

Materials to Develop a Library Website

Introduction:

The purpose of this wiki is to create a list of resources that will enhance a librarian's understanding of how to create, maintain, and market a successful library website. Since the focus is on the fast-paced environment of the internet, most resources below exist online. However, the internet is often prey to websites simply disappearing or becoming stale as they are abandoned. The questionable longevity of an internet resource then makes it pertinent for a web developing librarian to keep on their toes so that their website does not get bogged down in dead links or the design to become outdated. Such seemingly trivial aspects will turn away the user base as they continue to look for more sophisticated resources that can keep pace with their information needs. This wiki includes the following topics:

- Where to follow the latest news in the library professional and in web development
- What web technologies will best reach out to you users/patrons
- What are the best qualities found in outstanding library websites
- How to market your website for a broader and more involved audience
- Informative and humorous tips, tricks, and videos you can add to your website for greater appeal

Blog:

Kroski, E. (2009, October 16). Retrieved October 8, 2009, from iLibrarian:

<http://oedb.org/blogs/ilibrarian/>

Kroski bills her blog as the “News and resources on Library 2.0 and the information revolution” as she covers new trends, strategies, and questioning the place of technology in the library. Her blog is called “one of the best blogs to follow” (Blake, 2008) for the latest in applying Web 2.0 for librarian’s use. Moreover, her blog is “structured, elegantly-organized, thoughtful and sober explanations of important topics” (Karp, 2006).

West, J. (2009, October 16). Retrieved October 18, 2009, from librarian.net:

<http://www.librarian.net/>

Since 1999, West’s blog has been the to-go to blog for librarians seeking the latest in library news. Described as a “must-read” (Library Journal, 2002), West blogs with humor about changing the cultural perception about what librarians are, what they do, and how librarians can change attitudes about censorship. StumbleUpon (2005) reviewers write that the blog is “recommended by instructors and students” and useful for “keep(ing) up with the industry.”

Zeldman, J. (2009, September 22). *Jeffrey Zeldman Presents The Daily Report*. Retrieved September 26, 2009, from zeldman.com: <http://www.zeldman.com/>

Design Interviews calls Jeffrey Zeldman “one of the pioneers of the web design industry” (DesignInterviews.com, 2008). Since 1995, Zeldman’s blog has been posting the latest in web standards and usability. By reviewing his blog, like Jakob Nielsen’s website, the web developer librarian can be kept in the know about the latest developments in web standards. Zeldman was one of the first web designers (Voice America Internet Talk Radio, 2008) and has published several books and website on web usability.

His podcast interview with Debbie Millman for Design Matters can be found [here](#) (Voice America Internet Talk Radio, 2008).

Book:

Bacon, P. S. (2005). *Creating Online Courses and Orientations: A Survival Guide*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited.

For the librarian that wishes to connect to their user through online courses, this book gives “practical advice; annotated Web and/or print resources; and reproducibles for course planning, implementation, and evaluation” (Pickett, 2006). Bacon shows how to reproduce her orientation program that can be applied by librarians for their own online program development. However, Pickett point out that the book does not give the companion website’s address nor does the website “contain a comprehensive collection of the book's reproducibles.”

Engard, N. (Ed). (2009). *Library Mashups*. Medford: Information Today.

This edited volume of contributors by Nicole Engard explores how libraries deliver data. Included is how Web 2.0 “technologies are integrated into existing library webpages “ (Ayar, 2009). The book is newly published with few professional reviews out yet, but on the goodreads website, Cal Desmond-Pearson (2009) writes that the book promotes “increase(d) user participation, provide exemplary web-based service through the power of mashups.” By looking through the chapter titles and the list of contributors, this book provides further skills that the cutting edge web librarian can implement.

Krug, S. (2005). *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* (2nd Edition ed.). Berkeley: New Riders Press.

Farnum (2001) writes that “This book provides an introductory overview of why Web usability is important, explores principles for assessing a site's usability yourself, and explains how to start actually testing users without breaking the bank.”

With a plain cover and a simple message, Steve Krug's book tops Amazon's list as the most popular book in the Website Architecture and Usability category even four years after publication. This book guides you through how the average website visitor thinks – or not thinks at all—as they surf the web. An understanding of the user will facilitate the web developer librarian as they plan their library's website. Krug “ knows what he is doing and he doesn't shroud that knowledge in jargon” (Ornbo, 2007) which makes this book accessible for any skill level in understanding users.

