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LibGuides CMS eReserves: simplify delivering course reserves through Blackboard

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the process of implementing LibGuides content management system (CMS) eReserves with Blackboard integration to streamline workflow for the end-user and staff workflow.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on some of the issues with the existing system, there was a need to improve workflow for the user and staff. The previous course reserve process included a non-automated process. Implementing the LibGuides CMS eReserves module training for circulation staff consisted of in-person instruction and creating a tutorial with step by step directions for staff. The library sent out many email announcements and corresponded with individual faculty members. The authors also worked with the instructional designers for feedback and best practices when developing Blackboard courses, specifically online courses. The authors also developed an information page with a tutorial.

Findings – Findings indicate that the LibGuides CMS eReserves module is a success. The quick implementation process and ease of use for end-users and staff have proven to be beneficial. With the launch of the new system in fiscal year: 2013-2014, this revitalized the Seton Hall University eReserves program with a 142 per cent increase in usage. There could be many contributing factors to the increase in usage: the online form, direct links to Blackboard, the increase in online courses, etc. eReserves are up 42 per cent as of April for this year.

Originality/value – At the time of our evaluation, there were no other libraries using the eReserves module. The authors reviewed the literature and found no published articles about LibGuides CMS eReserves module.

Keywords Academic libraries, Library services, Information services, Library users, End-users, Library automation

Paper type Research paper

Background

Seton Hall University (SHU) is a private Catholic doctoral degree granting university located in South Orange, New Jersey, USA, with 10,000 full-time equivalents. The University libraries adopted a new strategic plan in 2012, the plan included strategic Goal 3 to “Provide effective organization and presentation of information and collections and access to information located elsewhere” and strategic Goal 5 “Communicate the library’s services and resources effectively, expand outreach and develop opportunities for our users to communicate about and shape those services and resources”. In the summer of 2013, the libraries overhauled the eReserves system. There was a need to simplify access to course eReserves for students, the submission process for faculty and staff workflow in support of the University libraries strategic plan.

Needs assessment for new eReserves module

Based on some of the issues with the existing system, there was a need to improve workflow for the faculty, students and staff. The previous course reserve system included a non-automated process. To submit an eReserves request, the faculty would

access the course reserves page on the University libraries Web site. The page consisted of a printable PDF form to be filled out by hand (later by typing) and submitted to the circulation desk with the reserve material. Material was then scanned and added to a LotusNotes database by circulation staff. A temporary catalog record in Ex Libris Voyager was created for each course with a link to the eReserve. To access eReserves, students would access the library Web site and locate the catalog. A search of the catalog course reserves module by course, or instructor would give the student access to the course reserve.

During this time, we were implementing Online Computer Library Center (OCLC)’s WorldShare Management Services (WMS) and would discontinue Voyager. It was important to find a new solution for managing eReserves.

The following items were identified to address improved access and workflow: an online submission form with the ability to upload a file, confirmation to the user when a form is submitted, a Web-based module designed for eReserves and access for the circulation department, ability to manage electronic files and links, a user-friendly course reading list and the ability to deliver this information to Blackboard. Other key requirements for the new eReserves system included a cost-efficient solution and the re-use or integration with existing technology within the libraries and campus.

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Review of alternative eReserve models

Blackboard

SHU uses Blackboard Learning Management System. We evaluated workflow for adding course reserves to the Blackboard module. The process was lengthy and did not function properly. Access to courses is dependent on another department. Blackboard lacks a user submission form.

Online Computer Library Center WMS

This module is ideal for housing our eReserves content, as the library recently implemented OCLC WMS. However, it lacks a place to store documents and a module for online submission and integration with Blackboard. WMS also lacked the option to password protect the documents.

Springshare LibGuides content management system (CMS) eReserves version 1

At the time of our evaluation, there were no other libraries using this eReserves module. We reviewed the literature and found no published articles about LibGuides content management system (CMS) eReserves module. The eReserves module included an online Web submission form that could include a file, an alerting email notification for staff, statistics, set visibility dates for display, ability to create a course with a listing of readings (links or files access), a link to course readings and online document storage. Additionally, it included the ability to turn on the eReserves module within a LibGuide. Of the few drawbacks, we noted that the user form is not customizable. The form is rather lengthy, and it is not possible to customize the fields or indicate required fields nor is it possible to have the information auto-populate the staff module.

Implementing eReserves workflow

Throughout the trial period, we conducted several tests to see if the eReserves module was a viable option. We discovered that we could deliver the eReserves to Blackboard through an in-house database built by the SHU Teaching, Learning and Technology Center, originally to distribute subject and course guides to Blackboard courses. Our testing concluded that there were more advantages than drawbacks, and the eReserves module was the best option for us at the time.

