection and library value, librarians have been employing a growing range of metrics, not all of them usage-based. In a recent Library Connect article Leo Appleton, author of Libraries and Key Performance Indicators, noted that while “data about usage quantity can show, to some extent, how much a library’s services and resources have been drawn upon ... usage is not synonymous with value or benefits to users, even though that is a common perception.” Indeed no single metric, however ingenious, can be wholly synonymous with “value,” which is a necessarily diffuse idea based around the benefits derived by different stakeholder groups. With this in mind, Appleton goes on to propose a suite of performance indicators that address specific performance outcomes. For example, for the outcome “Percentage of an institution’s research outputs regarded as world class,” he proposes examining the percentage increase of articles and research papers submitted to an institutional repository, as well as the number and percentage increase of citations of items contained within that repository.

Information overload via the back door?

Perceptively, Appleton observes that “there is no internationally agreed upon or tested method for assessing the different aspects of library outcomes”. In the wake of COP5 it would be easy to imagine COUNTER, or possibly an offshoot initiative, moving towards the development of such a standard. The challenge would be reconciling the need for clarity and consensus with the sheer range of metrics now on offer. Elsevier, for example, provides a “basket” of citation, readership and media impact metrics, as well as free tools like Elsevier Product Insight for Customers (E-PIC), designed to give institutional customers an informed overview of their engagement with its content. With other information providers rapidly following suit, it can sometimes feel that this is merely information overload via the back door. Are there simply too many metrics?

Jean tells me that there are always going to be those who pine for a return to a simpler life, in librarianship or any other profession (I’m beginning to think that I might be one of them), but that the growth in the number of indicators now available to the library really represents an enormous opportunity. “In the context of budget management, choosing the right metrics can help you evaluate the performance of your holdings more accurately than ever before. They can also provide insights into the library’s own ROI that were not previously available – and give you a way of talking to managers in a language they readily understand.”

Custodians of the metrics

All of which has significant implications for the way academic librarianship is evolving. Jean sees librarians becoming “custodians of the metrics,” which basically means “making informed choices about the indicators being used, overseeing the quality and consistency of the data that underpins them, and reporting clearly to the organization as a whole”. “Just as researchers have had to become more metrics savvy,” she adds, “so those who support them need to learn how to use these tools more effectively.”

This is also true for areas that fall outside the librarian’s traditional collection management remit. The open access attribute in COP5 allows librarians to more easily evaluate the role played by freely accessible content in the mix of resources offered or endorsed by the library. At the same time, COUNTER is already working on a separate Code of Practice for research data, taking COP5 as a starting point, although it is unclear whether the two approaches will be integrated in the longer term.

By the throat

There now is quite an extensive literature on the changing role of the academic librarian, much of it dating from the last decade. While commentators agree about the process of change, there is surprisingly little consensus about the end result, with the librarians of the future presented variously as information managers, teachers, de facto researchers, de facto publishers and bibliometricians. Through all of these persona, it’s hard not to discern a certain quantification of the job, mirroring trends across the university as a whole. While it’s tempting to see the love of knowledge and learning – the inclinations that have steered so many along a library-based career path – vanishing in a blizzard of statistics, this is an unduly submissive point of view. As Jean notes “that will only be the case if libraries meet these changes passively, allowing others to call the metrics shots.” Proactivity is the order of the day.

From this perspective, the long-awaited arrival of COP5 in January represents both a safeguard and an opportunity. Or, as Lorraine Estelle described it to us:

“The new Code of Practice is consistent, unambiguous, and flexible. Flexibility is important because it means that the Code of Practice can be adapted and extended as digital publishing changes over the years. The future-proofing built into Release 5 means that it can be subject to a continuous maintenance process, changing over time to stay relevant, instead of being replaced by Release 6.”

Like a good fifth symphony, COP5 is built to last – drawing on past experience and a growing frame of reference to deliver a technical and strategic leap forward. Beethoven once remarked that he wanted to “seize fate by the throat” and there are many in the library community who would now share these sentiments. LC
KBART, the next generation: Why automation is top of everyone’s wish list
JANUARY 24, 2019

The National Information Standards Organization (NISO) will be announcing a new Recommended Practice that will focus on automating the request and retrieval of KBART reports for title lists and library holdings. The new guidelines will also recommend that reports reflect individual library holdings, with a reduced reliance on general collections.

