

All You Need Is a Few Good Tools

Many information literacy tutorials you find online are created in LibGuides. LibGuides are used to “curate knowledge and share information, organize class and subject specific resources, and to create and manage websites.”¹ They are not intended to be used to create tutorials as they don’t have the pedagogical features needed to create effective and engaging learning experiences. There are hundreds of online sources that list and review the latest and most popular e-learning tools. Here I have included those that librarians will find most helpful in teaching information literacy skills via online tutorials. One thing to remember when choosing a tool is that no one tool can do it all, and depending on your content and your learning objectives, you will most likely need more than one.

Arist

Arist is the newest e-learning tool described in this chapter and is by far the most mobile-friendly. Arist is an e-learning platform tool that allows you to develop content delivered via text messages. In addition to text messages over phones, content can also be delivered via What’s App, Teams, and Slack. Arist is easy to use and has almost no learning curve. Content types include text, images, and questions. There are three types of questions: multiple-choice, open-ended, and one-word answer, and question feedback can be customized at the answer level. A typical course will consist of some text followed by a question. The learner replies to the text message with their own message and receives a reply back with feedback followed by more snippets of new content. The content is organized around days, and a typical course takes about five to seven days to complete. A learner has twenty-four hours to complete a day’s content, including answering all the questions. Once a learner completes a course, you are able to look at several analytics,

including number of completions and answer accuracy, and you can also see each learner’s response to a question. Arist has a lot of potential, especially for reaching learners whose only access to technology is via a cell phone. My library recently used Arist to create a six-day course on using primary resources. Preliminary survey data indicates that learners were overwhelmingly satisfied with the text message-based course. Arist is on the pricey side and charges anywhere between \$1.00 to \$5.00 per learner, but the company will work with customers, especially educational institutions and libraries, on pricing. Arist also offers a free version with limited features and a limit of fifty learners. Arist is best used to teach more conceptual aspects of information literacy. It will not work well with development of skills that need practice, as students will need to toggle back and forth between the course and website or application, which can lead to extraneous cognitive overload.

Arist
<https://www.arist.co/>

Sidecar Learning

Sidecar Learning is a web-based application that employs the side-by-side method to teach students how to use databases and other online resources. When the student opens a tutorial, two windows automatically open side by side. The narrower window contains directions, while the other larger window contains the database or website. Learners are given directions as they interact with the live website or database. Learners can also answer different question types, including multiple-choice and short-answer, and are provided with customized feedback. Upon completion of a tutorial, the learner receives a certificate of completion.

Sidecar Learning was developed by two University of Arizona Library librarians after the well-known Guide on the Side software program lost support and funding. Sidecar is 508-compliant and can be used with any database or website. One unique feature of Sidecar Learning is the automatic setup of the windows. The user does not need to adjust the windows, and no window disappears behind another window. Sidecar Learning has different plans that range from \$99 to \$399 per year per creator/license. The \$99 plan allows a maximum of three tutorials, while the \$399 plan allows unlimited tutorials. There is also a free thirty-day trial. Sidecar Learning also offers custom pricing for larger organizations. Sidecar Learning works best with the development of information literacy skills and teaching how to use a website, use a database, and fill out a complicated form. It should be noted that the author, Yvonne Mery, is co-owner of Sidecar Learning.

Sidecar Learning

<https://www.sidecarlearning.com/>

LibWizard

Like Sidecar Learning, LibWizard is specifically aimed at libraries and uses a similar side-by-side method. Learners work with two side-by-side windows, one with textual information and the other with the content (website, database, catalog, and more). In addition to text, you can also include images, PDFs, widgets, and many different question types with customized feedback. In addition to side-by-side tutorials, LibWizard also allows you to create forms, surveys, and quizzes and includes advanced reporting and analytics. LibWizard is a product of Springshare, which also makes LibGuides and LibAnswers. LibWizard does not provide any pricing information on its website, but it does offer a free trial. LibWizard works best for developing information skills and database skills and for quizzing and getting feedback from students.

