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Summer LibGuide Workshops: Making Our Digital Content More User-Friendly

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SUMMER LIBGUIDE WORKSHOPS: MAKING OUR DIGITAL CONTENT MORE USER-FRIENDLY

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THE INSPRIATION

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THE PROJECT

Weekly presentation of best practices at regularly scheduled meeting

Weekly 2 hour workshop

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THE SPECIFICS

Week 1: Profile box/Homepage

Home	Profile/Homepage	Links	Appearance	Accessibility

Items to Look Over (July 9)

Profile box

- Include faceshot
- Email link
- Social media links
- Updated subject specialties
- Uniform profile box name across all guides - change all guides to: "Contact Me"
- Profile photo should be kept to under 200x200 (eg., 154x193)
- Include on first page of guide (not every page, except as makes sense)

Homepage

- Table of contents included in guide

Best Practices Sources

- LibGuides Best Practices - Metropolitan State University
  "Add a photo. Usability study participants thought photos were 'friendly'.
  Either use your own phone number and email address, or make it clear that the email you are linking to is the reference desk. Usability participants were confused when contact info listed was not the librarian in the photo."

- Improving Independent Student Navigation of Complex Educational Web Sites: An Analysis of Two Navigation Design Changes in LibGuides - Information Technology and Libraries
  Students are sometimes confused by tabbed navigation. Users can experience "banner blindness," which causes them to ignore horizontal graphics at the tops of screens, like LibGuide tabs. LibGuides can be improved by adding navigational content to the body of the page, and improving tab design.

- Best Practices for LibGuide Design - Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
  An overview of the contents and links to the individual tabs within the guide should be on the homepage. Users don't always notice tabs; they prefer information in the body of the page.

THE SPECIFICS

Week 2: Links

| Home | Profile/Homepage | Links | Appearance | Accessibility |

Items to Look Over (July 16)

Links

- Check for currency/broken links
- Edit for conciseness
- Annotate (1-2 sentences)
- Use link boxes so stats can be tracked and link checker used
- Use Database links for databases to improve statistics
- Database links all use proxy URL
- LibGuide should have friendly URL

Best Practices Sources

- LibGuides Best Practices - Springshare
  Use the correct asset type for the content you're using (database link for databases, etc.) Assets are reusable, using them correctly makes it easier to make changes across guides, Springshare link checker can't check links if they're in a rich text box, and using the correct box makes it easier to aggregate statistics.

- Letting students take the lead: A user-centred approach to evaluating subject guides - Evidence based library and information practice
  Students prefer links to have succinct annotations to resources.

- LibGuides Usability Testing: Customizing a Product to Work for Your Users - University of Washington
  Guides should provide context and guidance. Students don't like lists of resources without descriptions.

THE SPECIFICS

Week 3: Appearance

| Home | Profile/Homepage | Links | **Appearance** | Accessibility |

Items to Look Over (July 23)

Appearance

- Edit for conciseness
- Clear visual hierarchy
- Keep it to one row of tabs, if possible
- Tab titles should be four words or less
- Column width adjusted so no empty space
- Colors/fonts/sizes are standardized
- Bonus: visual interest, such as pictures and cartoons

Best Practices Sources

- Cognitive Load Theory and Library Research Guides - Internet Reference Services Quarterly
  Reduce Cognitive Load by clearly directing users to the information they need. Don't include extraneous information, and don't use jargon words.

- Testing the Usability of Two Online Research Guides - Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research
  Create shorter pages, avoid jargon.

- Letting Students Take the Lead: A user centered approach to evaluating subject guides - Evidence based library and information practice
  Students value a simple and clean layout and are most likely to use a guide with a good visual appearance.

- F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content - Nielsen Norman Group
  Readers scan webpages in an F shape rather than reading the whole page. Put the most important content in the top two paragraphs and start subheadings, paragraphs, and bullet points with the words that convey more information.

- LibGuides Usability Testing - University of Washington
  Keep the number of tabs to a minimum. Reduce visual clutter and information overload.

THE SPECIFICS

Week 4: Accessibility

| Home | Profile/Homepage | Links | Appearance | **Accessibility** |

Items to Look Over (July 30)

Accessibility

- Images all have alt text tags
- Links open in the same window or user is told if they open in new windows/tabs
- Formatting removed from copy/pasted text from outside sources
- Use Syles rather than changing text size (ex: Header 1)
- Run the guide URL through WAVE Tool

example

Best Practices Sources

- Accessibility - Springshare Help and Documentation
  Remove the formatting of content before copying and pasting to try to eliminate the external site's code (such as color and font). To check the accessibility of a site, run the guide through the WAVE tool, rather than just a W3C Validator tool.

- Click Here! (And Other Ways to Sabotage Accessibility) - ACRL presentation
  All images should have descriptive text as an alt tag so visually impaired users can understand the page using screen reader software

- Introduction to Web Accessibility - WebAIM
  Overview of many accessible design principles

- Links should open in the same window - LibUX
  Links opening in the same window is expected behavior (based on most other websites a user visits).

- Links and Hypertext - WebAIM
  Visually impaired users can get confused if a link opens in a new window, if their screen reader doesn't tell them. If the link opens in a new window, text should alert them of the fact.

THE RESULT

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RESOURCES

Summer LibGuides Workshop LibGuide:
http://libguides.unomaha.edu/libguide_project_2015

ACRL News article from East Carolina University:
http://crln.acrl.org/content/76/5/278.full