The NISO KBART Automation Working Group has been working on the proposal since early 2017. Following a public consultation period late last year, it is now refining the document with the aim of publishing the final version in the first few months of 2019.

But what will it mean for librarians, content providers, and the third-party companies that support them? Working group member, Jozef Paulik, is a Senior Product Manager for Elsevier’s platform integration group. Jozef has been instrumental in developing ScienceDirect’s KBART API, many features of which form the basis of the working group’s Recommended Practice proposal. In this article, Jozef provides a little more detail about the Elsevier API and explores the benefits it brings. He also explains how other companies can gain from the API’s development work, which Elsevier is making freely available to the KBART community.

How the ScienceDirect KBART API evolved

It was back in 2014 that NISO published a Recommended Practice for KBART, proposing widespread industry adoption of the format for metadata transfer.

Jozef explained: “At that stage, the link resolvers suggested that the best way to deliver KBART reports was for content providers to create a list of their content packages. Customers could then scroll through them and choose the ones they had subscribed to.

“However, Elsevier offered nearly 1,000 packages back then, so we knew the job of manually selecting them would be labor-intensive for librarians. In addition, packages don’t always reflect what a customer has access to, and even after generating the report, librarians had to wait 20-30 minutes to retrieve it.

“So, we decided to invest in developing our own technology and, within a couple of years, we had gone live with account-level KBART reports, which show customers their holdings; that’s the range of full text content they can access, not just what they’ve purchased. The reports include the packages (and any amendments agreed with the sales team), as well as single subscriptions, and open access, promotional and legacy content. Essentially, we are mirroring what a user can access when they visit ScienceDirect online. We also made it scalable by moving to the cloud, which has increased the speed of report retrieval.”

But even though the development team had gone above and beyond the NISO Recommended Practice, it wasn’t happy with the result, particularly the fact that librarians were still spending valuable time downloading and processing the files.

Jozef said: “We knew we could do better. And the solution we came up with was to create an API that would allow automatic retrieval of the information by the systems that librarians use. But an API, or application programming interface, is essentially a link between two software programs so there was no way we could do it alone. We approached OCLC and I have to give them credit for coming on this journey with us. They shared our vision and while we were building the API, they created systems that would allow them to retrieve the reports on a customer’s behalf. We went live with the API in 2015/2016. Since then, Ex Libris (SFX® and Alma) have come on board.”

What is a NISO Recommended Practice?

The website for NISO defines it as a “recommended ‘best practice’ or ‘guideline’ for methods, materials, or practices to give guidance to the user. Such documents usually represent a leading edge, exceptional model, or proven industry practice. All elements of Recommended Practices are discretionary and may be used as stated or modified by the user to meet specific needs.”

Jozef added: “The only manual steps a librarian now has to take is to decide which companies can access their holdings data and how often they want the API to run updates – weekly, monthly, or even daily, if that’s what they need and the link-resolver/library management system supports it. The rest is automated. To give a vendor access, the librarian selects the Create Token option in the ScienceDirect Admin Tool and gives the token to the vendor. This ability to choose who can see the holdings data is something that is very important to our customers, particularly companies and corporations.”

### KBART automation – the benefits

Although companies can choose whether they want to adopt the Recommended Practice, Jozef believes there are strong incentives to do so, with benefits for all parties involved.

“This is one of those rare win/win situations with everyone gaining in some way. That doesn’t happen very often!”

