Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library, Gustavus Adolphus College Report

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Introduction:

Folke Bernadotte Memorial Library is the library at Gustavus Adolphus College. The library at Gustavus Adolphus College is dedicated to serving the students and faculty and wanted to increase its utilization to all community members. One of the initiatives to accomplish this goal of being more functional to the community is my improving and reconstructing their website.

Executive Summary:

For my Patricia Lindell Project, I collaborated directly with Librarians Michelle Twait and Rachel Flynn to overall help improve the online presence, layout and structure of the library website. Individually, I assessed the library website and created a strategy to help them improve their web layout to maximize the amount of information that students can achieve. There were many factors that had to be considered such as improving accessibility, eliminating jargon and making navigation easier. With the time constraint, I formulated recommendations, for the future, to optimize the website's usability, functionality and improvement.

I used a variety of methods throughout my project to analyze, brainstorm and organize recommendations to implement to improve the website for the Gustavus library. Some methods that I used include an introductory library analysis, comparative analysis and segmenting their target audience i.e. students and designing a survey for them. In addition to these, I have formulated an implementation plan to assist the library in successfully applying my suggestions for the future. In doing so, I am confident that the Gustavus library can continue to grow their online presence.

Library Overview:

Currently, the library has an overwhelming amount of information that is hidden in its multiple pages. It is not very easy to navigate through and a lot of terms need more explanation for non-library people. There is an urgent need to reduce "clutter" and reconstruct the homepage of the website.

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this project was to help in the reconstruction of the Gustavus library website in order to make it more accessible for students to help them achieve their academic needs. Reconstruction of the website meant to clean up the "clutter" in order to make it more accessible.

Working with Michelle and Rachel, we set some SMART goals, developed an implementation plan to help achieve some goals and then figure out some details for the future, due to time restriction. Since the purpose of the project was to help students achieve their academic goals, we decided to conduct a beginning survey for students in order to see what they felt about the library and which aspects needed the most improvement.

Unfortunately, due to the unusual circumstances, the survey was not sent out. However, the content of the survey is completely ready and should be used in the future.

We also agreed that increasing awareness about the library staff would be a good way to familiarize students with the library so we agreed on the idea of a video introducing the librarians, sometime in the future.

The Gustavus library's website is an important hub of information for all students and faculty to learn more, research for classes and leisure reading. My recommendations for the website would ultimately support the goal of Gustavus Adolphus College is supporting students achieve their academic needs.

Recommendations:

- **Best Practices for library websites:**

  - **Have a Vision:**

    Short blurb defining the goals of the library that align with the goals of the college. This should be one or two lines of a mission statement. Examples: "To help and support students succeed in their academic endeavours…"

  - **Easy access to search**

  - **Keep navigation simple**

  - **Homepage recommendations**

    - The homepage currently looks very overwhelming, especially at a first glance.

  - **Eliminate jargon:**

    - These are terms students don't understand. Consider replacing them with common/simple words.

    - Examples of some of these words are listed below. Highlighted words were present on the Gustavus Library website.

      - Boolean

      - Catalog

      - HTML Full Text

      - EPUB

      - e-Book Full Text

      - Database

- - <mark>Trade Publication</mark>

    - Some recommendations to improve this would be to:

        - Weed content

        - Write in plain language.

        - Be aware of library-ese when branding your link resolver and/or discovery service.

        - Provide explanatory text when needed.

        - Do not rely on a glossary!

        - Ask a non-librarian to validate your content.

        - Conduct a survey or usability testing.

  - **Make the page accessible**

    Accessibility is one of Gustavus' biggest sections for improvement for now to work on. The library also needs to work on that aspect of it.

    - Images must have alt-text or off-screen text.

    - Audio/Video content must include captioning or transcripts.

    - Website must be navigable by keyboard only.

    - Become familiar with screen readers (e.g., JAWS, NVDA) and other assistive technologies used by your students.

    - Test your library website for accessibility. Recommended Tool: WAVE (free)

- Make sure that your website is usable for those who are colorblind.

  Recommended Tool: Colour Contrast Analyser (free)

Implementation Plan:

- **Campus wide survey**
    - I made an initial short survey in order to gauge the usage of the library website by the students and their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it.

