University of Arkansas Libraries

Web Services Committee, February 1, 2013.


LibGuide Discussion:

Key points:

- Discussed whether to use a survey, observation, or Participatory Design (PD). Which users needed to be targeted, e.g., faculty, grad students, upper classman, under classmen.
- Discussion about difference between subject and class LibGuides, and general agreement that they serve different purposes, and that testing or redesign might have to be different for each.
- Objectives for study or PD would be to make LibGuides more consistent and effective.
- Decided to receive report from those attending ACRL which will include several sessions on LibGuides.
- Need to get input from internal reviewers already working on LibGuide issues.
- Need to gather data on most used guides.
- All agreed that findings should be turned into best practices approach for LibGuides.

Transcript:

Sarah, acting as facilitator, began the discussion: in terms of usability and LibGuides, what needs testing?

KL: when do students get overloaded? What is the sweet spot for too much or too little content?

PJ: Can we see a more complete picture of the use statistics, such as also for related pages? That might inform new approaches.

BJ: how about seeing details from Google Analytics?

Everyone: yes, that would help.

JRH: There is other campus work, such as from University Relations on writing for the web, that should be considered.

DB: how do we actually gather data from these studies?

BJ: Built in stats and Google Analytics. [Shows LibGuide stats page.] How can we make access, without administrative rights, to see the full reports?
LS pointed out that dates can be adjusted.

BJ: API flirting with the pulling in off-site collecting.

LS: one of the plans is to evaluate web resource for the year? Is this the Web Service committee’s work? Part of a strategic initiative?

Answer: mentioned in 1.6 strategic goal.

All: visibility was assigned to the Web Services group as part of the strategic initiatives.

More Questions?

KL: how do they navigate from LibGuide home to other pages? By subjects? Authors?

LJ: Do the terms make sense? What about tabs versus drop-downs?

LS: tabs ad complexity of the pages is different for undergrads and faculty and different levels of research.

LJ: What happens to undergrads when they get to a dense page?

LRH: Springy camps mentioned in Web Services group before. Have them design their own?

SS: Holy Oak allowed student design. Who do we want to test?

PJ: As broad of input as possible. Balance elaborate data with only a few responses and getting as much input as possible.

LJ: Is there a survey possible.

PJ: Yes, but need to prevent survey from being a deterrent.

JRH: Observation is good, and it is encouraging for students sot Have nothing at stake.

PJ: How did observation work?

Beth explained the last survey:

- Repeat of 2009
- There is a possible bias because it’s students already in the Library
- 12 tasks in order to follow pathways of access
- Many knew the URLs already or used Google
- We watched, recorded, it, tallied the results and measured time and success rate.
- Results were way better than 2009. Still big problems in some areas, such as discerning and article or journal search.
- Book searching was slightly worse than last time
- Beth also thinks that we observed a “LibGuide effect,” Grad student couldn’t see past the “kiddie pool.” Created information silos, and information might not be transferring.
- Going to schedule a repeat of it.

The question emerged about the suitability of Participatory Design (PD).

PJ: With participatory design, there are various types of people. What would we want to see? IN PD you are not looking over their shoulders to help, but ask clarifying questions as they work.

LS: That still depends on levels.

MB: Have to provide pieces for them to work with. Paper or something, but have to give them something.

SS: They will still list what they like.

MB: They will want to know what’s available though.

PJ: We have to work with their language.

BJ: It requires a skilled facilitator.

LS: Web redesigns for the entire website have been good.

BJ: It would be nice to take LibGuide, use student data for best practices approach.

Another question is, because testing is resource intensive, as is PD. Would we want to start for a certain group?

KL: Not faculty.

PJ: Grad students—they have concepts already, looking toward research, and have sense of student experience. That and we tend to overlook them.

LS: What is the objective and the outcomes being sought.

MB: To improve LibGuides.

BJ: Translate design to best practices approach; need assessment to translate content to design. Such as having less links.

SS: LibGuides are a lot of work, need to have them used as effectively as possible.