#### Understanding the benefits for:

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<tr>
<th><strong>Librarians</strong></th>
<th><strong>Benefits</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>Saves time: No more manual updates to knowledge bases, discovery services, etc. whenever there is a change to holdings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improves data accuracy: The potential for human error or delays between updates is reduced.</td>
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<td>Provides clarity: Account-level reports make it easy for an institute to see what they have access to at any given time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Offers privacy and security: Holding information is only visible to the companies that librarians choose to give access to.</td>
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<td>Improves usage visibility: If COUNTER and KBART reports from content providers use the same identifiers for titles, the process of matching usage to holdings is simplified and analysis is improved.</td>
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<th><strong>Vendors</strong> (knowledge bases, link resolvers, discovery services)</th>
<th><strong>Benefits</strong></th>
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<td>Reduces costs: With the introduction of a standardized process, it’s no longer necessary to develop customized automation procedures per content provider.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improves data accuracy: Content is more up-to-date.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Satisfies a market demand: The result? Increased customer satisfaction.</td>
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<th><strong>Publishers/content providers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Benefits</strong></th>
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<td></td>
<td>Increases usage: With record links regularly updated, usage of content is likely to improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfies a market demand: The result? Increased customer satisfaction.</td>
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<th><strong>Content end users</strong></th>
<th><strong>Benefits</strong></th>
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<td>Improves availability: Standardized holdings feeds support integration with the products and users usually turn to for information, e.g., discovery systems, library catalogs, A-Z lists, abstracting &amp; indexing (A&amp;I) databases, Google Scholar, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reduces frustration over linking failures or out-of-date content.</td>
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The NISO proposal also highlights the benefits for authors – regular updates and improved accuracy ensures their work receives better exposure, potentially increasing usage.

According to Jozef: “When we launched the API back in 2015, we found librarians were really enthusiastic because it frees up their time and they can spend it doing better things.

“And other publishers and content providers don’t have to start from scratch – all the technology we’ve developed is internet-standard and we are making API retrieval of these reports freely available to vendors or customers. We can also create free configurations for any link resolvers interested in adopting it, including customers who have built their own in-house link resolvers.”

Jozef added: “From our perspective, the move by NISO to incorporate our work in the new guidelines is great news as we never wanted this to be just an Elsevier thing. And, the more widespread it becomes, the more opportunity for the technology to improve, and the more we can make life a little easier for librarians.”
Supporting students and faculty with an institution-led publishing program

LISA DELUCA, SETON HALL UNIVERSITY | APRIL 17, 2019

Seton Hall University (SHU) serves diverse stakeholders across its three New Jersey campuses by publishing a wide array of academic materials in its institutional repository (IR). From student-led journals, to theses (which currently have 1,467,560 downloads across 192 countries), to campus-wide events such as the Petersheim Academic Exposition, the eRepository @ Seton Hall University seeks to meet faculty and student publishing needs.

We are excited that the number of downloads from the IR is fast approaching 3 million. According to Sebastian Derry, Assistant Dean for Public Services at Seton Hall University Libraries, the eRepository reflects the library’s mission by providing access to theses and dissertations as well as supporting faculty’s interdisciplinary approach to research. Electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) are the most frequently downloaded documents from the repository, with 216,000 downloads from 30,877 institutions in 226 countries. SHU’s press release about reaching the milestone of 2 million downloads in 2017 underlined Derry’s point: “This is significant for the fact that the eRepository allows the University’s research to become a viable worldwide resource.”

Journal publishing

Our institution-led publishing program, managed by the SHU Libraries, includes a journal publishing program for the law school and the wider university. In fall 2018, Locus, a new undergraduate research journal created to feature excellent examples of undergraduate scholarship, was launched by the College of Arts & Sciences. The journal has since been viewed by 52 institutions in 43 countries. This is terrific exposure for students who want to build a digital portfolio, and it gives the editors valuable metrics to better understand their readership. Faculty advisor Nathan Kahl, PhD, Associate Professor of Mathematics, was delighted with the process and has become a fan of the institution-led publishing platform.

SHU’s Catholic mission

SHU is a private Roman Catholic University, and the repository also ties into the Catholic mission, which focuses on community service and servant leadership. The open nature of the repository is a great service to the campus, local, and global communities. SHU believes that getting involved in the community teaches lessons that can’t be taught in any classroom. The use of the repository, whether for a student-run journal or a campus-wide event such as the Petersheim Exposition, allows SHU to share scholarship and campus resources. SHU’s commitment to the study of theology is also important. In additional to departmental collections, religion-focused journals include Arcadia: A Student Journal for Faith and Culture and Vocations - A Publication of the Center for Vocation & Servant Leadership. The Catholic Advocate, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Newark from 1951 to 1987, is currently being uploaded into the repository’s digital collections to preserve our institutional history.
Open access journals

Open access journals are available to student organizations, academic and campus centers and administrative departments. We have had great success with Political Analysis, a student-run journal which added an online presence to its printed issues in 2016 and has over 15,000 downloads globally. The editors and authors find the dashboard metrics very helpful to determine the global reach of student scholarship.

