

Overcoming the Challenges to Creating a Single Online User Experience

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Consequences of Legislation
and Policies in Libraries

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Poll #1

What area do you work in within your library?

- Systems/Web/ER/ILS
- Reference/Public Service
- Technical Services/Cataloging
- Access/Circulation/ILL
- Administration
- Other

Overview

- Examine today's challenges of managing library websites
- Understand what a single online user experience means
- Learn tips for overcoming these challenges

What are the challenges?

Multiple Applications

Innovative
interfaces



Summon™
Web Scale Discovery

Computer Lab Solutions



CONTENTdm®
Digital Collection Management Software

Docutek
ERes



WORDPRESS



ILLiad™

A single interface for more efficient interlibrary loan

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Poll #2

How many different applications are integrated within your website?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- More than 15

Poll #3

Who manages each of those applications integrated into your website?

- Each application is managed by a different individual/department/committee
- Multiple individuals/departments/committees manage multiple applications
- One individual/department/committee manages all of the applications

Multiple Access Points

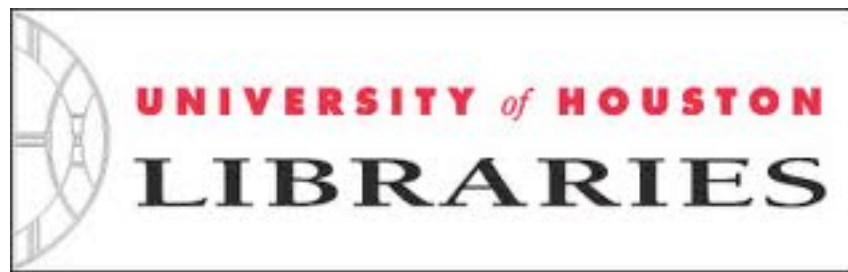


Plethora of Access Points

- info.lib.uh.edu
- library.uh.edu
- guides.lib.uh.edu
- digital.lib.uh.edu
- search.lib.uh.edu
- weblogs.lib.uh.edu
- ask.lib.uh.edu
- archon.lib.uh.edu
- uh.edu/library
- uh.edu/libraries
- lws.uh.edu
- login.ezproxy.lib.uh.edu
- illiad.lib.uh.edu

Branding

- Library branding
- Overarching institutional branding
- Logos
- Colors
- Fonts
- Functionality
- Consistency between virtual & physical branding



UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | LIBRARIES



UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON





Searching: **Academic Search Complete**

[Choose Databases »](#)

<input type="text"/>	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾
AND ▾ <input type="text"/>	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾
AND ▾ <input type="text"/>	in	Select a Field (optional) ▾

Search

Clear



[Add Row](#)

[Basic Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [Visual Search](#) | [Search History](#)

UNIV OF HOUSTON
LIBRARIES



Search Options

[Reset](#)

Search modes

- ☒ Boolean/Phrase
- ☐ Find all my search terms
- ☐ Find any of my search terms
- ☐ SmartText Searching [Hint](#)

Apply related words

☐

Also search within the
full text of the articles

☐

Limit your results

Full Text ☐

References Available ☐

Proprietary products can be difficult
to customize in a uniform way

Different Library Types

- Academic
- School libraries
- Public libraries
- Special Libraries
 - Business
 - Law
 - Medical
 - etc.

Multiple Sources for Content Creation

- Website CMS
- Mobile website CMS
- LibGuides
- LibAnswers
- Blogs

...And multiple people throughout the library create that content



Organizational Politics

Applications might be administered by different departments

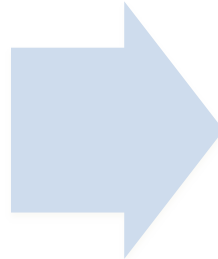
- Public/Access/Liaison Services
 - Guides, IM/virtual reference
 - Blogs/social media/communication channels
 - ILL/reserves
- Technical Services
 - Catalog
 - Discovery layer

Organizational Politics

- Special Collections/Digital Services
 - Finding aid tool
 - Local/institutional repository
- Information Technology Services
 - Server/website access
 - Network/user accounts

