

EMBEDDED LIBRARIANS MEET
STUDENTS IN SPACE
ALAO 2009

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Research Realities

& The Good Approach

Land of Plenty—Tech Tools

- ▣ Computers
- ▣ Internet
- ▣ Cell Phones
- ▣ MP3 Players
- ▣ Search Engines & Full-text Databases
- ▣ Websites, Wikis, Blogs, Media
- ▣ Electronic Books, Journals, & Newspapers

And Yet, College Students Are:

Anxious, Confused & Frustrated!

Surprising Paradox:

- Research Seems More Difficult in the Digital Age!
- It's not easy to navigate “a vast and ever-changing information landscape.” (PIL Progress Report 2009)

Research Reduced



- Course-Related Research
 - ▣ Typical Assignment: 5 to 7 Page Argument Paper

- Everyday Life Research
 - ▣ Health, News, Personal Need, Career, Spirituality

Students Are Frustrated by “Course-Related Research”

60% - Inability to find desired materials

70% - First go to Wikipedia despite the professor's warning

80% - Procrastinate on more than 80% on their research assignments

Findability is #1 Challenge

Overwhelmed

- ❑ Information Overload
- ❑ Irrelevant Information
- ❑ Getting Started
- ❑ Not Knowing What To Look For
- ❑ Out-date Books

Lack Orientation to Find

- ❑ Books on Library Shelves
- ❑ Full-text Articles in a Database
- ❑ The “Perfect Source”
- ❑ Statistical Information
- ❑ Things Not on Web

Undergraduates want:

- Library Instruction Sessions--Optional
 - ▣ Nice, but soon forgotten
- I need just-in-time research.
- If I can cope on my own and avoid the library, I will.
- They seem to want a librarian in their learning space.


Undergraduates need:

- Big Picture Skills
- Language
- Situational Context
- Information Gathering



Research Aid in Student Space

Or The Better Approach



If We Build Library Networks,
Systems, Websites, OPACS, and
Federated Search Tools, Will
They Come?

The Mission: To Deliver Library Services to Users

So Where Are These Users?

Put simply, the library portal as we know it today is unsustainable. It, along with a host of other indicators such as declines in reference questions and shifts from print to e-resources, signals that for academic libraries a “let’s just keep doing business as usual” mentality is a sure path to obsolescence.

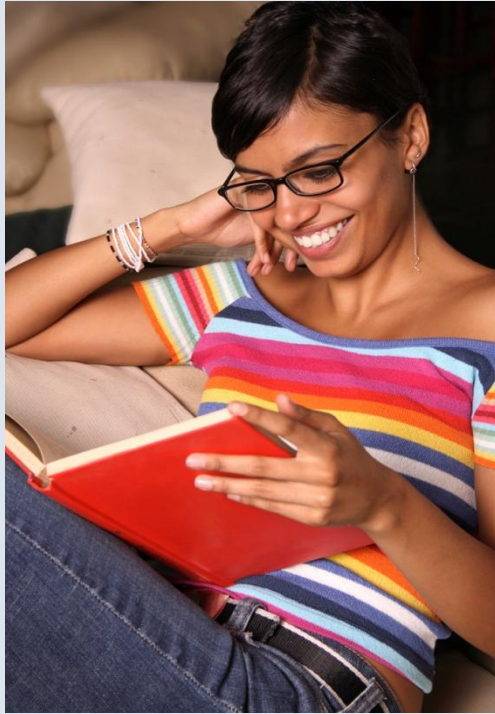
“The Library Web Site of the Future?” February 17, 2009

Steven J. Bell, associate university librarian, Temple University

He blogs at [The Kept-Up Academic Librarian](#).

Stark Statistics – Confront Realities

- Only 2% of users start at the Library Website rather than with search engines
- 90% of a University Library Collection cannot be found on the free Web



A Radical Solution: Infiltrate or Invade the Course Management System (Partner & Collaborate)

Academic librarians work with students, collections, and technology.

Show up online and make a student smile.

Market the Solution

The Blackboard Embedded Librarian!

Show up in online space students associate with course assignments and provide customized resources and services.