LibWizard

<https://springshare.com/libwizard/>

Articulate

Articulate has several popular products including Rise and Storyline. With Rise you can create sleek web pages (Articulate calls these pages courses). They are courses as opposed to static web pages because you can easily add interactive options and quizzes. Content

is presented modularly, and users can easily move through the different modules. You can also restrict movement between modules until the learner completes a task or answers a question. Content is primarily presented via text and images. Storyline is more customizable than Rise and includes more interactivity and many more question types. Storyline can also be used to create screencasts, animations, and simulations. Both Storyline and Rise are mobile-friendly, and content automatically adjusts to any screen, and both have course/learner management system integration. Rise 360, which includes Storyline, also features an extensive library of assets including images, characters, and templates. It also includes collaboration and review tools with which teams can work together. All Articulate products are easy to use, have a very low learning curve, and come with excellent customer service. Articulate has different pricing structures from \$499 to \$649 annually for nonprofits including academic institutions. Rise is an excellent tool to present information on a variety of topics in a fun, engaging, and interactive way. Storyline works best with simulations and practicing skills.

Rise

<https://articulate.com/360/rise/>

Storyline

<https://articulate.com/perpetual/storyline-3/>

Adobe Captivate

Adobe Captivate is often mistaken for a simple screen-casting software program, but it is much more and can be used to create highly interactive mobile-ready tutorials. Captivate has a plethora of features including quizzes, templates, conversion from PowerPoint slides to interactive videos, and access to Adobe Stock assets. Captivate can be integrated with an LMS. Captivate has different pricing structures, which start at \$33.99 a month for an individual plan. Team and enterprise plans are also available upon request. Captivate works best with simulations and practicing skills.

Adobe Captivate

<https://www.adobe.com/products/captivate.html>

Vyond and Powtoon

Thanks to YouTube and TikTok, video is everywhere, and it is the way students access all types of

information today. Vyond and Powtoon are two of the most popular video animation creation software platforms. Both offer a variety of customizable templates, characters, and other assets. Vyond has three different types of characters: contemporary, business-friendly, and whiteboard animation. Powtoon also has whiteboard doodling, screen capturing, and video templates for specific social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. Both support voice-overs, music, and lip syncing of characters. Both also offer a number of pricing structures starting at \$228 per year. Video tutorials are best used to teach information literacy concepts and theories.

Vyond
<https://www.vyond.com/>

Powtoon
<https://www.powtoon.com/>

Actionbound

Of course, students still visit our physical spaces and need to learn what they offer and how to use them. An engaging and digital way to do this is via scavenger hunts delivered on students' phones. There are several scavenger hunt apps on the market with a wide range of pricing. One of the most affordable is Actionbound. With Actionbound you can create interactive digital tours around your library. Students download the Actionbound app, then scan a QR code. Then, they are given directions to different areas of the library and interact with the app by answering multiple-choice or short-answer questions or taking and uploading a picture. Actionbound also has a GPS feature where students need to find a specific spot. When students answer a question correctly or find a spot, they move on to the next step. There are also reporting features with which you can view results and how students rated the tour. Actionbound prices vary by type of institution and size; library-specific plans start at around \$60 per year. Note that Actionbound is based in Germany and lists prices in euros.

Actionbound
<https://en.actionbound.com/>

Jotform

Like the better-known Google Forms, Jotform allows you to create forms for a number of different purposes, including getting feedback from students via ratings and surveys and having students answer open-ended questions. Unlike Google Forms, Jotform integrates seamlessly with tools like Rise. Jotform also allows you to run different types of reports to analyze student responses. Jotform has different pricing plans, including a free version with limited features, and plans from \$12 to \$39.50 per month. There is also enterprise pricing upon request.

Jotform
<https://www.jotform.com/>

Playposit

Although popular and effective, videos are passive. Playposit allows you to add interactivity to any video. Videos can be imported from platforms like YouTube, TEDed, Vimeo, and Khan Academy, or you can upload your own. You can pause a video at any point and add interactivity in the form of a multiple-choice question, a short-answer question, a discussion forum, and summative quizzes. Playposit integrates with any LMS, and as soon as a student completes a tutorial, you can see how they performed on the questions. Playposit has several pricing structures, including an individual subscription that costs \$144 a year.

Playposit
<https://go.playposit.com/>

Note

1. "LibGuides," Springshare, accessed August 30, 2021, <https://www.springshare.com/libguides/>.