For more information about creating online journals, see “Starting, Publishing, and Sustaining an Online Journal: Beginner’s Workshop” which was presented at the Digital Commons Conference at The College at Brockport in 2016. This presentation can help other institutions create a framework to launch open access journals.

Open educational resources

To promote sharing among faculty, we created an Open Educational Resources collection on the repository to highlight projects from our Digital Humanities Committee, which sponsors multiple faculty programs per year. We have also added faculty assignments that utilized PolicyMap, a GIS Lite mapping tool, from disciplines including anthropology, political science and health care administration. Many of the faculty from these different departments had not met prior to the PolicyMap rollout. Now, because of eRepository, they can track each other’s mapping assignments in their classes. PolicyMap continues to be a thread between departments to improve digital literacy among students and faculty communication through the IR.

Conclusion

The eRepository partners with diverse stakeholders to support faculty and student needs. The next planned project is a syllabi repository for the School of Diplomacy and International Relations that will reduce paper storage and allow virtual sharing of syllabi. We are also excited to be taking in programs from the History Department’s symposia and more academic materials from across our campuses. We will continue to work with the Office of Research and Grant Services (OGRS) to promote scholarship output and results for Seton Hall faculty, administrative departments and students. Regular distribution of IR statistics are sent to university deans in an annual report. These reports showcase the excellent global maps that are created by the Digital Commons dashboard. LC
Look at us now! Year three of our OER grant program and OA journals

BY MICHÉLE GIBNEY, UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC | SEPTEMBER 27, 2019

Open Education Resources grant program update

At the University of the Pacific in California, the University Libraries (UL), in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Technology in Education Committee (TEC), started a grant-based Open Educational Resources (OER) program in 2017. (Read more about the first two years in this Library Connect article.)

The initial faculty cohort consisted of 10 members, and during the first academic year (2017-2018) they saved students slightly over $110,000 in textbook costs by using OER in their courses.

In the summer of 2018, 15 faculty were awarded grants to work on OER. Their efforts more than doubled the amount saved by students: During the 2018-2019 academic year, a total of almost $153,000 was saved, bringing the program’s total to $263,000. This represents a significant return on investment, as the total paid out in grants for the first two years was $60,000.

In the spring of 2019, the UL, CTL and TEC revised the grant parameters, so they could both offer more grants at a sustainable rate and acknowledge the varying levels of OER development and interest among our faculty. The response to this change was positive, as we saw many faculty submit for a “review” level grant to review an OER relevant to their courses.

We spent a great deal of time raising campus interest during Open Education Week (March 4-8, 2019) by using a whiteboard with student-directed questions on textbook costs, holding a “petting zoo” of open textbooks (with printed first chapters of over a dozen books, including four from our faculty), and a social media blitz.

The questions directed at students on the whiteboards were:

1. How much money did you spend on textbooks last semester?
2. Do you delay buying textbooks for classes?
3. Have you ever NOT bought a required text?

The responses helped us gauge how University of the Pacific compares with other schools. From our 41 responses on how much money they spent on textbooks in one semester, the median amount was approximately $200. The national average for last academic year, according to the National Association of College Stores (NACS), was $484. Our students reported slightly less than half of that amount for one semester, but it is likely that the NACS amount does not include alternate means by which students purchase or rent textbooks (i.e., costs other than purchases at the college bookstore). Unfortunately, based on the phrasing of the question, we are not sure whether students included additional course fees (such as technology fees for online homework programs or miscellaneous lab fees) in their amounts.

More ➤
Our last two questions on the other side of the whiteboard gauged how often students delay buying textbooks (e.g., until financial aid money is deposited) or never buy the required text and make do by borrowing from a friend, finding a pirated version online, or borrowing from a library. For both questions, the number of “Yes” answers was striking. Eighty-five percent of respondents (47 out of 55) said they delay buying textbooks for class, and 74 percent (37 out of 50) admitted to not buying a required text. A 2018 study of 1,000 students in the US and Canada found that 80 percent of students waited to purchase course materials, and 35 percent on average didn’t purchase the textbook at all. Previous studies in 2016 and 2011 have the percentage who opt out of purchasing at least one textbook at 66 percent and 70 percent, respectively. Our students were comparable with the 2018 study on delaying purchase, but well above the average for not buying at all.

