Co-Branding and sticky web sites - E-Content and the library's role

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Abstract:
As the amount of real time access information grows exponentially, and vendors increasingly target end users, libraries face an increasingly difficult task to remain a central part of the information loop. Through branding services with library logos and common elements, libraries can maintain a continuing role in the process and further develop and enhance the partnerships, which exist between libraries and external partners. The use of portals as "sticky web sites" encourages libraries to be seen as a one-stop shop for information access. To remain at the forefront, libraries also must pay more attention to marketing principles.

Introduction

As the amount of real time access information grows exponentially, libraries face an increasingly difficult task to remain a central part of the information loop. One of the greatest opportunities for increased visibility and useability of expanding library infrastructure has been the growth and development of customisable interfaces. Portals provide a seamless environment where library users can access relevant content with a minimum amount of time and effort.

Users have an innate need for information, while libraries need a personality. Web based marketing provides an opportunity to create a familiar face in the information jungle. Libraries need to maximise these opportunities. The creation of "sticky web sites" encourage libraries to be seen as a one-stop-shop for information access through static and customisable portals. By adding library logos and familiar elements to external services such as e-resources, libraries can maintain a continuing role in the process and further develop and enhance partnerships with information providers.

This paper will seek to explore the possibilities of establishing a direct link from the initial portal interface to external information sources such as the Internet, electronic databases and e-journals with a familiarity that is clearly recognisable as being part of the library.

In this newly emerging environment libraries must risk being marginalised unless current strategies change. Libraries must devote significant resources to marketing themselves both externally and internally. Growing opportunities exist for libraries to enter the brave new world of "co-branding" to enhance their profile, to create maximum value as a brand entity, and to increase organisational trust, familiarity, centrality and perceived usefulness. Zemon comments that libraries' homepages and collections have what every web site wants: brand and content. They have the institutional brand and the content that must be customised to meet specific user needs. The Digital Library Initiative http://www.dli2.nsf.gov has been a major impetus in creating a digital presence for scholarly libraries.

Forward thinking information managers, such as Stuart Wiebel of OCLC (http://purl.oclc.org/~emiller/talks/www/tutorial/part1) were at the forefront of developing new tools that could provide effective access to information. Portals have become the technologists buzzword for an infrastructure to provide a one-stop-shop, one place to get information and the applications that are needed to maximise the use of that information. Portals are designed to answer the ever-increasing information and knowledge management initiatives.

Information Portals have three fundamental purposes:
I.   Provide convenient and effective access to information resources through a single gateway
II.   Describe resources according to agreed standards of subject and quality control
III.   Identify information resources to agreed content guidelines

What they don't do however is to assess, select and manage the content and this can be a pivotal role of the "new age" librarian. Jeffrey Scherer defines libraries as the element in our society, which maintains the essential continuity between the ages and the requisite cross-references between all forms of information. Libraries, he says integrate and civilise technology, they aren't replaced by it.

Little defines a library portal as "systems which gather a variety of useful information resources into a single one-stop Web page, helping the user to avoid being overwhelmed by "infoglut" or feeling lost on the Web. Customised Web portals can bring to light the suite of resources being offered by a library and will allow the user to create a personalised customised service.

Changing face of the environment within which libraries exist

Libraries cannot rely on the traditional edifices of bricks and mortar. In recent years they have become information repositories, which allow users a choice but more importantly provide a nameless, brand less interface to information. Those who see the internet as a medium of increasing value argue that it is not the access to information but rather the provision of information that is the critical factor. However, in a time of declining budgets when physical presence is becoming less important, brand recognition is becoming an important measure.

The rapid pace of change in information rich environments is posing significant challenges to organisations whose livelihoods are based on access, manipulation and dissemination of information.

The Internet is being seen by many as the panacea for information - a one-stop-shop, where information is all of equal value and quality. Library patrons want access to services and support 24x7, any-time, any-where. The challenge for the library community, and in particular academic libraries, is to convince high-level management that the Library has an important and ongoing mediating role in sorting, sifting and evaluating this information.