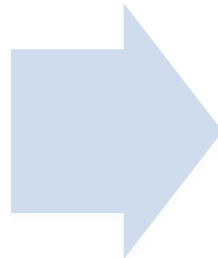
Assessment Tools

Google Analytics
Transaction logs
Click Analytics



Can apply these
across your library's
web presence

Database A
Database B
Database C



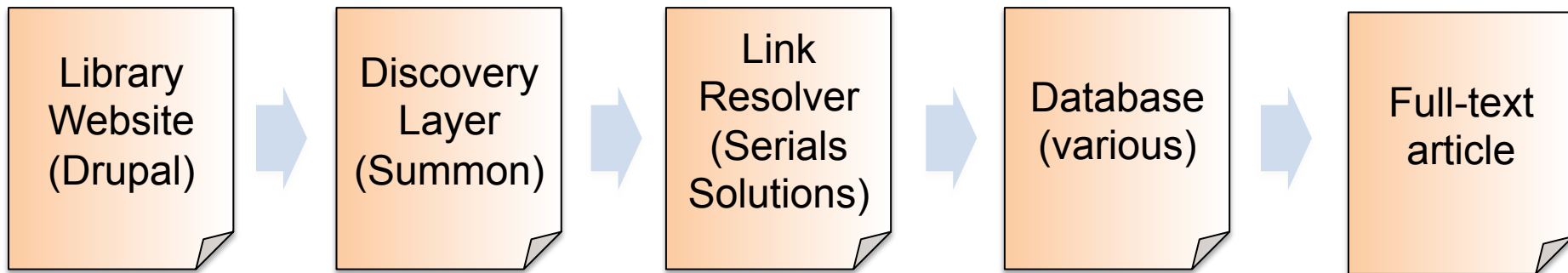
Analytics from
separate sources
can be challenging
to compare

Programming Resources

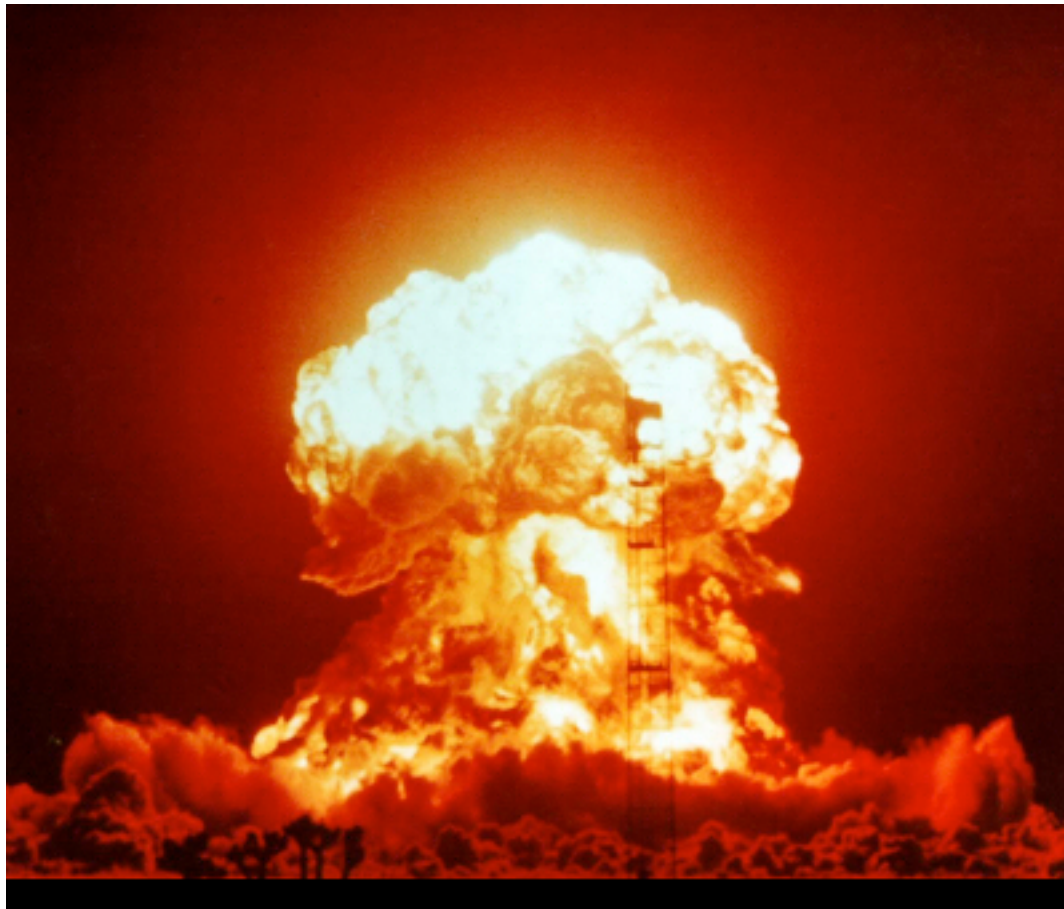
- In-house (or community-contributed) custom programming can help hide the seams
- Too few libraries have advanced programming knowledge or skills in-house
- While this is changing in larger organizations, some smaller libraries will not be able to hire a programmer for the foreseeable future, if ever

