



An Analysis of Academic Library Web Pages for Faculty

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Web sites are increasingly used by academic libraries to promote key services and collections to teaching faculty. This study analyzes the content, location, language, and technological features of fifty-four academic library Web pages designed especially for faculty to expose patterns in the development of these pages.

INTRODUCTION

This article reports the results of a study of Web pages designed for faculty on the Web sites of the largest academic libraries in the United States. Through systematic analysis, we investigate the location, content, language, and technological attributes of each Web page. Key questions examined in the research include: Do most large academic libraries have easily located Web pages for teaching faculty? If so, are there core content items found on most pages? How difficult is it to locate these pages and what types of language and technology do they utilize? Do any features stand out as particularly innovative or useful? The research uncovers some clear patterns in the development of such Web pages as well as insights into what is often not included, particularly in the area of collection development. Our research contributes to the study of academic library Web pages as well as to the body of literature on how to conduct outreach to faculty.

Relations with teaching faculty and the use of Web sites are both key topics in academic libraries today. It has been said that faculty are among the “most powerful and influential constituents” of any academic library.¹ Libraries collect resources based largely on what the faculty are teaching and researching and they work hard to satisfy this key user group. The Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) publishes a *Toolkit for Academic and Research Libraries*, intended to help libraries promote and market their services, which describes “faculty” as a key target audience and recommends Web sites as a potential vehicle for delivering the message.² Web sites are increasingly used by academic libraries for outreach to faculty. As Bao noted in 2000, universities and colleges now use Web sites as a “new medium for promoting products and services, for providing data and information” to their users.³

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a fairly substantial body of literature which examines the structure and content of academic library Web sites, but little which focuses on Web pages for faculty. Both King and Stover and Zink looked at the general design and organization of academic library Web pages to note similarities and differences.⁴ One major factor in the effectiveness of Web design is the clear labeling of links on a library Web page and several studies have advocated the use of annotations instead of unclear, confusing library jargon.⁵ In the area of Web page structure, two studies found that academic library Web pages were not always directly linked off their parent’s institutional home page.⁶

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Detlor and Lewis examined 107 academic library pages for holistic content using a coding methodology that was modified for the present study.⁷ Cohen and Still compared the library pages of research institutions with two-year colleges in order to come up with a list of core common content.⁸ Agingu looked at the content of historically black college and university library pages.⁹

Several other studies looked for the presence or absence of specific content on academic library Web pages. In the area of library collections, Hahn and Schmidt looked for collection management and scholarly communication items¹⁰; Straw focused on collection development policies¹¹ and Bao reviewed links to commercial databases.¹² In the area of services, Barsun looked for the presence of policy information on unaffiliated users.¹³ Coffta and Schoen investigated interlibrary loan lending information¹⁴ while Dewey looked for a checklist of specific library services related to policies, reference, circulation, reserves, collections, and user support.¹⁵ Other studies include Kuchi's search for a mission statement¹⁶ and Welch's search for marketing and public relations material.¹⁷

Still other studies analyzed specific links off the library homepage in the areas of e-mail reference and ready reference,¹⁸ the acquisitions department,¹⁹ the catalog department,²⁰ and distance education.²¹ The study of specific links off academic library Web pages designed especially for faculty is not well developed in the literature. Hahn and Schmidt looked for such pages on Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resource Coalition (SPARC) member Web sites in relationship to collection management content, and they found that only 43 percent of the Web sites they analyzed had Web pages specifically tailored to faculty with a significant section on collection management. Furthermore, the information that was present was most often departmental contacts and purchase recommendation forms rather than information about collections or scholarly communication.²² The present study analyzes the content of academic library Web pages specifically for faculty and also looks at what technologies are used on the page, the placement of the page in relationship to the library homepage, and reviews the language of the links.

