

2008 - 09 Innovation of the Year Application

GCC Libraries Website Redesign and Content Contribution System

Executive Summary:

The redesign is a multi-phased approach to improving student information access by enhancing the usability, accessibility, assessibility, and maintainability of the library website. Initial stages of the project redesigned the library website to align with the GCC web and enhance information architecture. Subsequent phases deployed dynamic content modules that facilitate direct updates by content experts and are responsive to user preference.

Innovation Contributors:

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Criteria:

Quality: It is evident that the innovation increases "quality" in the course, program, office, or institution.

Access to library information resources has improved. In addition to cosmetic enhancements aligned with the campus design scheme that generally improve the user experience, the new website provides greater access to detailed information at the time of user need and based on user searching and viewing preferences.

The redesigned **library homepage** provides multifaceted information access points in order to serve users who seek information in different ways. Access points are provided based on service classifications, user type, and popularity of use. Additionally, two different methods of searching / browsing the site are included.

For example, links are arranged under major service and information categories such as *Research, About Us, Services, and Help*. However, those who prefer to find information based on their GCC affiliation are able to do so under links *for Students, for Faculty, for Staff, and for Visitors* (>6100 views in 2008). In keeping with trends in commercial site development, the most popular library databases are listed on the homepage under the heading *Popular Databases* – thereby reducing the number of clicks for users to find the information they are seeking. Information search and browse features are elevated to the homepage including a *Google* supported *Site Search* (>8,750 searches in 2008) and an *A-Z Site Index* (>3200 views in 2008) where users can click on a letter to find the resource they are looking for.

Dynamic web modules enable users to access and view information based on various user preferences and

moment of need.

Example:

Users accessing the subscription databases available via the library website (24% of all library website page views during the past 14 months), now have the opportunity to view database listings in various ways. Users can now get more info at the time of need by (a) mousing over database titles to view a brief description of the database (b) clicking on the ‘information’ icon to view detailed information or (c) switching to the ‘brief description’ view which shows information about all the databases on the page. Further, users can view lists limited in content and in the order relevant to their research or instructional need. Each subject area can be expanded to show all databases for a given subject, with or without brief descriptions – a great handout for classes and instructional purposes. Users can switch to an alphabetical listing by title or view resources by content type such as primary source, statistical, encyclopedic, or reference databases.

It is interesting to note that the more advanced features and user preferences associated with this enhancement appear to take time to discover. In comparing January and February of 2008 to 2009:

- Individual Database Info Page: Increased in page views by 502%
- Ordering – by Title: Increased 61%
- Some elements seem relatively undiscovered

Web modules that were deployed after the homepage redesign (such as the example above and those listed below) enable content experts to update the website in an unmediated fashion – allowing the most current and relevant information to be accessible to students in a timely manner.

Currently deployed similarly enhanced systems include:

Web Module	Page Views	Dates	URL
Library Homepage	117,582	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/
Database Listings	75,801 (24%)	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/databases/
Subject Guides	10,426 (15%)	1/1/2009 – 3/3/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/help/guides/
Staff Information	9,200	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/aboutus/contactus.cfm
News and Features	3731	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/aboutus/whatsnew/
Frequently Asked Questions	3117	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/help/faq/

Media Services	884	1/1/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/media/
Awards and Readers' Advisory	820	2/10/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/collections/featured/
Suggestion Box	248	2/12/2008 – 12/31/2009	http://lib.gccaz.edu/lmc/aboutus/feedback/
Art Collection	NA	Not Public Yet	http://devlib.gccaz.edu/lmc/collections/art/listing.cfm

Since redesign, some highlights include:

- The library homepage has included 100 news and featured items. News items are directly added to the website by content experts through web forms, stored in a database, and are viewable to users in various configurations.
- Nearly all of the more than 60 subject guides have been updated – directly by content experts. Several new guides have been created on-the-fly by content experts to support classes.
- Media Services department is more visible on the library website. Descriptions of media services are included and easily updated in response to feedback from users and employees.
- Resources and information specific to the needs of particular user groups (i.e. students, faculty, staff, community) are prominently featured on the homepage.
- The Art Collection and FAQ modules include elements to support Spanish speaking students and campus HSI efforts. The Art Collection includes Spanish language audio files describing many of the pieces. The FAQ module has been built so that Spanish language FAQ answers and questions can be easily added to the web site.