Where is the user?

Example: User looks for an article from home



Enough is enough!



What is a single user experience?

Poll #4

Does someone in your library oversee the entire web presence?

- Yes, an individual
- Yes, a department, team, or committee
- No, each person or department manages their own section
- Not sure

User Experience (UX)

- Accessibility
- Information Architecture
- Interaction design
- Writing for the web
- Usability and usefulness testing
- User research
- Visual design
- Web analytics

Single User Experience

Apply UX concepts across your website's multiple applications and content sources so users feel like they are interacting with a single website



Interface, branding and functionality
should be familiar across systems

Single UX isn't easy

Complexity



1 website = 1 UX

1 website with multiple applications
integrated well = 1 UX

1 website with multiple applications not
well integrated = Multiple UX

Multiple UX across 1 website =
Confused users

How to get there

Tip #1: Ask questions

- What is the purpose of the website?
- What is the purpose of each section of the site?
- Who is the audience?
- Is the branding and content presented consistently across every application?
- Is the functionality associated with each user behavior presented consistently?

Tip #2: Create content style guides

- Provide consistency
- Clear up confusion among multiple contributors
- Resolve questions on frequently problematic elements like abbreviations, capitalization, tone, brand, naming conventions
 - Rockwell Pavilion vs. EDR Pavilion
 - User vs. patron
 - Website vs. web site

Tip #3: Create consistent brand

- Establish a plan for using:
 - Fonts
 - Colors
 - Logos
- Create consistent user expectations



Tip #4: Create a consistent social media presence

- Branding
- Voice
- Be engaging
- Be frequent
- Integrate where appropriate



Tip #4: Take advantage of APIs

- Some APIs allow for complex interactions, others just permit widget construction
- Most ILSs, institutional repositories and discovery platforms provide APIs
- Many content management systems also have APIs
- Structured data coupled with APIs means content can more easily be pulled across multiple platforms
- Helps to prevent duplicative work

Tip #5: Create appearance of uniformity



- Start with high impact, low effort projects
- Use consistent branding
- Streamline the data sources you control
- Try to employ similar functionality across applications

Tip #6: Play the politics game

- Create buy-in from all stakeholders when making decisions about a web application
- Some people can be territorial about the systems they manage, but remember you are working together to provide the best services you can for your library
- Try to get involved in all decisions about the services your library offers on the web
- Accept the limitations of your environment
 - Tech skills
 - Staffing
 - Funding
 - Time

Tip #7: Be nice to others

- If you aren't the manager of an application that is integrated into the library's website, it means that you will have to work closely with others
- Not everyone will grasp the importance of a single UX – help them to understand



Tip #8: Research before you buy

- Is the user interface customizable?
- Are there APIs available?
- Can you push out or pull in structured data?
- How is the customer support?
- Is there an open source version of the application?
- Are many other libraries using this application?
- How will this application integrate with the other existing systems?

Is a cohesive single user experience even possible?

Yes, but it's not easy.



Thanks!

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Presentation also available on
<http://www.slideshare.net/vacekrae>