METHODOLOGY

The sample of libraries used in this study was taken from the May 2005 edition of ALA Fact Sheet 22²³ ("The Nation's Largest Libraries"), which consisted of the 100 largest libraries as determined by number of volumes held. Public libraries were excluded from the list and the remaining sixty-nine academic libraries formed the population of our study. See Table 1 for the list of universities, number of volumes, and identification number assigned to each. This list was divided equally among the three researchers, who then located the home page of each library and searched for a page devoted to faculty. Faculty in this case was defined as the traditional nonlibrarian, "teaching" faculty of the university. In searching for the faculty pages, it was agreed not to search deeper into the site than three or four clicks or levels from the library home page. The location of the link to a faculty page link, if any, and its "distance" from the library home page were captured in a checklist whose results are shown in Table 2.

The content on the fifty-four faculty Web pages found was then scanned and captured using another checklist which contained forty-eight content items organized into five main categories and four subcategories (see Table 3). The list

developed out of an in-house project to improve our faculty outreach Web page by comparing it to other university faculty Web pages; from this we got our list of variables which formed the checklist. Although not exhaustive, the checklist was designed to capture most of the key content we found on most of the Web pages. Table 3 includes sections in the following functional areas: information about the physical library facility; current awareness issues like copyright and open access; collections (including the library catalog, databases, and special collections); services (with subcategories devoted to lending, purchasing and acquisitions, research support, and teaching support); and library contact information (personnel and a place to send complaints, etc.).

Two additional checklists were employed to capture other characteristics of the Web pages. One allowed the researchers to describe the language used on the links of the page to check for library jargon. Each page was classified as primarily "descriptive," "annotated," or "jargon." The language was considered to be "descriptive" if the links clearly described their purpose (for example, a hyperlink named "Course Reserves" leads to a more detailed explanation of how material could be placed on reserve). If this same link included a detailed explanation of course reserves on the actual faculty Web page, it would be considered "annotated." The language would be considered "jargon" if the label was not clear (for example, the name of a course reserves system such as ARES or technical library terminology). The designation of "Other" was used for pages that use a combination of language types (see Table 2).

A fourth checklist was used to capture some of the technological features of the faculty Web pages, including indexes or site maps, a Web log ("blog") capability, search engines, podcasting, RSS feeds, wikis, and the ability of the user to customize the page. Finally, some Web pages had innovative features or useful information that was not described on the checklists and the researchers had the discretion to record these items on supplemental lists of "Cool Ideas" (see Table 2).

Each Web page was independently reviewed by two different researchers, who then resolved any differences in findings for each school. They recorded the presence or absence of all the checklist items for each page by using an Excel spreadsheet and assigning the value of "1" to items that were found and "0" to items not found. Information from the entire Web site, including both the central and outer frames, was included as long as the content was clear and unambiguous from the link label. For example, an outer frame link for "Hours of Operation" would be counted, but a more general link called "About the Library" would not be counted since it was not specific. The initial Web page reviews were completed by the first researcher between August and September 2006 with the secondary reviews occurring between September and November 2006. After each Web site had been reviewed by both researchers, the results were compiled in November 2006 and the statistical results calculated in the Excel spreadsheet.

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations resulting from the methodology employed. It is possible that some of the libraries reported as not having faculty pages do in fact have such pages, but they were not located. Web pages are also moving targets in that they are constantly being revised and modified, which led to some complications when the pages were reviewed by the second

