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MANAGING INFORMATION 🛣

# Free Web-based tools for information literacy instruction

Christine Forbes

Today's libraries use online instruction to teach a multitude of topics to a range of audiences. For example, academic libraries teach undergraduates how to evaluate the credibility of a Web site, medical libraries teach future doctors how to search for evidence-based resources and public libraries teach patrons how to use the catalog, download e-books and provide gateways to resources for lifelong learning. Libraries are finding innovative ways to engage users through the creation of videos, animations, comics and interactive tutorials. This article explores only a small sample of the many free tools available for creating interesting learning objects and entire information literacy modules.

All of the tools discussed here are Web-based, eliminating the need to download any software. Working in the cloud saves disk space, allows you to access your project from anywhere and opens the door for easy collaboration. Web-based software also eliminates compatibility issues, so there is no need to consider whether the operating system you use is Windows, Mac or Linux. However, because there is no software to download, there is always the peril that the tool used to create learning material will not be available in the future. In researching this article, several interesting tools were identified

that were once promising, but no longer exist. In addition, much of the Web-based software available uses a "freemium" model, which means that a basic version is free to use, but librarians and other instructors need to upgrade to a paid version for additional features. Unfortunately, some companies using the freemium pricing structure end up downgrading the free version of the software. Despite these limitations, the Web-based software programs discussed below are worth considering when developing information literacy instruction. For each of these products, links are provided to examples of actual use by libraries.

#### Infogr.am (http://infogr.am/)

Infographics, visual representations used to communicate data, have become a very popular way to share information. Infogr.am is a freemium service that enables users to create interactive infographics. Users register with e-mail, Facebook, Google+ or Twitter. The free version gives access to 30 chart types. Data can be imported using XLS, XLSX and CSV files. Allinfographics created with the free version are public and contain a watermark on the bottom linking back to Infogr.am. Infographics-created

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The Informed Librarian

# What's trending in libraries from the Internet cybersphere – 5

Adetoun A. Oyelude

This last edition of "What's trending in libraries from the internet cybersphere" for volume 31, tries to move around the world to wrap up. This feat has not exactly been met. The reason, we report what's trending wherever it is trending, and the trends could move anywhere at all. Please enjoy this edition and I would be happy to hear your feedback.

# Adobe spies on eBook readers and library users

In an October 7, 2014 blog, the news reported that "AdobeDigital Editions, which most eBook platforms in libraries use (including OverDrive, 3M Cloud Library, Axis 360, and Enki), has been secretly spying on users". The company is said to be collecting data without subscribers being aware. "Adobe is gathering data on the eBooks that have been opened, which pages were read, and in what order - including consumer-subscription eBooks eBooks borrowed through a library". They are also said to be "tracking user activity outside of Digital Editions" that

[...] gathering metadata from non-Adobe eBooks on the user's hard drive. All of this data is being kept and transmitted in clear text that is easily intercepted and duplicated by intermediaries, such as library eBook vendors (http://librarianinblack/).

Andromeda Yelton in an October 8 blog condemns such procedures and calls for libraries to review their contracts properly and take a stand on this issue. The injunction here is strongly:

[...] to say that playing nice with your vendors matters more to you than this part or professional ethics that protecting patron privacy is not on your list of priorities. If you're not content with that choice, it is time to set something else on fire.

Are libraries ready to seriously examine this trend when we have a professional ethical responsibility of maintaining user privacy? (http://andromedayelton.com/blog/2014/10/08/ebooks-choices-and-the-missing-soul-oflibrarianship/? utm\_content=buffer13c22&utm\_medium=social&utm\_source=twitter.com&utm\_campaign=buffer)

#### Tips for librarians using Webometrics

Web metrics is a broad term used to refer to the quantitative measurement of the creation and use of web content. It incorporates both 'webometrics', the quantitative study of web content and use for research purposes, and 'web analytics', the quantitative study of web content and use for the evaluation and improvement of a service.

