

Technology and the academic librarian: Emerging, merging, and changing the game

By Caitlin Bakker.

At Technology and the academic librarian: Emerging, merging, and changing the game, ALPS's December 2013 meeting, a series of seven lightning talks highlighted the role of the academic librarian in using, assessing, and repurposing existing tools and in the development of new tools to better engage and meet user needs. For those unable to attend the event, or who would like to revisit the content, a recording of all lightning talks is available at <http://www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca/alps/>.

Online instruction: Keeping it personal

In "Online Instruction: Keeping it Personal," Ania Dymarz (SFU) outlined her goal of creating a more personalized learning experience for 280 students in a first year Kinesiology course. As is the case with many library instruction sessions, objectives included familiarizing students with the physical library, introducing students to library resources, and teaching students how to evaluate those resources.

In addition to the number of students, in-person library instruction was further complicated by the renovations which were underway at the Bennett Library at that time. As a result, an online module was developed with the goal of helping students feel more comfortable in a physical library space without the benefit of being taught within that space. Strategies included incorporating self-guided tours and web-based assignments which would require students to physically visit the library space to retrieve print resources.

To use or not to use: Should academic libraries be using Web 2.0 tools to engage students and faculty?

Laura Thorne (UBC-Okanagan)'s "To use or not to use: Should academic libraries be using Web 2.0 tools to engage students and faculty?" presented the results of a research study conducted between December 2012 and April 2013 on the use of social media in academic libraries. Defining social media as internet applications that can be used to facilitate

two-way communications and knowledge exchanges, Thorne and her collaborator, Sarah Nicholson, investigated the effectiveness of social media tools at one mid-sized academic library.

Through surveys, it was found that 74% of students felt it would be worthwhile to engage with the library via social media, but only 9% were doing so. Thorne and Nicholson set out to explore the reasons behind this discrepancy, including a lack of awareness and the necessity of timely, relevant, and personalized content. Despite the enthusiasm of the respondents, it was clearly found that social media was seen as a value-added service rather than a replacement for more traditional reference and instruction services.

Teaching via Skype: The Rashomon Effect

Engaging a classroom of learners can be challenging, but it may prove an even greater challenge with a technological intermediary. Liaison Librarian Holly Hendrigan (SFU Surrey) examined the difference between the librarian and the faculty instructor's assessment of an online library session in "Teaching via Skype: The Rashomon Effect."

Hendrigan drew on her experience providing library via Skype instruction for a graduate-level Education course in Nanaimo. The session did not allow the librarian to receive visual feedback from the students or instructor and the librarian relied on the instructor to advance slides, click hyperlinks, and enter search terms. While the librarian felt that the session had been less than ideal, the faculty member reported that the students were fully engaged.

Web literacy standards and open badges

In "Web literacy standards and open badges," Cynthia Ng (CILS, Langara) described the potential applicability of the open badges system for libraries and library instruction. Badges can represent the achievement of skills and be connected to competencies, such as those outlined in Mozilla's

web literacy standards (available at www.webmaker.org).

While students are familiar with traditional forms of self-advocacy such as resumes, open badges were discussed as a means of enhancing the traditional resume through a more robust web presence. As the visible metadata includes the issuer, an institutional affiliation has the potential to add prestige to the badge.

Experimenting with shifting sands: UBC Library's Localized Open Online Course (LOOC) partnership

UBC's recent foray into the world of Localized Open Online Courses, or LOOCs, was described by Erin Fields. M101 was designed as a flexible learning space focusing on developing digital literacy skills from conducting research to synthesizing information to creating content. It contains forums in which participants are able to offer ratings and commentary as a means of engagement and to provide feedback on the design of the educational units. It was noted in discussion that one benefit of the LOOC may be as a professional development tool for faculty and staff within the community.

It was found that there were some challenges regarding understanding of intellectual property and copyright law among participants. In response, a unit was developed to serve as an orientation to some basic principles of copyright. The possibility of incorporating open badges is also under consideration.

Flexible learning support for a first year business course

In "Flexible learning support for a first year business course," Lindsay Ure (UBC) discussed a project in which an online information sources tutorial was created for a first-year business course. The business context of the module was of the utmost importance as in business there is not only less of an emphasis on traditional scholarly resources, but also a very wide variety of potential sources. One of the goals of the project was to raise awareness of the variety of resources available.

Four videos were developed focusing on credible sources of information for research assignments,

career research, and on-the-job research, as well as the various types of information sources, and how to find and evaluate information. Videos were embedded into quiz questions, which were made available through the course management system.

As part of the course, pretest and posttest questions were developed to help the librarian determine the impact of previous library instruction, see how students chose the best sources of information for their research, and measure whether awareness of information would improve after the tutorial. Assessment of these pre and post-test questions found no significant difference or, in the case of two questions, negative results. It was noted that user testing of questions during development may offer further insight.

Qualitative data analysis support for researchers

Nicole White (SFU) described the Research Commons' recently introduced NVivo service, which provides qualitative data analysis support for graduate students and researchers. Essentially, NVivo is a software package which helps to organize and analyze unstructured qualitative data and allows the user to test theories and identify trends.

To support the software, two graduate students have been hired to act as peer facilitators. These students had been using the software independently in their own departments and therefore possessed significant experience with the tools. Their responsibilities include one-on-one consultations, responding to e-mail inquiries, teaching workshops, and offering general course-integrated instruction sessions.

White noted that there had been significant cross-disciplinary interest in the software beyond the anticipated social sciences which included researchers in education, business, and applied science, among other disciplines. Following the deployment of the software, assessment has now begun to examine who is using the software and how the service may better meet user needs.

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