Lippincott, J. K. (2005). Net Generation Students and Libraries. In J. L. ed. Diana G. Oblinger, *Educating the Net Generation* (pp. 13.1-13.5). Educause. Retrieved October 18, 2009 from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/pub7101.pdf>

Lippincott's chapter in this e-book is geared towards developing library services that resonate with students whose primary source of information is the Internet. She argues that “academic libraries are failing the current generation of students” (Sondermann, 2005). However, she shows what opportunities await in using Google Scholar and other online services. Lippincott also discusses how the “implementation of virtual reference services which were sophisticated but too cumbersome” for both users and librarians (Texadata, 2005).

Reeb, B. (2008). *Design Talk: Understanding the Roles of Usability Practitioners, Web Designers, and Web Developers in User-Centered Web Design*. Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.

Reference and Research Book News writes that this book is “intended for web designers and developers who build and maintain sites for libraries, this guide describes the design processes and content requirements needed to produce a user-centered result.” The importance of this book is for the librarian who wishes to further their knowledge on web usability for library users. Reeb demystifies the process of understanding websites for library users in order to increase the visual attributes of the site and develop specific web applications” (Design talk; understanding the roles of usability practitioners, web designers, and web developers in user-centered web design, 2009).

Dissertation:

Hallam, R. (2003). Assessing the quality of websites: The view from Public Library Authorities. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from http://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dissertations/2002-03/External/Hallam_Rebecca_MALib.pdf

In this U.K. dissertation, Hallam explores through questionnaire on what makes a good quality website that is useful for the library to collect as a linked resource. She explores

what makes a good website and how such websites' promotion by the library can increase standards of web development. The overall goal of the paper is to benefit the library profession by discovering how to assess websites for the public good.

Valenza, J. C. (2007). *Discovering A Descriptive Taxonomy Of Attributes Of Exemplary School Library Websites*. Retrieved October 16, 2009, from <http://digital.library.unt.edu/permalink/meta-dc-3911:1>

Valenza's studies ten effective school library websites for their best practices. Her dissertation systematically identifies which trends are of the most help to the school librarian in building a website. She also tackles the ways in which school libraries meet the changing needs of students in a technology enriched environment.

van der Velden, M. (2008). Usability of web 2.0 functionalities for information dissemination organizations. Retrieved October 17, 2009 from http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/413660686&referer=brief_results

In this survey based on the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) library in the Netherlands, students and faculty were asked to rate the usability of web 2.0 programs for the school's library. New technologies like text-messaging, e-books, and email notification were tested for their ease of use for the university population. Furthermore, suggestions on how web 2.0 services could be improved were also solicited.

Journal:

Eash, E. K. (2006). Podcasting 101 for K-12 Librarians. *Computers in Libraries* , 16-20.

Eash writes about the need for librarians to familiarize themselves with podcasting and its use in the library. She writes that it "supports efforts to differentiate instruction in the library," that is give patrons a wider range of materials to facilitate their learning style. The article includes "an introduction to podcasting, and looks at its applications in school libraries" (School Libraries (K-12), 2009). "Podcasting is a great tool for students" (Landry, 2009) which a library can capitalize on to further their use for students.

Podcast:

Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2009, June 23). *Libraries to the Rescue*. Retrieved October 18, 2009, from Institute of Museum and Library Services: http://www.ims.gov/resources/podcasts_Jun09.shtm

Five podcasts are available on this website from five librarians covering topics such as technology in the library to helping users find government assistance. The librarians

discuss what “other libraries have taken to help their communities” (Public Library Association, 2009). These podcasts primarily focus on how to “help residents during these difficult economic times” (Shaffner, 2009) which is an example of how a podcast can benefit other librarians in a timely and efficient matter between conferences. This means that creating a great library website is not just a focus on patrons but can also be a tool to increase professional knowledge.