This comment was in a post submitted at a blog by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. In the blog post, there are five tips given, just like the five Laws of the library by Ranganathan, for librarians who are using Webometrics:

- · don't try to track everything;
- don't just reach for the closest metric;
- · every tool has limitations;
- accept the fact that tools will change; and
- no metric ever tells the whole story.

www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/blog/5-tipslibrarians-using-web-metrics

### Creating effective and engaging video tutorials

Video tutorials provide libraries a way to meet online learners at their place and time of need. Nichole and Ross Martin of the Seminole State College of Florida, have increased tutorial production to meet the growing demands of distance learning courses. A posting on September 24, 2014 on the Blended Librarian Web site gives information about the library's effort to connect with their users through this means. The video tutorials are said to be "high-definition, mobile-friendly, and accessible for disabled viewers". These tutorials are of high quality due to the researchers having "studied best practices outlined in library literature, as well as findings from other fields invested in video communication: education, business, journalism, and television production". See more at http://blendedlibrarian.learningtimes. net/would-you-watch-it-creatingeffective-and-engaging-videotutorials/#.VDrdu1fWGM\_

## Reading all books on the library shelf

Rachel Cooke in The Observer of August 16, 2014 wrote about Phyllis Rose, the woman whose book about her experience reading every book on a shelf in a library is trending. This article was published on the Guardian Web site on August 16, 2014. Another version appeared on page 16 of The New Review section of The Observer on Sunday, August 17, 2014, and it was last modified on September 2, 2014. It has since then had 8,289 shares, 740 tweets, 124 Google + downloads and 24 LinkedIn shares. Phyllis Rose's book about her extreme reading experiment, in which she tackled the entire content of a shelf in a New York library, has won high praise, but are such "bibliomemoirs" really reminding people of the "deep and abiding pleasures of reading, sending them back to novels that they love or to pay others a first visit"? The blog post is at: www. theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/16/ phyllis-rose-the-shelf-library-book

### Laser cutters and three-dimensional printers in libraries

A post by Clive Thompson on February 9, 2014 talks about trends in the Chattanooga Public Library where one can find the "usual stuff: rows of books, magazines, and computers". The fourth floor has something unusual about it, however: a "makerspace complete with a laser cutter, a zine lab for making paper publications and a 3-D printer". You will find a loom there as well. This makerspace provided by the library ensures that library users with not such everyday needs can find their expectations met. The librarians in this library are reported to have asserted that their job is "helping with access to knowledge", and they are ready to do this by adapting to new information tools and providing ways for their users to create their own content. They have been able to embrace change. Librarians must surely embrace change in their spaces, technology and all! What do you think of makerspaces? Take a look at the following post: www.wired.com/2014/09/makerspace/

# Redesigned Web site and online library for Ghanaian children

The street children project in Ghana relaunched its Web site. The site promotes literacy of Ghanaian children. A blog post reports that the organization gave its Web site a makeover, to make it "relevant to today's youth who may access the Internet through different platforms on a variety of mobile devices". The Street Library's Web site includes an Online Library in which "electronic versions of certain books are available for free

download thanks to the generous donations of authors and illustrators from around the world". As:

[...] one of the most social media savvy and globally connected social enterprises in Ghana, Street Library's website also fully integrates its Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Google+accounts via quick access tabs.

Access to the site can be made through, www.streetlibraryghana.org. This is trending, with 53 likes, 3 Tweets and 5 LinkedIn shares. Check out the blog post at: www.streetlibraryghana.org/article.php?id=44#.VDWIrVfWGM-

### Why technology is not making us smarter

A study on why technology is not making us smarter was recently completed. An excerpt from the post about the research study on July 11, 2014, can be found at www.impactlab.net/2014/07/11/why-technology-is-not-making-us-smarter-study/ The study states:

[...] when we think about whether mobile technology and apps are really improving our lives, this cognitive component is really important. We can call out the individual things that our iPhones or Androids enable us to do and imagine all of the things that wearables and the Internet of Things can add, but are they all making us happier or smarter? Unfortunately, I think not. And in fact, to really make use of all of these wondrous products of our collective imagination we will need to make a point of learning to put them down some of the time and develop the capabilities of our unaided minds?

This trend is worth a second look because it may really be counterproductive not to use one's mind and rely on electric shocks to get one out of boredom. What do you think?

#### Libraries on the beach

Beach libraries are trending, and not only with good old books, some with the latest technology, Android tablets, ebooks and the like. Allison Meier of AtlasObscura, the definitive guide to the world's wondrous and curious places, compiled a report of beach libraries in different locations. From the Pop-up library by Matali Crasset in Istres, France, to the mobile version in Holland, and another in Tel Aviv on Metzitzim Beach, "offering books in five languages and WiFi for tablets to check out electronic reading material". She reported that in 2010, IKEA, a multinational group of companies originating in Sweden, and that designs and sells ready-to-assemble furniture, appliances and home accessories, "set up 30 shelves on Sydney's Bondi Beach for the surfers and sunbathers". These are examples of new ways to cater to readers who are already on the beach by creating special reading spaces, and the technology that can go with them, for tourists on vacation or local beach bums! See more on how this is trending at: www.atlasobscura. com/articles/libraries-on-the-beach

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