Lastly, our social media campaign helped raise awareness among students and faculty about textbook costs (see photos below). Students visiting the library wrote how much money they spent this semester on textbooks and what they could have spent it on instead. We got a range of responses, including food, clothes, trips, musical instruments, pets, and family. We also had several students (7 out of 41, or 17 percent) who spent $0, an increase from last year (when we had six out of 110, or 5 percent). When we asked those students more questions to find out why, it seems as if more Pacific faculty are using OER and/or more students are finding pirated PDF copies of textbooks online.

While the Library does not support illegal textbook copying, it is interesting to note the cost-cutting lengths students will go to in order to reduce their textbook costs. Hopefully, the three-year campaign to advocate for OER at Pacific will help lower textbook costs.

For the summer 2019 grants, the OER committee received 24 applications and awarded 21 grants in varying amounts: $2,500 to create OER materials, $1,000 to adopt OER materials, and $250 to review OER materials. Some faculty created brand-new textbooks or course materials; some reviewed OER in their field, including textbooks, online materials, and video series, for potential future inclusion in their courses; while others adopted and adapted existing OER into their course’s pedagogical framework, aligning it to their teaching style and needs.

The 2019 grants went to faculty affiliated with multiple departments from the College of the Pacific (including Mathematics, Economics, Physics, Religious Studies, Biology, Psychology, Chemistry, English and History), the School of Engineering and Computer Sciences, the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, the School of International Studies, the School of Business, and the School of Education. This was a more diverse group than in the previous two years—and, of course, due to the staggered grant amounts, we were also able to award more grants with our limited budget. Staff members from the UL and CTL were available all summer to assist faculty working on their OER projects.

For more information on OER at University of the Pacific, check out these resources:

- University of the Pacific Open Education Week
- An example from the summer 2019 “create” stipend level is Joshua Steimel’s textbook, Materials Science and Engineering
- Additional faculty-created OER materials will be added to Scholarly Common’s OER website. The website also includes a faculty promo video for OER, and we are hoping to add one with student testimonials.

I will be co-presenting on our OER program at the Charleston Conference in November.

Open Access journals update

In addition to the OER program Pacific’s institutional repository also became host to two Open Access (OA) journals in 2018.

The Pacific Journal of Health continues to solicit and review articles for publication in a second issue but the initial issue consisting of two articles has seen a total of 400+ downloads worldwide from over 40 countries. They also have a very active Twitter feed.

Backstage Pass, the undergraduate music industry journal, has published two issues, totaling 47 articles and 3,300 downloads from 83 countries.

Usage map from Digital Commons

The editor in chief, the publications manager, and one of the student editors gave a presentation on the journal at a meeting of Music Librarian Association, California Chapter, in September 2019.
One of the most important results seen from the journal is the empowerment of undergraduate students from the Conservatory of Music. The dean, Peter Witte, said, “Success in music today requires a range of skills and writing persuasively is essential. Backstage Pass highlights Pacific students’ curiosity and scholarship across a range of subjects in the music industry.” Editor in chief Keith Hatschek has heard from employers in the music industry that “professional level writing and communication skills are the most important attributes they seek in new hires. Backstage Pass was conceived to provide a public platform, encouraging and celebrating scholarship and writing excellence.”

Ensuring that the articles are open access and usable as proof of skills in job interviews is a key service that we provide to the student authors. One of the student editors, Nicole Wasnock, said that the skills she has obtained in editing, concise and professional writing, fact checking and formatting “are all transferrable skills to any job which I can talk about in an interview, citing my own personal experiences which have prepared me for the professional world.”

One of the published authors, Joey Tan, whose article “LGBTQ Representation and Activism in the Music Industry” accounts for approximately a third of the journal downloads so far, graduated in 2019 and has gone on to graduate school for a MA in Cultural Studies focusing on LGBTQ+ representation in media and society. Tan provided a quote for the recent presentation: “Writing for Backstage Pass has given me the chance to refine and share my ideas about inequalities in the music industry, as well as exploring the role that music can play in speaking out about social injustice. It’s helped me find my voice and better understand what kind of career I want to pursue.”