Information Portals function as an electronic doorway into an organisation/service and its component parts. They help access appropriate data, collaborate and efficiently distribute information. New uses of portals allow users to select content and subscribe to information all which is presented in a consistent customisable and user friendly format. Information is delivered and accessed in "clumps" through these gateways. What they don't do however is to assess, select and manage the content. In the traditional academic information economy, the library occupied a central role. It licensed and distributed data from information producers. In the new economy model, vendors are going directly to customers, self-service information provision. In response to this, the new role for the library must be very much an intermediary between end users and commercial publishers. Dynamic sources that process information must include resource discovery and sharing interfaces and standards as

well as links to external elements and tools. The library can add substantial value in this new intermediary role. What it should not try to do is compete but rather compliment the myriad of other information providers.

O'Leary provides an overview of some of the products that are set up as competitors to libraries and entice people to pay for things they may have previously expected from a Library for free:

- Xanedu.com (http://www.xanedu.com)
  Xanedu takes familiar content databases and surrounds them with course-related interfaces, creating its own value-added teaching materials, custom course packs. The products can be interlinked with existing library database products and resources, university wide teaching infrastructure services such as WebCT and other E-Texts. While Xanedu has recently disappeared from the information landscape, other providers are seeking to fill the void in much the same manner

- Questia (http://www.questia.com)
  Full text library ebook collection including approximately 50,000 titles in undergraduate liberal arts (no science, engineering, technology, or business)

- Ebrary (http://www.ebrary.com)
  Undergraduate liberal arts ebook using a cost per view model similar to photocopy

Information vendors are embracing portal technology to manage these "information clumps" because they see the opportunity for online integration with business partners, internal staff and consumers. It is one way of ensuring a continuing presence. A portal interface reaches out to web content and enables real time responsiveness to it. Portals allow the type of personalisation that users demand, but with technology moving so fast, libraries need to act quickly.

Universities as well as libraries must think more strategically about their use of the web and interactive portals. The Library must now provide access and service to remote users, and it must create a brand image that is easily recognisable not only as part of the institution but as a recognisable library/information service point. The Cybrary at University of Queensland is a good example of a recognisable physical and virtual presence. Other examples include the University of California network of libraries, Wake Forest University, University of Michigan and the Information Gallery at Winona State University Library. It is unlikely that any organisation would consider the implementation of "portal technology" based on the assumption that there would be significant short-term cost reductions. Long-term administrative costs can be reduced by building more interactive modes of access to data, information and services. Return on investment (ROI) must be a measure applied to all technological developments and portal technology is no exception (see http://www.pi004.lsu.edu/pawsinfo.nsf for a discussion of ROI in relation to a portal development at Louisiana State University). If portals are seen as simply a value-added service rather than a change to business processes and practices then the justification for the development might be based on short-term rather than long-term objectives.

According to an anonymous author in Information Intelligence most library products are in their infancy with little use data for quantitative analysis. Early trends appear to suggest that while some users love the new interfaces some are indifferent.

Other institutions offering Library portals include: North Carolina State University http://my.lib.ncsu.edu ; Virginia Commonwealth University http://www.library.vcu.edu/mylibrary/cil99.htm; University of Washington Libraries http://www.lib.washington.edu/resource/help/MyGateway.html ; California Polytechnic State University http://www.lib.calpoly.edu/mylib/cgi-bin/index.cgi ; Cornell University http://mylibrary.cornell.edu/development/mylibrary ; University of California Los Angeles http://my.ucla.edu

Interactive portals and a strong Library web presence are vital to strengthen the role of the Library as a point for resource discovery rather than as a physical presence. While the value of a library as a physical space is now questionable, the value of the "hybrid" library as a value added provider of information is unquestionable. By realising the development, adoption and integration of knowledge through a sharing interface such as an interactive portal and a strong web presence, libraries can increase the availability and suability of their services and hence their value and viability in an information rich but time poor society.

