Ongoing Implementation
Outreach to Stakeholders

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Based on data collection shared with Penn State from Springshare in 2017, the first entire year using the LTI integration, an increase of over 200,000 hits on guides can be directly linked to use of the Canvas LTI. This was nearly a quarter of our total guide traffic increase for the year, and by all accounts a large number. However, it is also a number we are committed to increase through outreach efforts.

Although LTI integration makes it a lot easier for librarians to put content where instructors and students can reach, it in no way guarantees that anyone will use said content. In much the same way that students can come to the library itself and have no real understanding of what resources the library offers them, the Library Resources tab can be passed over within the course navigation if students are not instructed to use it. What's more, the link can easily be hidden by the instructors before a course even starts if they don't see a need for its inclusion. Its use is not necessarily intuitive, not because of the inaccessibility of guide content, but because of a lack of context for its use.

Based on student and instructor behavior, this seems likely to be true no matter where the Library Resources tab might be located. Though students in our initial survey described a sharp interest in guides, they also had no idea what their purpose was if they hadn't been told before the time of the survey. Instructors are incredibly busy people, with papers to grade, lessons to plan, and oftentimes their own research that calls for their attention. Their knowledge of library resources fluctuates from those who are extremely aware to those who rarely look at the library's website at all. While some explore the depths of Canvas, others use the most basic tools necessary for their course and leave it at that. Some don't use Canvas at all. In the spring of 2017, out of 27,000 SISIDs, only around 14,000 were active in Canvas.

To add another variable to this equation, at Penn State instructional designers are often responsible for taking the content provided by instructors and course designers and organizing this content within Canvas for easy use by both resident and online students. These experts in Canvas design are the most likely candidates to include manual library integrations, as well as to make the Library Resources tab a prominent feature in the course. Much like instructors, they have a variety of library backgrounds. Some are enormous library advocates, while others are familiar with very little beyond library reserves.

For some courses, the presence of library reserves, a required feature for students to access, showcases the existence of the library guide for the course as well as the Ask a Librarian widget. However, with only seven hundred courses with reserves, this number is small in comparison to fourteen hundred activated Canvas sections.

This chapter will review actions and strategies to target students, instructors, and instructional designers in order to increase awareness of the automatically integrated guides, as well as the blue cloud manual integration.

Students

Since students do not create assignments nor produce lectures and are often put in positions of being simple consumers of course content, reaching them through wide marketing efforts is difficult and not altogether necessary. Students seem to best learn about library tools in the context of a need for them in a course, and

that is how we decided our marketing efforts should be focused. In general, this meant not focusing on the student at all, but instead reaching out to those who control what the student is presented within the LMS.

However, at Penn State, the Library Resources link exists in all courses where it has not been removed, whether or not it is explained or used by the instructor. The way students engage with their courses differs wildly, but there are always some who will click on the Library Resources link to see what it is. For these students, it is important to make the content in the guides clear and easy to understand even if out of context.

The most important step, which is also reflected in the literature on guide usability, is that students are given a succinct but clear explanation of what the guide is for.[1] Otherwise, our student survey indicated they were confused as to the purpose of guides and had no real reason to use them. Taking this into consideration, guide authors and librarians were encouraged to provide some sort of introduction to their content. Not only would these descriptions help students, but they are also useful for instructors and instructional designers who might then realize that the guide content was something that could improve their courses.

Obviously, guides designed with usability in mind are more accessible to students, making it more likely that students will use them. Some usability practices focused on by our LibGuides team included writing more concisely for the web, reducing the length of lists of links, better link descriptions, and putting the most important material in the first box on the first page of the guide.

Instructors

At Penn State, courses are taught by a variety of instructors, from graduate students, to lecturers, to tenured faculty. Each of these groups is extremely busy in their own right, so the interest in reaching out to librarians or including library resources in course content varies greatly. Instead of applying a blanket system of outreach, a more tailored approach was taken, focusing on areas of greater impact.

The most important partner in advertising our Canvas integrations were the subject and campus librarians themselves. Penn State as an institution is divided among twenty-four campuses, including the largest at University Park. While the subject librarians are stationed at University Park, the campus librarians are the direct line to the library at the campuses they work. These two groups of librarians have already done the legwork in building bridges between librarian and faculty and often are most aware of the needs of instructors they support. If these librarians are equipped with an understanding of the

functionality of the LTI, the resources available for integration, and the ways these resources can be integrated in courses, they can then share this information with their faculty.

Subject and campus librarians are almost always the creators of course guides, and they often spearhead the process of guide association. Not only does this allow us to assign the most appropriate guide to courses, but it also provides an additional line of communication between instructor and librarian. Every semester, custom guide associations must be remade, which allows for another regular opportunity for conversation and collaboration to take place.