Efficiency: here is evidence that the innovation contributes to a more efficient way of doing things.

The deployment of these systems enhances efficiency in the following ways:

- Content experts may directly update web content without the assistance of a technically trained intermediary.

For all the web modules listed above, content experts can (or will be able to) add content directly to the website using web-based forms. This facilitates quality, accuracy, and timeliness of website information and fosters responsibility and accountability.

- Web pages that display the same content in different configurations do not have to be separately maintained and updated.

Prior to the deployment of these modules, the web librarian needed to update the same information in multiple places when changes occurred. For example, staff information was maintained in a variety of ways including (a) alphabetical order (b) departmental / area of responsibility categories on a single page (c) individual departmental pages and (d) individual staff pages. Now all of this information resides in a single database and

is delivered in different configurations when requested by the user. Modifications to data take place within one source – the database, edited via web forms. Additionally, information about temporary employees (such as adjuncts) may be temporarily suppressed without removing information from the database. Data about adjuncts who are employed intermittently does not need to be re-entered into the system upon return; the data simply needs to be reactivated.

- Additional modules have been created to manage services and communication initiated by users; these modules retain records related to instruction and media requests as well as comments entered into the online suggestion box.

Revised instruction and media service request modules allow for the tracking and management of these service requests while facilitating communication via auto response and customizable response messaging. Additionally, modules allow for basic project tracking and the assignment of responsible parties to requested services.

Cost Effectiveness: There is evidence that the innovation adds a value to the institution while at the same time containing or reducing costs.

As indicated above, the efficiencies achieved by these website enhancements will result in cost effective use of staff time.

The inclusion of web analytics services integrated into the website redesign (and provided free by *Google*) enables the library to better assess website and resource usage and make data-based decisions.

Replication: The innovation selected can be replicated in other institutions with a minimum of difficulty.

We have received several positive comments from the campus community regarding the website redesign. Thus far the general design of the library website has been borrowed and deployed by the GCC Psychology and Math Departments. See: <http://www.gccaz.edu/psyc/> and <http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/math/> .

Creativity: The innovation should be as original as possible or the adaptation should be creative.

Portions of this project are particularly creative – such as relying on innovative coding to tweak the web presentation of 3rd party services that do not meet our standards of usability. An example of this is the rewriting of the cascading style sheet parameters that control the *Serials Solution 360* journal linker service.

Timeliness: The innovation should not be more than five years old in the institution, but it must have been around long enough to be tested so that it meets most of the criteria.

Initial stages of this project were deployed in January 2008. The project is ongoing as we seek continuous improvement.

Learning: The results of the innovation have been shared with others for the benefit of students throughout Maricopa.

We have demonstrated various website improvements to the Library Digital Group, a District committee charged with managing and enhancing district-wide digital library services. Several members of the group expressed an interest in the way that we incorporated our design principles into the third party journal linker service, *360-Link*. Additionally, I plan to propose that the Library Digital Group begin to manage district-wide database subscriptions in a manner similar to the databases management module described under the ‘Quality’

section. A consistent intercollegiate / intra-district management module supported by a database backend and configured to meet District and College needs would be a benefit to all the colleges as well as library users across the district seeking information from library databases.

Collaboration: The innovation successfully demonstrates collaboration, teamwork, and cooperation to ensure continuous process improvement efforts on behalf of students throughout Maricopa.

All elements of this project rely on collaboration. Within the library, we have worked with a variety of colleagues who are responsible for the area undergoing enhancement. External to the library we worked with the Office of Information Technology to lay the technological foundation as well as the Director of Institutional Advancement to ensure the site met with institutional web standards in light of the GCC web redesign.