Information Intelligence suggests that with any technological advance portal interfaces have a number of challenges still to be faced:

I.   Providing customised services means that systems must maintain personal profiles of user preferences, interest and use histories. Although libraries have a long history of protecting patrons privacy, user profiles cannot be destroyed if the personalised profiles are to continue

II.   Customised Web portals are complex database systems with Web interfaces. Their development takes significant time and money and human resources. Libraries must balance these "cutting edge" services with traditional needs

III.   Although some commercial software is being developed for custom portal development and broadcast searching, much of the early development is being done at sites with significant technical expertise. Use data, broader public input and integration with the commercial sector will be necessary to bring products to fuller functionality and acceptance.

What is branding, and why brand libraries?

The concept of branding is derived from within the marketing field. One of the major challenges faced by any organisation is to uniquely identify a product and differentiate it from the competition. Mercer suggests that the ultimate mark of success is making the brand "its own separate market, or at least its own segment".

A successful brand creates great trust in the marketer, and provides added value in the battle for market share. As Lindstrom points out, "the building of a brand, or a set of values,

associated with the actual product provides it with an `increase in value' or `additional value'. A strong brand has therefore great value for its owner, as it represents a means whereby turnover and income can be generated and at the same time it can be protected against attack or infringement of ownership by competitors".

Recognition of the importance of a successful brand to overall profitability is increasing. Microsoft's antitrust case and the overall technology slowdown are estimated to have shed 7 percent of its brand value. Whereas "branding used to be [only] practised by companies that sold packaged goods to consumers", it has been "taking centre stage…as a treasured corporate asset".

Acknowledgment of brand's applicability to library services is not new. In 1991, Dave McCaughan discussed how brand strategy could be used by librarians to "heighten the image and to emphasise the perceived role of their services", and how it can create useful bonds with users. Mercer points out that branding is increasingly applied to non-profit activities; not for competitive reasons, but as a means of improving awareness of what is available, and differentiating between offerings. Given the increasing range of other information-providing options, branding is a good means to achieve greater consciousness of the library, and what it can offer.

The range of services offered by most libraries is increasing all the time, as is the diversity of providers from whom the information is sourced. Today's library is now a huge amalgam, with resources including the library's catalogue (and perhaps links to others), electronic databases, traditional tools in digitised format, links to useful Internet sites, online learning tools, electronic books and e-reserves - the list goes on! Through specific branding, a strong "virtual" presence can be achieved in a way which creates consistency in the way resources are presented, makes the library's role in the process more obvious, and increases organisational trust in the Library's ability to deliver desired services.
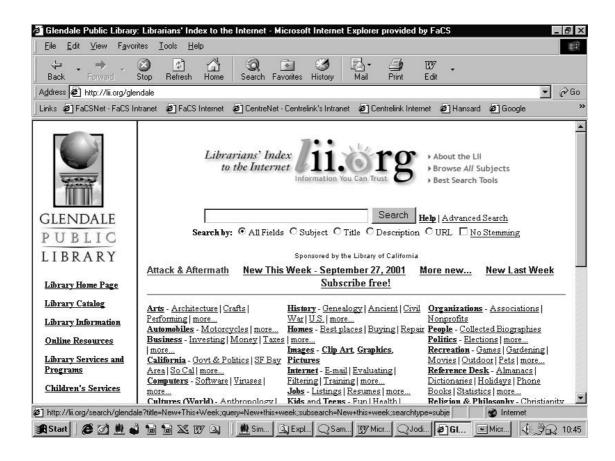
PAWS (Personal Access Web Services) at Louisiana State University offers enterprise, workgroup and personal portal services. Enterprise services include access to a central university directory, electronic library resources, student grades and financial status.

In many cases at present, the Library's role in offering an electronic service is not evident. Database search screens are heavily adorned with producer logos (eg Dialog, Proquest, Dow Jones Interactive), but there is no mention of the local provider. This situation is starting to change - OCLC's Firstsearch was one of the earliest to offer libraries the opportunity to add their logo the search screen. This can be achieved by simply providing the library's logo in standard format (eg gif file), or actually supplying HTML coding. Opportunities for significant co-branding of vendor specific sites are still limited. Many vendors see the concept of co-branding as simply – "this product has been bought to you by the library". Libraries need to use existing consortia mechanisms such as CAUL to convince vendors that partnerships are providing value-added services.