The editors are also looking into the future and discussing where they can take the journal next. Publicity and marketing efforts on campus have increased this fall to solicit new submissions for the spring 2020 issue. Stickers and T-shirts are circling around the Conservatory and discussions of other outreach methods are ongoing. Adding additional non-text submission options is also a hot button topic. The journal has already received and published a few infographics but is also contemplating podcasts or vlogs. While the journal is currently only open to Pacific students, there is also the possibility of an all-California issue, asking for submissions from any California undergraduates on the music industry, perhaps with a guest editorial board to manage the special issue.

As a relatively new entrant to OER and OA journals, University of the Pacific has accomplished quite a lot already. The institutional repository, Scholarly Commons, launched in the fall of 2016, and three years later, we have awarded 46 faculty OER grants and published 49 OA articles in two new journals. We look forward to adding to these numbers in the coming years.
Fighting the good fight for open access

Wendy Walker, Associate Professor and Digital Initiatives Librarian at the University of Montana (UM), is very clear on her position in the scholarly communication community. “I’m an open access advocate,” she says, “and open science is a natural part of that.” Walker has aligned the University of Montana repository, ScholarWorks, with the institution’s larger mission and offers solutions to many of the university’s needs around publishing science openly. Her commitment to open science has led to publishing data sets, oral histories, dissertations, grant-related research, and even a special collection from the Department of Geosciences that propelled a 40-year-old set of seismic data from dusty file cabinets to open digital files.

“Open access (OA) is an ongoing challenge, and at times it’s difficult. There exists a long road of OA advocacy. Professionally, it has pushed me to learn and to question,” Walker says. Her background was in digital collections, and she learned about institutional repositories (IRs) on the job. In the process, she recounts, she learned to wrangle OA mechanics, publishers, and faculty concerns. “It’s easy to say ‘everything OA is good,’ but it is a great challenge in this job to follow through on that. It can be a struggle, but I really enjoy that it constantly makes me challenge my assumptions about OA. When it’s hard to keep my spirits up, I go back to the value of OA and know the fight is worth it!”

Stories from grateful users of ScholarWorks help fuel her drive. She has received comments from a pastor who was doing research for his Sunday service, an amateur archeology enthusiast, students and others. Walker says this feedback makes her aware of people around the world reading something they never would’ve found if it hadn’t been freely available in ScholarWorks. She emphasizes that this is vetted scholarship, curated by the library, which provides different value than material found in an unknown context on the internet.

Partnering with faculty to make data sets open

As research grants have started requiring that any resulting data be openly available, Walker has seen the University of Montana place a higher value on open science. In her role as Digital Initiatives Librarian, she can offer ScholarWorks as a solution to this compliance issue. Recently she has worked with many faculty members to publish their data, including several UM professors who linked their article to a data set from the Montana Climate Office.

“I’m pleased to see the recognition of data sets as part of the academic record. I see providing access to these as key to reproducibility and transparency in an effort to promote verifiable, reproducible scientific research,” Walker says. “Every time someone contacts me with one of these requests, I’m thrilled. The faculty advisor for a recently graduated student contacted me to ask if I could link her former student’s newest data set to his dissertation, already published in ScholarWorks. She was very happy with my ‘yes!’ answer.” The more than 11,000 electronic theses and dissertations in the repository are among its most downloaded content. Since the
repository’s launch in September 2013, there have been more than 1,630,000 downloads.

**Special collections of open science research**

One of the first large collections that Walker and her team published in ScholarWorks was the Flathead Lake Seismic Survey, a decades-old data set with images, audio, text, and seismic files. In “Considerations and Challenges for Describing Historical Research Data: A Case Study,” she and co-author Teressa M. Keenan describe how “creating metadata for data sets can be challenging, but it is crucial for discovery, access, re-use, reproducibility, and preservation.” They offer words of encouragement: “Making historical data sets available to current researchers, with quality metadata, is worthwhile. Even with imperfect metadata, as of early November 2017 the seismic survey data files had been downloaded collectively nearly 3,300 times.” (By fall 2019, that number had increased to 4,695.) This collection provides a unique opportunity for current and future researchers because so many new methods of processing the data have been developed in the intervening years—yet another critical benefit of publishing science openly. The team was even contacted by an Italian researcher who wanted to use the .wav files of seismic data and play them as “music”—an example of open science truly promoting innovation.