Table 1
List of Universities

Number	University	Number of Volumes
1	Harvard University	15,181,349
2	Yale University	11,114,308
3	University of Illinois-UC	10,015,321
4	University of California-Berkeley	9,572,462
5	University of Texas-Austin	8,322,944
6	University of Michigan	7,800,389
7	Columbia University	7,697,488
8	University of California-Los Angeles	7,576,790
9	University of Wisconsin-Madison	7,232,850
10	Cornell University	7,120,301
11	University of Chicago	6,977,186
12	Indiana University	6,647,355
13	University of Washington	6,436,960
14	Princeton University	6,224,270
15	University of Minnesota	6,200,669
16	Ohio State University	5,674,784
17	University of NC-Chapel Hill	5,492,451
18	Duke University	5,360,303
19	University of Pennsylvania	5,273,887
20	University of Arizona	5,040,584
21	University of Virginia	4,921,442
22	Penn State University	4,779,165
23	Michigan State University	4,582,004
24	University of Oklahoma	4,427,670
25	University of Pittsburgh	4,420,970
26	University of Iowa	4,380,734
27	Northwestern University	4,315,314
28	New York University	4,176,065
29	Rutgers University	4,050,009
30	University of Florida	4,021,629
31	University of Kansas	3,980,589
32	University of Georgia	3,955,004
33	Arizona State University	3,856,561
34	University of Southern California	3,800,702
35	Washington University-St. Louis	3,608,538
36	Johns Hopkins University	3,572,375
37	University of South Carolina	3,374,496
38	Brigham Young University	3,373,793
39	University of California-Davis	3,365,689
40	State University of New York-Buffalo	3,330,476
41	Wayne State University	3,323,580

Table 1 (continued)

Number	University	Number of Volumes
42	University of Colorado	3,314,432
43	University of Hawaii-Hilo	3,294,184
44	Brown University	3,257,242
45	North Carolina State University	3,236,096
46	Louisiana State University	3,213,314
47	University of Rochester	3,185,231
48	University of Connecticut	3,168,617
49	University of Missouri-Columbia	3,149,211
50	University of Massachusetts	3,132,418
51	University of Utah	3,128,547
52	University of Notre Dame	3,054,075
53	University of Kentucky	3,053,726
54	University of Maryland	3,106,940
55	Texas A&M University	3,016,358
56	University of Cincinnati	2,977,475
57	University of California-San Diego	2,953,024
58	Temple University	2,900,832
59	Syracuse University	2,900,448
60	Vanderbilt University	2,882,057
61	University of Tennessee-Knoxville	2,880,949
62	Southern Illinois University	2,791,775
63	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	2,767,320
64	University of California-Santa Barbara	2,765,756
65	Emory University	2,755,929
66	Auburn University	2,724,011
67	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	2,707,849
68	Kent State University	2,634,374
69	Stanford University	8,000,000

reviewer. It is also possible that some of the libraries in our study utilize Web pages located on an intranet site to provide information to their faculty. As external users, we would be unable to locate and evaluate these pages. Additionally, the content and organization of the checklists could be critiqued, but the study as a whole was meant to provide a meaningful snapshot of these library Web pages at a certain time. The grounded theory approach²⁴ provided the theoretical framework for the study because we had no preconceived notions about the results of our investigation. Rather than testing a hypothesis, we allowed the data to generate the conclusions.

RESULTS

Content

Of the sixty-nine large academic libraries in our study, 54 or 78.26 percent had a Web page devoted to university teaching

Table 2		
	Total	Percent
<i>Location of faculty Web page from library home page</i>		
Frontpage	39	72.2%
1 level	11	20.4%
2 levels	4	7.4%
3 levels	0	0.0%
>3 levels	0	0.0%
	54	100.0%
<i>Language used on faculty Web page</i>		
Descriptive	26	48.1%
Annotated	26	48.1%
Jargon	0	0.0%
Other	2	3.7%
<i>Technology found on faculty Web page</i>		
A–Z index	11	
Blog	1	
Search engine	38	
Podcasting	2	
RSS feed	2	
Wikis	0	
Customization	4	
Site map	18	
Total	76	

faculty. Such pages could not be found for fifteen academic libraries. A review of the results shown in Table 4, which summarizes the content of the 54 faculty Web pages, shows that 96.3 percent of the pages included information on Reserves, the most commonly found item on all Web pages. Bibliographic Instruction was the second most commonly found item with 90.74 percent of the pages including this item. There was a tie for the third most commonly found item between links to the library catalog or other databases and descriptions of the circulation policy at 88.89 percent. In fourth place at 87.04 percent was information on librarian subject specialists, which often includes contact information. Reference help was in fifth place at 85.19 percent.