The growth in electronic resources also suggests a need for librarians and database vendors to work closely together in providing services, which meet the needs of both parties. For libraries this incorporates a number of issues. The most important is that of useability, and assistance available to users. The concept of an integrated "virtual reference desk" including the use of email and helpdesk services can form a value-added partnership between vendor and library services. While, hints on search technique and terminology are generally best provided by the supplier (although there may be a need to better integrate these with the local Information Literacy programs), libraries can provide the organisational context information. Other issues include relevance to client needs and easy integration within and addition of depth to the booming resource range. A major concern for publishers is the provision of a service, which meets the requirements of libraries and has long-term potential, thus providing them with a marketable advantage.

Collaborating in such a manner results in co-branding. Tennant suggests that co-branding "enables an organisation to purchase content or service while making it appear as if it were its own". However most cases result in jointly branded products, which acknowledge the role of both parties.

The Librarians' Index to the Internet (http://www.lii.org) is a perfect example of co-branding. Thirty libraries, mostly from California, use the LII directory as a starting point for external links, as "information you can trust". While the main screen is standard for all participants, a left frame is customised, including the Library's logo and key navigation links. Colours are also changeable to match the overall site branding.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print Edit

Address http://lii.org/glendale

Links FaCSNet - FaCS Intranet FaCS Internet CentreNet - Centrelink's Intranet Centrelink Internet Hansard Google

GLENDALE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Librarians' Index to the Internet lii.org Information You Can Trust

▸ About the LII
▸ Browse *All* Subjects
▸ Best Search Tools

Search **Help** | Advanced Search

Search by: ⦿ All Fields ○ Subject ○ Title ○ Description ○ URL ☐ No Stemming

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▸ About the LII
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▸ Best Search Tools

Search **Help** | Advanced Search

Search by: ⦿ All Fields ○ Subject ○ Title ○ Description ○ URL ☐ No Stemming

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http://www.sannet.gov/public-library/   Internet

Start Sim... Expl... Sam... Micr... Jodi... Sa... Micr... 10:47

Two LII sites with different branding.

O'Leary suggests that forming partnerships with vendors of new-generation content may be the best means of overcoming the threat posed. This may become the long-term desirable result for both parties, with "large book budgets [viewed] as potential saviours", and "proven turnkey solutions" provided for the library. The next development in co-branding was one mooted by Tennant, whereby a customised set of "dynamically generated … different set of buttons and styles [could] be sent to the client along with [unchanged] content." Such dynamic content may be particularly useful in the case of consortia, where branding elements of the home library appear.

The role of this new type of library must be very much an intermediary between the end users and commercial publishers. Dynamic sources that process information must include resource discovery and sharing interfaces and standards as well as links to external elements and tools. Interactive windows must be provided to a wide variety of sources within the library holdings, assist the end-user in accessing the material once they have decided what they want or offer them options if they don't know what they want or need and offer various kinds of support to assist users through the complex process of knowledge mediation and acquisition

Portals

One of the major challenges faced by universities in the growth of distance education and demand for remote access has been a huge increase in the amount of information to be provided online. This is not just an issue of physical storage; the best way to organise and structure information so users can find it easily is another major point. A further challenge is the integration of links to Internet resources from outside the institution, which will be of relevance to users. The common response to these needs, not just within the academic sector but all types of organisations, is the introduction of portals.

In essence, the portal is a one-stop gateway which "gathers a variety of useful information resources into a single, one-stop web page", to help overcome the problem of "information overload". The main benefit of the portal is that it will be much easier for users to find desired content, as they become familiar with the base screen and information will be arranged under useful topical headings. The typical University portal will include links to a historical overview, course information, library and IT services, support functions such as the Human Resources unit, and finding aids like a sitemap and search facilities. Little states that emerging university enterprise portals will present customised information to user groups based on a context, such as the user's role in an organisation or affiliation with a community of interest.

Navigation through the portal should be a seamless process, with screen layout and structure remaining consistent. The use of context-sensitive links in the banner across the top of each screen and a static left-side navigation panel is the most common example; this form of standardised layout is essentially a means of branding, which gives a feeling of familiarity and cohesiveness.

