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

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

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

Inconsistent
- History 202: Doing History
- ANTHRIBIO 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**

Guides.lib.umich.edu/citation
This guide is designed for those who need information on how to use library resources for citation analysis. This includes information about impact factors,...

**Citation Analysis - Research & Technology Guides**
guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid...
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 ...**
guides.lib.umich.edu/citationhelp
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**
guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid...
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 ...**
guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid...
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 ...**
guides.lib.umich.edu/content.php?pid...
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...

Other Research Guides

1 - 6 of 6

**Central Asian and Caucasian Studies**
This guide covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzb...
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>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>C</th>
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### GOOGLE ANALYTICS

[Google Analytics screenshot showing data]

- **Pageviews**: 10,000
- **Behavior**
  - Overview
  - Behavior Flow
  - Site Content
    - All Pages
    - Content Drilldown
    - Landing Pages
    - Exit Pages
  - Site Speed
  - Site Search
  - Events

- **Pageviews**: 1,420,936
  - % of Total: 99.91% (1,429,208)
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?

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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