Blackboard Embedded Librarian

- Collaborates with Faculty
- Becomes instructor/course builder
- Understands course assignments
- Provides library links and research strategies for students
- Is available via IM, email, phone, F2F
- Uses Blackboard Tools

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Beginnings and Marketing

Need @ Miami University Middletown

- Miami University Regional Campus System Expands
- Mandate to Innovate on Regional Campuses
- Online Nursing Program Launched, Fall 2008
- Faltering Economy Motivates Us to Work More Efficiently
- National Trend: Deliver Library Services to Distance Users

Research within Blackboard

- Faculty-Librarian Collaboration
 - ▣ Better understand students' research assignments
 - ▣ Customize library content & services!
- Students & Blackboard Embedded Librarian
 - ▣ Familiar with Blackboard
 - ▣ Associate this online space with course assignments
 - ▣ Easy access to research help & links to library resources

Questions Faculty Should Ask

- How will my students complete research assignments when they are enrolled in an online course or meet at a location without a library?
- Would I prefer to collaborate with an information specialist who bridges the worlds of technology, academic collections, and students or go it alone?

Librarian Allays Faculty Fears



- What is a Blackboard embedded librarian?
- Why would I want one turning up in my Blackboard course?
- How long does the relationship last?

Marketing the Program to Prospective Faculty

- E-mail
- Library Blog
- New Faculty Orientation
- Newsletters
- Face to Face
- Word of Mouth

Faculty Agree to Participate

- Pilot Program, Spring 2009
 - ▣ 10 Faculty of 19 Sections
 - ▣ 13 Different Courses, 272 students
 - ▣ 3 Embedded Librarians

- Continuing Program, Fall 2009
 - ▣ 11 Faculty of 19 Sections
 - ▣ 11 Different Courses, 265 students
 - ▣ 2 Embedded Librarians

- Online, Off-Campus, Traditional
- Lower and Upper Division
- Humanities to Science/Technology

Faculty Needs Surveyed

- When is the embedded librarian needed in the semester? start-up, few weeks, or semester?
- Describe research assignment(s)
- Identify where students have struggled in the past
- Checklist of information literacy skills, Blackboard tools, technologies, and strategies available



Implementing

Model Blackboard Course



- Showcase library wares to faculty
- Demonstrate & explain possibilities
 - ▣ relevant electronic resources
 - ▣ teaching tutorials of research concepts
- Discuss where embedded content might be added

Implementation

- ▶ Collaborating face-to-face with faculty to discuss students' information needs early in the semester.
- ▶ Creating embedded content that meets the needs of the course:
 - LibGuides
 - Tutorials
 - Videos and podcasts
 - Lists of recommended resources specific to assignments
 - Forum and discussion board options

<https://mymiami.muohio.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Interaction

- Meeting students in class for an information literacy session early in the semester:
 - ▣ 15-minute introduction vs. full period of instruction
- Emailing announcements to welcome and alert to updated content

Interaction

- Waiting...



Interaction

- Students eventually seek library help!
- Requests trickle in as assignments come due.
- Students procrastinate on research. (Some things never change.)
- A rare few communicate early and often.



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What We've Learned and What the Future Holds

Assessing the Embedded Experience

- Two web-based surveys: students and faculty
- Students (6.25% response rate)
 - ▣ 82% visited embedded librarian pages
 - ▣ 64% found resources useful and used new ones
 - ▣ 70% want embedded librarians in future courses
- Faculty (44% response rate)
 - ▣ 100% thought students used better search methods
 - ▣ 75% agreed students better understood options
 - ▣ 50% agreed students chose better topics or sources
 - ▣ 100% would collaborate in the future

Lessons Learned



- Increased email, IM, and in-person contacts from students during pilot
- Study the course schedule to find teachable moments
- Location, location, location! Placement of librarian materials is crucial
- Combine the strengths of both face-to-face and asynchronous interaction

Lessons Learned (cont'd)

- “Embedded” term has caught on elsewhere on campus
- More interaction = more time (workload issues)

What's Next?

- Survey faculty and students in embedded classes (late November)
- Analyze results and fine-tune methods
- Create new content for courses & new contact methods
 - ▣ More “point of need” F2F instruction sessions
 - ▣ Using Elluminate to conduct sessions with small groups or whole classes
 - ▣ More Captivate tutorials
- Work more collaboratively with faculty on research assignments – share skills
- Identify faculty and courses for embedding in Spring 2010

Learn More

- Head, A., and Eisenberg, M. (2009, February 4). Finding Context: What Today's College Students Say About Conducting Research in the Digital Age. *Project Information Literacy Progress Report*, pp. 1-18. Retrieved March 6, 2009, from http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_ProgressReport_2_2009.pdf
- York, A. (2009). Taking Library Instruction into the Online Classroom: Best Practices for Embedded Librarians. *Journal of Library Administration*, 49(1), 197-209.
- Attend 14th Off-Campus Library Services Conference, Cleveland, 2010



Questions?