Kretz, C. (Producer). (2006, April 10). *Learning to speak: Creating a library podcast with a unique voice*. [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.dowling.edu/library/about/learningtospeak.mp3>

Reference librarian, Chris Kretz produced this podcast to explain how the Dowling College Library created their podcast series, Omnibus. This podcast shows you “how you get people to want to talk on the show, how you market your radio show, and how much time it takes to put it together” (Extra Mile Design, 2006). It also goes into detail about how the “library approached podcasting and endeavored to produce a unique, worthwhile, and interesting program that would appeal to its various user groups” (HigherEd BlogCon, 2006)

Podcasts. (2009, February 12). Retrieved October 14, 2009, from Curtin University Library: http://library.curtin.edu.au/research_and_information_skills/online_tutorials/podcasts/index.html

Curtin University Library located in Perth, Australia began creating and posting podcasts available in a range of topics from learning research skills to book reviews and Opinion@Curtin University Library. The pedagogical value of podcasting is that it allows students to learn at their own pace and takes into account different learning styles (Ralph, 2007). Ralph and Olsen are librarians for the Curtin University Library but they discuss the reasoning behind the library’s move into podcasting and the success of the program in their paper, *Podcasting as an Educational Building Block in Academic Libraries* (2007). Podcasts also serve “as a jumping-off point for further exploration and research” (elanorlance, 2008) to invite further learning, as a library should have as a foundation stone in the library’s mission.

Website:

Mathews, B. (2009, February 15). *Ten Essentials for any library site*. Retrieved October 9, 2009, from Library Journal: <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6634712.html>

Mathews explains the ten essential ingredients needed to create a successful and user-friendly and appealing website for libraries. The elements he outlines are the basics of what makes a website great in the usability and not in just the latest bells and whistles

<http://www.godaisies.com/blog/2009/10/18/materials-to-develop-a-library-website/>

technology. He links to websites that employ the qualities he has selected. In the comments, Janet Van De Carr, the director of the Park Ridge Public Library in Chicago writes that “We are incorporating all of the points in the article” in building her library’s website. However, Joan Gosnell, the archivist for Southern Methodist University writes that “Some of the sites that you loved, I found very busy and distracting.” Mathews defends himself that his example websites were chosen for each point were only to showcase one component at a time.

Nielsen, J. (2009). *useit.com: Jakob Nielsen's Website*. Retrieved September 18, 2009, from useit.com: usable information technology: <http://www.useit.com/>

By being the guru of usability and straight forward simplicity in web design, Jakob Nielsen guides web developers on how to build websites that are simple and intuitive for visitors. Librarians can heed his principles on making intuitive websites that have worked for his clients which include Google and the BBC (Winder, 2008). CNN called him the “eminent Web usability guru” (Marks, 2001) so by becoming familiar with his work, the usability of a library’s website can be enriched immensely.

A link to Nielsen’s articles can be found [here](#).

Scott, D. (2009, August 12). *100 Terrific Tips & Tools for Blogging Librarians*. Retrieved October 14, 2009, from Online College: <http://www.onlinecollege.org/2009/08/12/100-terrific-tips-tools-for-blogging-librarians/>

Having a personal relationship with your users is difficult in today’s fast-paced world. However, through the platform of blogging, the librarian can reach out in a personable way to advertise library services, programs, or even just recommending a good book. Scott’s article lists 100 “interesting observations” (Badertscher, 2009) about creating a blog that can build a loyal reader base. The list provides tips in such areas as organization, networking, branding, readership, etc (Kroski, 100 Terrific Tips & Tools for Blogging Librarians, 2009).

Wiki:

Weblogs. (n.d.). In *LISWiki*. Retrieved October 16, 2009 from <http://liswiki.org/wiki/Weblogs>

This wiki hosts a list of libraries and librarians who publish their own blogs. Using this wiki will connect a beginning blogging librarian with ideas and a community of other librarian bloggers whom to learn from. It is an effort “to list all blogs by librarians” (Crosby, 2006). In the comments section of Meredith Farkas’s blog entry on wikis, discussion about the purpose of LISWiki emerges that points out that LISWiki is a

generalized wiki in the library field, but is included here as a source because of the roll call of librarian bloggers which are maintained on the Weblogs page.

YouTube:

Milligan, L. (2008, June 18). *100 Awesome Youtube Vids for Librarians*. Retrieved October 11, 2009, from Accredited Degrees: <http://www.accrediteddegrees.com/2008/100-awesome-youtube-vids-for-librarians/>

While this list of 100 videos from Milligan's website are not the YouTube videos themselves, she has compiled an impressive list of videos that teach basic library skills, program ideas, library news, library etiquette, and even just some plain humor. The inspirational list of videos (Godwin, 2008) shows how producing online videos for a library's website can be another useful tool for the innovative librarian. These videos are of "special interest to librarians was created for distance learners" (Del Castillo, 2008) that can learn from home.

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