BJ: Holy Oak, study what they did more closely. They used butcher paper, chocolate snacks, and a lot of coaxing.

LS: Is it a promotion problem?

BJ: They found students don’t see tabs—changed to search heavy design.
Sarah navigated over the Holy Oak LibGuides.

BJ: Less stuff, link to other places. Added more graphics, used Gas to reformat guides. Go for a consistent layout, still converting. Use for fewer subjects.

MB: Did Holy Oak purchase the upgrade?

BJ: No. they can do it now.

BJ: Other usability style would be task based. That is tricky because of already having the different LibGuides styles we would have to represent.

PJ: That might not work.

BJ: Could use different home pages.

JRH: Move toward a landing page that makes more sense.

SS: Could look at what they do after they navigate to the guides.

BJ: How about PD first? Then make designs for subjects to evaluate?

PJ: Might get ACRL feedback about work already being done?

LS: the question is not about how useful the guides are, but can they find things, for classes.

KL: but not all of the guides are for classes.

JRH: It’s a chicken and egg question: we might lose people before they even see the resources to use.

BJ: we might need more template styles, build on the work already being done by our LibGuide reviewers.

LJ: Do we have the opportunity to give information “on the improbable middle place,” a way to use the study to get everyone to redesign to that middle place.

PJ: Is concerned about inconsistency. But if using them, it’s OK. We might need to come down hard.

BJ & SS: There might be easy fixes: column numbers, images, etc.

JRH: Can we just base it on use? Whether they are working and being used or not?

DB: Can make it hidden or not/

LJ: What tools can we use to measure that?
BJ: What about other factors that drive use? Classes? One link? We have to get subjective data from students.

LS: We have the website, but have emphasized LibGuide so heavily, and created LibGuide silo issue.

KL: If we are teaching from both the website and LibGuides, need to make both useful.

PJ: What is the relationship between the Website and LibGuides.

LI: It is still developing, we might not know. We still don’t know the purpose of the LibGuides.

BJ: We have evolved website based on the LibGuides. Maybe we have done that too much?

PJ: Maybe we’re making the LibGuides for their own sake. Are they useful all the time?

LS: Sometimes rely on consistent web pages with or without LibGuides.

BJ: more robust help inside the LibGuides then?

JRH: What are our verbs? What are we going to do?

SS: We may need a larger discussion with all the creators. There are many voices still left out. We’ve addressed:

- Best practices
- Student input

BJ: What if we have results to take back to the creators, and then start from there?

MB: Question of the study then is: “How do you use LibGuides?”

BJ: We can learn from general practices. May want tabs to link to other tabs.

LS: hide things then? Don’t want to undergraduates to see all the things on the dropdowns. So put most important things on top of tabs.

MB: Did everyone hear that Apple disable Java?

BJ: Are we any closer to an action plan?

JRH: usability test for usability?

LI: How would we do PD?

BJ: Should we wait until after ACRL like suggested by Phil?

SS: We need to wait until the Fall anyway in order to use younger students, and thereby increase usability for everyone.
PJ: It is easier to maintain one big LibGuide.

SS: Balance is something that needs to come out of this for sure. The question is how to get student input to inform the changes. There is a difference between class and student guides, so we might need to focus on the subject guides since they are less used.

BJ: Will those going to ACRL investigate the LibGuide issues there for us?

In the meantime, the Web Group needs a more sophisticated design. Should we try now to adjust the red design?

Agreement from all on both: Yes.

Other topics:

BJ: for the Web Group: do we want to add an Instagram Badge on the front page?

It was decided to right before Twitter.

BJ: Arthur and Molly are working on faculty profiles.

MB: Arthur is still working on prototypes.

BJ: the Physics pages are going really well. Thanks Boddie for working on pdfs for assessment committee.

For WordPress: we are going to consolidate all on one page. Eventually we will extract published newsletter articles from the stuff on the site.

BJ: should we collection news to database trials.

It was agreed that yes, we would change it and see what the feedback is.