“Of the 69 large academic libraries in our study, 54 or 78.26 percent had a Web page devoted to university teaching faculty.”

Only one or two library Web sites included information on the five least commonly found items shown in Table 4: a

Table 3	
Content Found on Library Web Pages for Faculty	
<i>A</i>	<i>About the library facility</i>
A1	Hours
A2	Location/address
A3	Maps of service points
A4	Disability access
A5	Study space
A6	Computing info
A7	Photocopying info
A8	Library tours
<i>B</i>	<i>Current awareness/issues</i>
B1	Announcement/newsletter
B2	Frequently asked questions
B3	Digital library initiative
B4	Copyright/fair use
B5	Scholarly communication
B6	Open access
B7	Institutional repository
<i>C</i>	<i>Collection</i>
C1	General collection introduction
C2	Electronic resources
C3	Library catalog/databases
C4	Citation management software
C5	New acquisitions
C6	Special collection
C7	Archives
C8	Exhibits
C9	Multimedia collection
<i>D</i>	<i>Services</i>
D1	Lending
D1.1	Circulation policy
D1.2	Document delivery
D1.3	Interlibrary loan
D2	Purchasing/acquisitions
D2.1	Acquisition guideline
D2.2	Collection development policy
D2.3	Collection budget
D2.4	Purchase request form
D2.5	Donating (gifts)

(continued on next page)

Table 3 (continued)

<i>D</i>	<i>Services</i>
D3	Research support
D3.1	Research guide/tutorial
D3.2	Reference help
D3.3	Library training for faculty/RA
D3.4	Remote access help
D3.5	Research alert
D4	Teaching Support
D4.1	Reserves
D4.2	Bibliographic instruction
D4.3	Training for TA
D4.4	Instructional technology support info
D4.5	Distance education support
D4.6	Writing resources for students
D4.7	Customised library resources for courses
<i>E</i>	<i>Library contacts</i>
E1	Subjects specialists
E2	Library administrators
E3	Service department contacts
E4	User complaint contact

description of the library's collection development policy, information on training for faculty or research assistants, information on training for teaching assistants, acquisition guidelines, and information regarding the collection budget.

Overall, the results indicate a broad pattern of variables relating to library services being promoted relatively more than the variables relating to library collections. The three categories with the highest percentage of variables present on all the pages were lending services, teaching support, and research support. Library contacts came in fourth, followed by information about the library. It is possible that 'information about the library' was not as prominent because faculty access the library remotely more than in person and have little need for information on hours or locations. The three categories with the least number of variables present on all the pages were collection information, current awareness issues, and purchasing/acquisitions information.

Web Page Structure/Design

The results from Table 5, which describe attributes of the faculty Web pages such as location, language, and technology, show that 72.22 percent of the Web pages can be found through direct links from the university library home page. An additional click is required for 20.37 percent of the pages and, finally, 7.41 percent of the pages need two clicks to bring the user to the faculty Web page. No Web pages were further than two levels from the library home page. The language used in the links on the faculty Web pages is generally specific and jargon free: either descriptive (48.15 percent) or annotated (48.15 percent) language was found for 96 percent of the pages.