Survey Questions:
1) Have you ever used the Gustavus library website?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Unsure
2) How often do you use the library website?
   a) Every week
   b) Once every two-three weeks
   c) Once a month
   d) Longer than a month
   e) Never
3) What is your most common reason for visiting the library's website (for coursework)?
   a) Citation Help
   b) Research Guide for a specific course
   c) Searching for articles
   d) Searching for books
   e) Others (please specify)
4) What is your preferred way of using the library's homepage?
   a) Search Box in the middle of the homepage
   b) The multiple options on the left side
   c) I browse around to find what I'm looking for
   d) Others (please specify)
5) Which resource is the most difficult to access through the library website?
   a) Citation Help
   b) Research Guide for a specific course
   c) Searching for articles
   d) Searching for books
   e) Others (please specify)
6) Rate your satisfaction with each resource (Extremely unsatisfied, unsatisfied, adequate, satisfied, extremely satisfied)
   a) Citation Help
   b) Research Guide for a specific course
   c) Searching for articles
   d) Searching for books
   e) Others (please specify)
7) Almost done! Is there a specific feature that you use all the time - or would like to use more - if it was more centered on the library's homepage?

8) Feel free to share any additional comments/concerns or recommendations that you have for your library website. Thank you for your time!

9) Enter your name and email if you'd like to be entered into a drawing for the chance to get exclusive access to a library study room for Finals week! (Optional)

10) Enter your name and email if you would be willing to participate in a Focus Group. (incentive)

Aimen Zara 12:44 AM Mar 6 Resolve
Check all that apply format

Aimen Zara 1:04 AM Mar 6
Only for qs number 3

Aimen Zara 12:41 AM Mar 6 Resolve
Redirect them to another page asking why they're unsure. Is the page confusing etc?

- Goal of survey

The purpose of this survey was supposed to gather some initial information about how students felt about the library website and where they felt that there was room for improvement so we could focus on that aspect.

- ○ <u>Incentives to fill out survey:</u>

    Working with Rachel and Michelle, we were able to come forward with a unique incentive to encourage people to fill out the survey. Instead of entering to win a giftcard, students would enter in a draw to win exclusive access to a study room in the library for a week during finals.

- **Comparative Analysis**

    I conducted a comparative analysis between a list of aspirant institutions and peer institutions and Gustavus' library website. Listed below are some of the findings.

    Gustavus' peer institution list:

    1) **Allegheny (Meadville, Penn.)**

        - ○ When the Pelletier Library is closed, they have search boxes configured specifically for all Allegheny College ebooks and ejournals.

        - ○ Link to a research assistance page.

        - ○ FAQs section and a chat with a librarian online section (available during working hours for quick questions).

        - ○ When you are about to access a database, it specifically shows that you are now going to a non-institution website.

        - ○ Schedule an appointment with a librarian online.

        - ○ Social media handles shared on the homepage (Facebook, Instagram etc).

- ○ **Format wise:**

  - i) There is a sidebar menu with various options such as:

    - (1) Reserve a library study room

    - (2) Faculty help

    - (3) Reserving cubicles

    - (4) Senior project submission help

    - (5) Digital collections etc

  - ii) Very clean and simple design with only two shades of blue which is a very visually pleasing color for the eyes.

2) **Augustana (Rock Island, Ill.)**

   - ○ FAQs section and a chat with a librarian online section (available during working hours for quick questions).

   - ○ Additional resources mentioned i.e. journal, magazine, & newspaper title search, electronic reference materials, images.

   - ○ A video showcasing how to use the library for basic needs.

   - ○ Library news section with information on research prizes, awards, scholarships etc.

   - ○ Social media handles shared on the homepage (Facebook, Instagram etc).

3) **Illinois Wesleyan (Bloomington, Ill.)**

   - ○ Library news section with information on latest news, research prizes, awards, scholarships etc.

- Database search is available on homepage (direct access without having to click through a bunch of pages).

- Side-bar for more information on topics such as research help, collections, reserving rooms, liaison services and more history about the library.

- Library staff photos and information shared on the homepage.

- Social media handles shared on the homepage (Facebook, Instagram etc).

4) **Luther (Decorah, Iowa)**

- Database search is available on homepage (direct access without having to click through a bunch of pages).

- Side-bar for information regarding hours, events, related services etc.

- Their search engine for their database, journals and references is in different tabs.

- All library resources and tools are also linked on the homepage.

