Midwinter Virtual Conference 2022

Questions from Session 3: A Library Website Redesign in the Time of COVID, by Erin Rushton and Bern Mulligan (Binghamton University Libraries)

Q1. If you work with your university's central marketing and communications department, what are tips can you provide for projects like this?

It helped that we had worked with C&M department on our previous web design project in 2013. At that time, we were migrating to the university platform (OmniUpdate) and so there were some compromises (on both sides) about branding, the footer, the banner, and having a customized search box on the homepage. For this project, the biggest change was the re-design of our homepage. As we mentioned in our presentation, we met with C&M early on the project to talk about our plans. However, while our Digital Designer occasionally reached out to the department for help, we didn't have an opportunity to meet with them until we were almost ready to launch. This was mostly because we were running on such a tight schedule. In retrospect, we felt that our groups should have had more frequent contact.

Q2. What platform did you use for development: WordPress?

OmniUpdate

Q3. How do you define "research guide"? And do you still find that there is a lot of duplication of content between the website and guides? Do you have any other specific criteria of what goes where? We struggle with this!

For the most part, content " about" the Libraries e.g. departments, services, collections are housed on the website. LibGuides includes all subject guides and how-to guides.

Q4. On the new website, what drove your decision to move the navigation menu from left side to right?

This was how the university templates were designed.

Q5. Did you incorporate testing with users (ex: card-sorting with students/faculty/etc., usability testing with the wireframe, etc).?

Originally this was part of our plan but because of COVID we weren't able to do as much user testing as we had wanted to. Instead, we relied on input and feedback from our colleagues in the Libraries to make decisions.

Q6. Have you received feedback that tools that were hidden before are being more frequently used? Such as the chat with a librarian tool that you mentioned earlier?

We didn't initially receive a lot of feedback about the new redesign apart from a few compliments. Hopefully, this means that our users are able to find the information they need.

Q7. What is your routine maintenance schedule for the website moving forward?

We don't have a routine maintenance schedule in place but we are regularly updating content. We also have some areas of the website that we want to improve and so we have mini-redesign projects planned this year.

Q8. Did you look at the new website through a culturally responsive lens for it to be more inclusive?

Accessibility was very important in the redesign. The other area that we focused on was trying to ensure that the images that we used on the website reflected the diversity of the campus population. One of the advantages to the redesign is that we are better able to respond to what is happening in the world. For example, last summer we had a Black Lives Matter image on our homepage.