**Table 4
Frequency of Content Items**

Rank	Content Item	Total	Percent
1	Reserves	52	96.30%
2	Bibliographic instruction	49	90.74%
3	Library catalog/databases	48	88.89%
3	Circulation policy	48	88.89%
4	Subject specialists	47	87.04%
5	Reference help	46	85.19%
6	Electronic resources	43	79.63%
6	Interlibrary loan	43	79.63%
7	Purchase request form	35	64.81%
7	Research guide/tutorial	35	64.81%
8	Instructional technology support info	33	61.11%
9	Document delivery	30	55.56%
10	Hours	29	53.70%
11	Copyright/fair use	28	51.85%
12	Scholarly communication	24	44.44%
13	Customized library resources for courses	23	42.59%
14	Remote access help	22	40.74%
15	Location/address	20	37.04%
15	Computing info	20	37.04%
15	Announcement/newsletter	20	37.04%
15	Service department contacts	20	37.04%
16	Library tours	18	33.33%
16	User complaint contact	18	33.33%
17	Writing resources for students	17	31.48%
18	Disability access	16	29.63%
18	Study space	16	29.63%
19	Citation management software	15	27.78%
20	Maps of service points	12	22.22%
20	General collection introduction	12	22.22%
20	New acquisitions	12	22.22%
21	Photocopying info	11	20.37%
22	Distance education support	10	18.52%
23	Frequently asked questions	9	16.67%
23	Open access	9	16.67%
23	Special collection	9	16.67%
23	Donating (gifts)	9	16.67%
23	Search alert	9	16.67%
24	Digital library initiative	7	12.96%
24	Institutional repository	7	12.96%
25	Multimedia collection	5	9.26%
25	Library administrators	5	9.26%

Table 4 (continued)

Rank	Content Item	Total	Percent
26	Archives	4	7.41%
27	Exhibits	3	5.56%
28	Collection development policy	2	3.70%
28	Library training for faculty/RA	2	3.70%
28	Training for TA	2	3.70%
29	Acquisition guideline	1	1.85%
29	Collection budget	1	1.85%

The results show relatively scant use of technology on the faculty Web pages. Thirty-eight schools or 70.37 percent of the Web pages included a search engine device to locate content on that page or the university library Web site. Only one-third (18 or 33.33 percent) include a site map and only 20.37 percent include an A–Z index for help in locating content. Only two schools included information on podcasting or had RSS feeds

Table 5

	Total	Percent
<i>Location of faculty Web page from library home page</i>		
Front page	39	72.22%
1 level	11	20.37%
2 levels	4	7.41%
3 levels	0	0.00%
>3 levels	0	0.00%
	54	100.00%
<i>Language used on faculty Web page</i>		
Descriptive	26	48.15%
Annotated	26	48.15%
Jargon	0	0.00%
Other	2	3.70%
	54	100.00%
<i>Technology found on faculty Web page</i>		
A–Z index	11	20.37%
Blog	1	1.85%
Search engine	38	70.37%
Podcasting	2	3.70%
RSS feed	2	3.70%
Wikis	0	0.00%
Customization	4	7.41%
Site map	18	33.33%
	76	n/a

Table 6**Content Ranking by University**

Rank	University	Score	Percent
1	Johns Hopkins University	30	55.56%
2	University of South Carolina	28	51.85%
2	University of Maryland	28	51.85%
3	University of Texas-Austin	26	48.15%
3	University of California-Los Angeles	26	48.15%
3	Indiana University	26	48.15%
4	University of Oklahoma	25	46.30%
4	New York University	25	46.30%
4	Arizona State University	25	46.30%
4	Washington University-St. Louis	25	46.30%
4	North Carolina State University	25	46.30%
5	Cornell University	22	40.74%
5	University of Chicago	22	40.74%
5	University of Kansas	22	40.74%
5	University of Utah	22	40.74%
6	University of Illinois-UC	21	38.89%
6	University of Southern California	21	38.89%
6	University of California-Davis	21	38.89%
6	University of Tennessee-Knoxville	21	38.89%
7	University of Missouri-Columbia	20	37.04%
8	University of Washington	19	35.19%
8	University of Minnesota	19	35.19%
8	University of Cincinnati	19	35.19%
9	University of NC-Chapel Hill	18	33.33%
9	Rutgers University	18	33.33%
9	University of Colorado	18	33.33%
9	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	18	33.33%
10	University of California-Berkeley	17	31.48%
10	Vanderbilt University	17	31.48%
10	Kent State University	17	31.48%
11	Stanford University	16	29.63%
12	University of Wisconsin-Madison	15	27.78%
12	University of Pennsylvania	15	27.78%
12	University of Pittsburgh	15	27.78%
12	University of Florida	15	27.78%
12	Brigham Young University	15	27.78%
12	University of California-San Diego	15	27.78%
12	Auburn University	15	27.78%
13	Harvard College	14	25.93%
13	University of Hawaii-Hilo	14	25.93%
13	Southern Illinois University	14	25.93%