- **Format wise:** Very soft colors and a lot of white space so the amount of information is not overwhelming to the eye on the first look.

5) **Stonehill College (Easton, Mass.)**

- Library virtual and building hours listed on top.

- Search bar with three tabs for research guides, databases and journals.

- Chat box, make an appointment option and FAQs.

- There is a list of useful resources such as library access, databases, quick article search, research guides, ejournals, meeting with the librarians and interlibrary loan access.

- Separate help sections for faculty and students.

- Featured library news section on the homepage.

- **Format wise:** One of the best web designs I have seen. Very clean and visually appealing. Very easy to navigate and find the information needed.

6) **St. Anselm**

- Search bar with different tabs for research guides, databases, citing sources, interlibrary loans and journals.

- Featured library news section on the homepage.

- Side-bar for information regarding hours, librarian help, events and donations.

- Drop down menu of options for additional resources, services, archives and special collections.

- Social media handles shared on the homepage (Facebook, Instagram etc).

7) **Wheaton, MA**

- A section titled "Guide to library jargon"

- Research guides fully listed by specific subject area.

- FAQs section on top.

- Side-bar with information of additional resources and information.

- Citation help and news section also present on the homepage.

- Social media handles shared on the homepage (Facebook, Instagram etc).

8) **Wofford College**

- Search bar for database right on the homepage to avoid more clicks.

- ○ Services for students listed with links.

  - ○ Services for faculty and staff listed with links.

  - ○ Ask a librarian section (24/7)

  - ○ Side-bar for additional information like hours, archives, special collections etc.

Gustavus' aspirational list:

1) **St. Olaf – Roberta Lembke**

   - Live Chat Feature

   - Menu options are initially limited but have more options as you click on them. Drop down menus. Not overwhelming.

   - Quick 1:30 minute video saying what resources they have without jargon (added interesting information that would make students just curious e.g. the first dance at the college, the fire, etc)

   - Upcoming library events (Idk if our news section is similar)

   - Had a section that said, clarify if you are a student, professor or visitor.

2) **Gettysburg**

   - Little to nothing informative on the homepage. Just a massive photo of the library itself, hours and a drop down menu on the top.

   - The e-library portion specifies what you're looking to find

     - ○ Digital magazines

     - ○ Research

     - ○ Streaming music

      ○   E-books and e-audiobooks

3) Hobart & William Smith

Astronomy at HWS, 1822-2019

- What the homepage looks like. Each resource is separately classified.

    ○ Search Collections

    ○ Student Services

    ○ Faculty Services

    ○ Archives & Special Collections

- Popular questions or FAQs in a section on the side.

4) Union College

- "Ask a question" tab on the page. So many questions and detailed answers.

- "Research Help" Appointment tab on page.

- There is a separate library option for students and faculty.

- They have a special section right now for help with remote learning and resources available for students.

- "Book an appointment with a librarian over zoom"

- Minimal use of jargon and very simple, understandable language.

- When you are about to access a database, it specifically shows that you are now going to a non-institution website.

Anticipated Results:

Since a majority of the work conducted is qualitative data, it is not possible to measure it in terms of specific numbers but I anticipate that adopting these recommendations and techniques, we will definitely see an increase in the usage of the library by the student body.

Future Action Plan:

- **Send out the survey**

  - As mentioned above, sending out a survey in the beginning can help in identifying where the problem in the library's website lies, for the students.

- **User testing**

  - It is important to test early and test often.

  - Testing five to seven users identifies 85 percent of usability issues.

  - Schedule usability testing sessions monthly at same day/time.

  - Usertesting.com is a great place to get people to test the website.

  - It will help in getting rid of random glitches and errors.

- **Focus Groups**

  - Holding small focus groups with students from different departments and classes can be beneficial to better identify the needs of individual courses and students.

- **Video to familiarize with library staff and how the online library works**

  - A video that can be shown on the library homepage would be nice. It can feature all the librarians and library staff to show what their areas of expertise are so that students can be familiar with them before even stepping foot into the library.

- **Work with Accessibility Support Center**

  - By working with the accessibility support center, the library can work on having alt text and other accessibility options for all students.

- **Work with Gustavus Technology Service**

- By working with Gustavus Technology Services, the library can keep track of the analytics such as click through rate, exit rate etc to monitor where users face a problem and leave the website.

Work Cited:

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