We upgraded our LibGuides subscription to LibGuides CMS v.1 in the summer of 2013; one of the additional modules included eReserves. To keep our technology consistent within one platform, we selected LibGuides CMS, as we use several products from Springshare to manage other Web services, including our Web sites, research guides, forms, calendars and conference room reservations. The eReserves module had several benefits with only a few drawbacks and thus proved to be the best option.

Workflow for LibGuides CMS v.1 user module

User submission form

The LibGuides eReserves Web-based user entry form significantly enhanced the user submission process. This is the first Web-based eReserves form for SHU users to submit online and upload a file. Although this was an enhancement from the former process, it also came with some drawbacks.

The user entry form proved to be lengthy, and there were limitations. It was not possible to modify fields, nor was it possible to require specific fields. We solved the problem by creating instructions for users to indicate which fields were required for submission, including an explanation for each field.

Despite the fact that the form is not ideal due to lack of flexibility, it is still helpful to have an online submission form that could accept files. The form eliminated the in-person submission to the circulation desk. Additionally, an email alert is sent to circulation notifying the staff of a new submission. The request is then processed and entered into the eReserve module. Unfortunately, the information from the request form does not carry over into the staff module. The staff has to re-type the submission information into the eReserves module.

Setting up a course

The visibility display dates must be set up first for each semester followed by a new course prior to adding content. Multiple entries can be made to include the entire course reading list in a variety of formats: citation, file or link can be included. For links requiring ezproxy, the ezproxy prefix must be manually added to the link. This is a difference from the LibGuide subject guides, where it is possible to check a box for ezproxy to be automatically added to the link. Once the eReserves are added to the course, a LibGuide is created with course title, number and eReserve module. A unique URL is generated for the course. The circulation staff will then login into the Blackboard/LibGuide database and add the URL to the corresponding course. The link to the course reserves is accessible to students via the library materials link in the Blackboard course.

Copyright compliance

To keep copyright compliance on the forefront, we made sure that the course reserves were only accessible to registered students in classes. Blackboard is password protected with the students' campus-wide username and password, and courses are only accessible to students enrolled in the class. The course number is linked from the LibGuides eReserves module with a unique private URL to Blackboard and produces a second link in Blackboard to gain access to "Library Resources". Upon entering "Library Resources", the copyright law, *US Copyright Act of 1976*, 17 USAC § 107 appears.

Staff training

We held training for the circulation staff, which consisted of in-person instruction, and we created a tutorial with step-by-step directions for staff. In addition, we used several live examples during training. The staff's learning curve was rather quick. The system was implemented in the summer of 2013 and went live in Fall 2013.

Outreach to SHU community

Once we were fully implemented, we made several announcements via email to the SHU community. Additionally, the Access Services Librarian sent out many email announcements and corresponded with individual

Figure 1 eReserves by date

Ereserves 06-07	Ereserves 07-08	Ereserves 08-09	Ereserves 09-10	Ereserves 10-11	Ereserves 11-12	Ereserves 12-13	Ereserves 13-14	Ereserves 14-15
360	393	475	280	301	293	153	371	525
	9%	21%	-41%	8%	-3%	-48%	142%	42%

faculty members. We also worked with the instructional designers for feedback and best practices when developing Blackboard courses, specifically online courses. We also developed an information page with a tutorial found at: <http://shu.libguides.com/library/eReserves>

Findings

Prior to implementing the new eReserves system, there was a declining trend for SHU course reserves. With the launch of the new system in fiscal year: 2013-2014, this revitalized the SHU eReserves program with a 142 per cent increase in usage. There could be many contributing factors to the increase in usage: the online form, direct links to Blackboard, the increase in online courses and instructional designers aided in the eReserves submissions for faculty teaching online courses. eReserves continues to increase in use, up 42 per cent as of April 2015 (Figure 1).

Findings indicate that the LibGuides CMS eReserves module is a success. The quick implementation process and

ease of use for end-users and staff have proven to be beneficial. We are entering our second year of using the eReserves module and will continue to refine our process. Recommendations for improving the system include adding customizable fields to the user form and auto-population – (OpenUrl) for citation population in the backend could greatly enhance the system for both users and staff. In addition, as stated in the workflows section, there is a need to add multiple PDF, URL and JPEG files to one form.

Conclusion

Overall, the launch of the new system has helped end-users and streamlined workflow.

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