In addition to this grassroots form of outreach, other more formal outreach steps were taken. Our Learning Design Librarian served as a Canvas blogger. The *Canvas Blog* was created by the Teaching and Learning with Technology unit at Penn State and featured entries from instructional designers, faculty, and others who were going through the course design and transfer process. Involvement in this blog required one post a month. Library posts included a post on the Library Resources page, how to request reserve readings using the new system, automatic integration of library resources, the Ask a Librarian widget, the manual blue cloud integration, and the Embedded Librarian program. Blog posts included visuals and statistics as well as two videos demonstrating the different types of integration.

Penn State as an institution took many steps to make certain that Canvas users were comfortable through the transition. This led to many opportunities to demonstrate the libraries' functionality in Canvas, both in presentation-style and demonstration-style scenarios. Presentations were made at yearly Canvas Day events, where faculty and designers were encouraged to explore the possibilities Canvas has to offer for their courses. The Embedded Librarianship program was showcased along with automatic and manual Canvas integrations, providing faculty and designers with the full spread of what library resources were available for their courses. Presentations were also made at our yearly technology symposium, a very large event that draws attendees from across Penn State's twenty-four campuses, as well as the yearly Learning Design Summer camp.

Attendance at such presentations were varied and unpredictable, from large crowded classrooms to a group of three. But the impact was not limited simply to those who viewed the presentation. The libraries' mere attendance at such events, with their visibility on program schedules, alerted Canvas users to the libraries' presence in Canvas and gave contact names for future reference. The philosophy of the libraries' LMS team was that at an institution of our size, there's no such thing as too much exposure, so we sought to be present at every event possible.

Instructional Designers

Much of the outreach to instructional designers took place in the same ways listed for instructors. Many institutional outreach efforts, like the *Canvas Blog* and Canvas Day, were directed at both instructors and designers. However, there was a specific need with regard to instructional designers, who were in some cases less aware of the libraries' resources.

We, a group of librarians, would not be aware of this issue had there not been an instructional designer on the libraries' LMS team. This team member pointed out the lack of understanding she had encountered when looking at the libraries and what was available when she was working on courses herself. In order to rectify her gap in knowledge, she set up a private consultation with a librarian and left the session with much more knowledge than she had possessed previously. She felt more confident engaging with the libraries and more willing to include materials she hadn't previously considered.

Because of this, we began a slightly different approach with instructional designers than we would have considered previously. This approach went beyond simply sharing what library resources were available and extended to demonstrations showing how library resources could be used within the context of a course, as well as the situations that students found themselves in that required library resources.

The first instance took place during a monthly meeting of instructional designers held synchronously online and in person, consisting of around seventy-five attendees, with more to review the recorded presentation at a later time. The LMS team was requested to share their Canvas integrations with the group. It was decided that in order to provide context that a brief demonstration of the ways a student could use the libraries' resources to do research was in order.

The session began with a brief hypothetical research situation that a student might encounter, and then the group was queried for potential solutions. While Google and LionSearch (Penn State's Summon product), "library guides," and "library databases" were mentioned by attendees, there was no specific strategy suggested as to how to approach the actual process of doing research. With this context, the instructional designers were then briefly taken through the library's resources, starting with locating a subject or course guide, then choosing the proper database, followed by creating an effective keyword search, and ending with sending citations to themselves.

The entire process took approximately fifteen minutes, and while it was not interactive, the number of questions that followed the demonstration was large. Through the process of answering questions, we were able to explain the LTI and its implementation, as well as gather feedback for how instructional designers felt the LTI and its tools could be used. The librarian presenting handed out her cards at the end of the session, and when requests for custom guide integration were made, they were often from individuals who had some sort of connection with that session. As word of mouth is extremely important within the instructional design community, making connections with individual designers can prove extremely fruitful.

The library's LTI integration is now a part of information literacy workshops regularly provided for instructional designers. These workshops encourage instructional designers to consider the information needs of the students and provides handouts and references that instructional designers can refer to in the future as they work to embed the library in their courses.

Conclusion

In order for LMS library integrations to be used, they must be understood. Although automatic integration allows specialized library resources to be targeted at all LMS courses, that does not mean that they'll be accessed. It is important then to build ongoing relationships with stakeholders, providing not just information that such integrations exist, but also reasons why to use them.

While Penn State's implementation of the LTI is centered on a small group of librarians and staff, the LTI's effectiveness in many ways hinges on the subject and campus librarians and their ability to instruct their faculty in the use of this tool. As is nearly always the case, collaboration in this instance is key.

Note

1. Denise FitzGerald Quintel, "LibGuides and Usability: What Our Users Want," *Computers in Libraries* 36, no. 1 (February 2016): 4–8.