(continued on next page)

Table 6 (continued)

Rank	University	Score	Percent
14	State University of New York-Buffalo	13	24.07%
14	University of Notre Dame	13	24.07%
14	University of Kentucky	13	24.07%
15	University of Virginia	12	22.22%
16	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	11	20.37%
17	Princeton University	10	18.52%
17	Ohio State University	10	18.52%
17	Temple University	10	18.52%
18	University of Arizona	9	16.67%
18	University of Georgia	9	16.67%
18	Wayne State University	9	16.67%
19	University of Michigan	7	12.96%
20	Michigan State University	6	11.11%
21	Yale University	0	0.00%
21	Columbia University	0	0.00%
21	Duke University	0	0.00%
21	Penn State University	0	0.00%
21	University of Iowa	0	0.00%
21	Northwestern University	0	0.00%
21	Brown University	0	0.00%
21	Louisiana State University	0	0.00%
21	University of Rochester	0	0.00%
21	University of Connecticut	0	0.00%
21	University of Massachusetts	0	0.00%
21	Texas A&M University	0	0.00%
21	Syracuse University	0	0.00%
21	University of California-Santa Barbara	0	0.00%
21	Emory University	0	0.00%

on the pages; only one included information on a Web log (blog) and none made use of wiki technology. The percentages for technology total more than 100 percent because some Web sites used multiple technologies.

Individual Schools

In terms of school rankings, John Hopkins University had the most content items, a total of thirty of the forty-eight possible items for a score of 55.56 percent. The University of South Carolina and the University of Maryland were tied for second place with twenty-eight items, and the University of Texas at Austin, UCLA, and Indiana were tied for third place (see Table 6). One might assume that larger libraries would have more developed Web pages for faculty, but we found no statistical connection between the size of a collection and the content or features of Web pages for faculty or whether they even had a dedicated Web page for faculty. A regression analysis was performed to analyze the relationship between the total score of a Web page and the number of volumes in the

collection. This analysis showed that there was likely not a relationship with a correlation coefficient of just 0.06068 at a significance level of 0.62042. A narrower regression analysis of the score of a Web page relating only to the Collection variables shown on Table 3 and the number of volumes provided a correlation coefficient of only 0.03657 at a significance level of 0.62042. It is interesting to note that two of the seven libraries with the greatest number of volumes do not have faculty Web pages.

“...we found no statistical connection between the size of a collection and the content or features of Web pages for faculty or whether they even had a dedicated Web page for faculty.”

DISCUSSION

More than three quarters of the academic libraries surveyed had Web pages for faculty no more than one or two clicks away from their home pages, making it clear that most view faculty Web pages as an important outreach vehicle. The faculty Web pages found in our study emphasized classic teaching, research, and lending services for faculty such as reserves, bibliographic instruction, and document delivery. Links to existing collections such as the online catalog and electronic databases were provided, but it is somewhat surprising that information about new acquisitions, special collections, and archives did not receive more emphasis since academic libraries devote considerable resources to building and maintaining their collections. In 2004/2005, for example, the average ARL-member university spent a total of \$7,694,261 on monographs and serials, which was 38 percent of their entire library budget.²⁵

Furthermore, comparatively little attention was paid to explaining how the collection is developed. Although almost two-thirds of the libraries included a link for faculty to request a purchase for the collection, few posted the collection development policy, acquisition guidelines, or the collection budget for faculty to see. This lack of transparency may indicate that academic librarians do not view the teaching faculty as full partners in building library collections. This omission could become critical in the future as both collection budgets and available shelf space continue to shrink.

