Evaluating and Managing LibGuides: How can we better reach our users?

Lisa Campbell
WILU 2014
In the last 22 days, we deleted 266+ guides.
How did we get here?
We questioned usage statistics.
“LibGuide authors interpret the numbers as significant patron usage and quantitative support for the creation of more LibGuides.”

Castro-Gessner, Wilcox, Chandler, 2013, p. 253
“I am considering hits to indicate that someone arrived at a guide, found it useful, and continued using it or returned later.”

Slemons, 2013, p. 22
Springshare announced a new version of LibGuides
We hired a web content strategist.
OCTOBER 2012 - PRESENT

We tackled many improvements, with some success...
However, some challenges persisted.
Unclear titles and descriptions

Similar
- ENGLISH_125_2
- ENGLISH_125
- English 125 Winter 2013
- English 125

Ambiguous
- Read Read Read
- Eat, Pray, Love
- Writing, Citing, & Research

Acronymic
- UROP Fall 2012
- UC 107: WISE RP
- PEM
- ULAM

Inconsistent
- History 202: Doing History
- ANTHRBIO 368/PSYCH 338: Fall 2012
- Library Guide for ARTDES 399: Writing in Art and Design: Critical Issues in Art and Design
Confusing search/browse results

GOOGLE

Citation Analysis - Research & Technology Guides
This guide is designed for those who need information on how to use library resources for citation analysis. This includes information about impact factors, ...

Introduction - Citation Help - Research & Technology ...
The tabs for APA and MLA style have a number of examples. Under Bibliography help, there are links to citation generators that will format your citations for you.

Citation Guides - Research Guides - University of Michigan
Having trouble formatting your citations? Use one of those tools to automatically generate a citation books, journals, newspapers and more in APA, MLA, ...

MLA Style - Citation Help - Research & Technology Guides ...
Examples of preparing reference citations and the list of works cited are taken from chapters 5 and 6 of MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by ...

3. Google Scholar - Citation Analysis Guide - Research ...
This guide is designed for those who need information on how to use library resources

U-M LIBRARY WEBSITE

Highly Recommended Research Guides
1 - 4 of 4

Chinese Studies
A guide to selected digital resources for conducting research in Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan

East Asian Studies
An introductory guide to East Asian studies (Humanities and Social Sciences) English language resources

Japanese Studies
Selected information resources on Japanese Studies at University of Michigan

Korean Studies
Provides selected research resources in the area of Korean Studies, with a particular focus on social sciences and
cultural studies.

Other Research Guides
1 - 6 of 6

Central Asian and Caucasian Studies
This guide covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzb

Digital Humanities
An introduction to tools and projects in the field of digital humanities.
Broken content

- Broken links
- HTML errors
- Outdated media
- Empty space
- Browser or device issues
- Time-sensitive statements
We conducted a content inventory.
Methods

**ALL GUIDES INDEX + EXTRAS**

<table>
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**GOOGLE ANALYTICS**

- **Explorer**
  - Navigation Summary
  - In-Page

- **Behavior**
  - Overview
  - Behavior Flow
  - Site Content
    - All Pages
    - Content Drilldown
    - Landing Pages
    - Exit Pages
  - Site Speed
  - Site Search
  - Events

- **Pageviews**
  - Total: 1,420,936
  - Direct: 32,549 (2.31%)
  - Referral: 32,321 (2.27%)
  - Organic: 1,379,173 (99.41%)
  - Other: 1,009 (0.07%)
Findings

LibGuides have become the biggest piece of our web presence.

• Nearly 1,000 guides with ~7,000 pages of content.

• 120 account holders from dozens of library units

• creating an average of 164 new guides per year — more than 1,100 pages
An important piece of the content puzzle … that has historically received less attention.

LibGuides 7,000 pages

Drupal 2,000 pages
- Libraries
- Services
- Collections
- Exhibits & Events
- Etc.

8 content coordinators & bulk of UX / Web Systems’ attention

1 content coordinator
Findings

Much of our content is not reaching its intended audience.

• Out of over 1 million views in 2013:
  – Google was the top referral source
  – Five guides accounted for more than a quarter of total traffic, much of it coming from users outside the U-M community
  – Average user visited 2 guide pages for less than 2 minutes
  – “home” page for many guides received 50-80% of all views
Findings

We struggle to define LibGuides, their purpose, and what makes them effective.

• Most guides were subject, course, and outreach guides, but there were many other uses.

• Format issues

• Best practices outdated or in conflict
Findings

We aren’t taking advantage of many useful features.

• Only around 30% of boxes were collecting click-through statistics and being crawled by the link checker.

• Only 8.3% of boxes were linked copies (vs duplicates)

• Low use of comments, feedback, user-submitted links
We presented our results to various stakeholder meetings.
MAY 2014

We launched a library-wide cleanup initiative.
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What’s next?
Questions?
Lisa Campbell
lacamp@umich.edu
References


Slemons, M. *Design standards for LibGuides: Does better design lead to greater use?* (Master’s thesis). Retrieved from https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/record/uuid:e9704531-bcd4-4c00-8124-821247be010a