Walker credits geoscientist Bob Lankston with helping to organize a challenging variety of file types, including bathymetry (measurements of water depth), survey maps, seismic sections, and salvaged audio recordings. They decided on a creative use of the “book gallery” publishing format in their repository, ScholarWorks. They linked varied files to each data set, which is posted as a separate “book” and contains a unique record. Walker also used the repository’s flexible structure to publish other scientific materials with widely divergent needs, yet still provide the most searchable, well organized data. For example, an “event gallery” structure showcases the Clark Fork Symposium Archives, while *Lithics in the West* is an often-downloaded OA monograph published in partnership with the University Press.

Walker has also been pleased to partner with Hannah Soukup, Archives Specialist, on an extensive collection of more than 2,000 oral history interviews detailing various aspects of Montana history, from forestry to feminism. She notes that it can be tricky to make archival content open, as it is no mean feat to get the necessary permissions for decades-old materials. It often involves convincing the owners of these documents of the value of open access publishing, something that Soukup excels at doing. Wendy also admires Soukup’s dedication to making this material as open as possible, including offering text transcriptions of the audio files, which makes them accessible to readers with different needs. As Walker says, “We saw the value of publishing archival material from the get-go. We had a digitization program in place, but we were looking for a more robust search function. We are both committed to meeting accessibility standards and know it is an iterative process, as it takes a great deal of time.” LC
Expanding the impact of research
BY EILEEN HARRINGTON, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND LIBRARIES | SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

The first thing that comes to mind when hearing the term “open science” is often open access journals. For many academic libraries, open access journals are their entry point into the open science arena. Often facing flat or reduced budgets along with rising costs for journal subscriptions, libraries have a vested interest in supporting the expansion of open access journals. When librarians advise faculty and graduate students on possible publication outlets, they often promote open access journals. Many academic libraries also maintain open access publishing funds, which researchers on their campuses can tap into to help defray the costs of publishing in an open access journal.

Open access journals, however, are not the only component of open science. The term also encompasses other types of content, such as open textbooks or research data. Infrastructure also plays a role through the development of open systems and standards to ensure interoperability; Open Science Framework, GitHub and Mendeley are examples. Changes that make the processes related to research more transparent — such as alternate forms of peer review and citizen science — can also be considered open science. Many of these components overlap, and open science initiatives often incorporate a mixture of them.

The University Library System (ULS) at the University of Pittsburgh provides an example of the interconnected nature of open science initiatives. ULS has moved beyond simply supporting publishing in open access journals and has become an open access journal publisher itself. As described in my book, Academic Libraries and Public Engagement with Science and Technology (2019) from the Chandos Information Professional Series, ULS publishes about 40 electronic open access journals from the US and around the world. Many of these journals come from emerging fields of research or small societies and would not exist without the ULS publishing program.

Rising costs in another area — textbooks — have driven many libraries to undertake open educational resource (OER) initiatives. Students often forego purchasing required textbooks, to the detriment of their academic success. Some libraries provide copies of required textbooks through course reserves, but often this is limited to one copy. With budget constraints, many cannot even offer this. In addition to ensuring all students have access to course materials, OERs offer other advantages, including more inclusive and customized materials that support a range of learning styles.

Institutional repositories maintained by academic libraries are also emerging as an important component of open science. They can house alternative forms of research outputs that might not be easily disseminated elsewhere, as well as data and OERs. Institutional repositories can also help researchers who need to comply with federal grants that require data sharing. Because OERs can be hard to locate and are often repurposed when found, depositing them in an institutional repository can make them more easily accessible, allow for version control and ensure their long-term preservation.

All these examples highlight some of the advantages of the open science movement. Through open access journals and OERs, anyone can learn about research and basic principles in the sciences, even those who are not affiliated with a university, college or research organization. This helps make science more equitable and fosters greater science literacy among the general public — which can lead to more people being involved in shaping public policy and confronting environmental and public health issues. Open science also can mitigate the reproducibility problem plaguing several research fields (Nosek, 2017).

It makes sense for libraries to be strong advocates for open science since, ultimately, sharing is the backbone of libraries. In my book, there is a chapter on open science that provides a literature review and case studies for how academic libraries can support the open science movement.

Library Connect is pleased to offer our readers an exclusive look at the author’s book by providing a PDF of Chapter Seven, Open Science, here.

References
WEBINAR RECORDING: Open science roundup: tools for collaborative research and early discovery

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