Another area which received relatively little exposure was how libraries can contribute to scholarly communication. Current issues in scholarly communication such as digital library initiatives, copyright information, institutional repositories, and open access did not appear frequently on the Web pages surveyed. This limited participation diminishes the visibility of the library as a partner who makes a contribution to the teaching and research mission of the university.

In addition to finding limited attention given to collection building or scholarly communication, the other key result of the study was the identification of a number of noteworthy innovations on the Web pages of several schools. Referred to as “Cool Ideas” in our original research, these are especially helpful links to key content or applications of technology that enhance the effectiveness of the Web pages and the relationship

of the library to the faculty. Other schools may wish to consider incorporating these “best practices” into their own Web pages for faculty.

For example, we found several links that could help libraries and faculty become better partners. These included a “Welcome” message from the Dean of the Libraries emphasizing the role and importance of the library, a section explaining the “professional culture” of librarians including their credentials and tenure process, links to database trials and faculty feedback mechanisms, and information on ongoing serials review projects. Some schools included explanations of the role libraries play in student research, such as guides to integrating library resources into course management systems, guides to creating effective library-friendly research assignments, guides to creating persistent URL’s that link to library resources, and information on library prizes for excellence in undergraduate research. Additionally, we found links to library committees involving teaching faculty, usually with meeting minutes available for viewing. We also found helpful links to information about faculty publications, including author citation indexing, journal profiles (including acceptance rates), and impact factors.

Several Web pages for faculty had innovative ideas for supporting faculty research. These included a list of grants and funding opportunities for faculty by subject area; both fee-based and free mediated database searches on a research topic; a “research port” with saved database searches and journal lists; and a day-long faculty library seminar featuring workshops on topics like Google searching, subject-based resources, book repair, course management systems, citation counts, e-reserves, and bibliographic citation management systems.

Advanced technology seems to be underutilized on faculty Web pages other than simple finding aids such as search engines, site maps or indexes, but a few schools provided a higher level of technological innovation. Several pages had a virtual tour of the library or video clips that introduced certain services. One had a link to create a customized list of new books by subject area and time period. Another school had a link to create photos of students in a class roster by accessing the photos on file with the card office. Many pages had information on multimedia and technology services, essential for faculty using technology in the classroom. Finally, one school had a customizable “teaching library” with downloadable documents on library resources.

Overall, two Web pages that we thought could serve as models of best practice were John Hopkins University and the University of Texas at Austin. Both schools had Web pages for faculty that were easy to use, logically displayed, rich in content, and held the promise of enhancing the relationship between the library and the faculty.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Our study of the content and accessibility of fifty-four academic library Web pages for faculty, sampled from the nation’s largest 100 libraries, reveals that most of the faculty pages were directly linked from the library home page. Overall, library services for lending and for teaching and research support were promoted more than variables related to collections. Although the pages used clear language, technology was underutilized on the Web pages, as were links that promoted the fact that the library was an equal partner in furthering the teaching and research mission of

the institution. A case could also be made that academic libraries are missing an important opportunity to utilize advanced “Web 2.0” technology in their Web pages for faculty. Next generation sites, for example, could include expanded use of weblogs, RSS feeds, wikis, social bookmarking, social networking, and mobile technology such as podcasting to involve the faculty more deeply in the work of the library. Rather than asking faculty to passively view a largely static Web page, librarians could invite faculty to be active collaborators, proactively assembling resources and services together to further the mission of their universities. Since outreach to faculty is so important, it is the authors’ hope that our survey will raise awareness of the Web page as an outreach tool to faculty and foster ideas for better content and design of these pages. Future research could include revisiting these same sites in five years for an updated comparative analysis, using a different sample study, revising the checklist survey tool, or looking at other variables for statistical significance such as the pages of state schools compared to private schools.

“Although the [Web pages for faculty] used clear language, technology was underutilized on the Web pages, as were links that promoted the fact that the library was an equal partner in furthering the teaching and research mission of the institution.”

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