Many library sites are becoming portals, due to the increasing amount and diversity of information presented. Librarians and technologists have been for many years working towards the provision of basic access to information in the virtual environment. However the need has now arisen to move on from this basic level of access to something more individualised and intuitive. Portals have become symbolic of this push. Libraries are no longer bound by time and space in their provision of information. Users no longer depend on physical libraries but increasingly depend on the access to information that libraries provide. Information providers should no longer be seen as an entity in themselves - rather than a service gateway to information and access to knowledge.

Academic institutions are using the portal concept to provide access to information in a cohesive manner to members of their community for example Boston College University Wide Information Portal http://www.mis2.udel.edu/ja-sig/whitepaper.html. A number of American institutions have even been attempting to develop their own portal software that can be shared http://www.ja-sig.org/ . Portals provide an opportunity to integrate a wide range of resources through branding and co-branding with like information providers.

Case Study: Defence Library Service Portal

The portal launched in August 2001 by the Defence Library Service provides a good example of how this can be achieved. A main entry screen provides links to six broad content groups - research services, electronic databases, electronic journals, lending services, information skills and general information about the service. Direct links to popular resources are also included. While the menus change as the user goes deeper into the site, the header, screen layout and overall presentation remain the same, and are hence common elements which brand the site.

Portal features

The DLS portal's introduction has encompassed provision of a far greater suite of online services. These include greater use of external resources, better use of subscribed content, and improved access to help material produced by the Library service.

News stand features links to a wide variety of local and international news sources, including news engines and bots which support personal subject profiles and desktop alert services. Online journals are split into two groups - magazine stand, which includes simple links to `free' titles and magazine resources, and electronic journals, which features more information about serials and is linked to print subscriptions, hence providing restricted access. A greatly enhanced range of electronic databases is also included.

A topical series of links to resources and sites of current relevance is maintained by DLS staff. Demand for such information has inevitably grown with the US Terrorist attacks and subsequent developments; terrorism and Osama bin Laden are examples of resources provided. Others of more general interest to Defence staff include the 2000 Defence

White Paper, Retention of Military Personnel and Global Hawk. In addition to these Hot Topics collections, regular Information Resource updates provide a series of useful links, often focussed on one subject area (eg Anthrax).

One of the most respected collections for Defence-related material is Jane's Information Sources. Jane's produces a series of monthly periodicals (such as Jane's Defence Weekly) and annuals (eg Jane's International Defence Review), as well as one-off special reports - all are of core relevance to Defence. Full online access to Jane's is provided - this includes a search facility. Other full-text subscribed content includes Australian Standards, a range of geo-political and military information products, and health and legal information.

Virtual reference tools such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias and collections of acronyms, quotations and maps are also provided.

The customisable My DLS Library allows staff to set up profiles tailored to their specific needs. It encompasses a wide variety of online resources - full-text and bibliographic databases, electronic documents, data sets and ready reference material. Information provided through profiles is of great use to DLS staff in identifying the exact information needs of clients.

A comprehensive range of information skills advice, such as citation and writing style guides, details of the Procite referencing package, and links to search skills guides are also provided.

Marketing the DLS Portal

In the build-up to the portal's launch by then-Defence minister Peter Reith, a lot of time and resources were invested in marketing the portal throughout Defence. Editorial content emphasising the benefits offered was prepared for a range of publications, including the Australian Defence Force Journal. This tied in with a nation-wide push to make existing Library clients aware of the portal, and how it can be used by them. The portal has also been publicised in library trade journals, such as Incite.

A range of promotional material was also produced - including pens, mousemats, bookmarks and business cards. The common theme throughout was `bookmark the DLS Portal as your favourite'.

Promotion of the portal through such means should be an ongoing process. Regular articles which focus on new features or highlight existing resources are important in maintaining the portal's prominence, and demonstrating its nature as a dynamic, constantly evolving tool. This is also a good means of promoting the Library service as a whole, and reiterating the national `13' telephone number which connects to the nearest DLS Library.
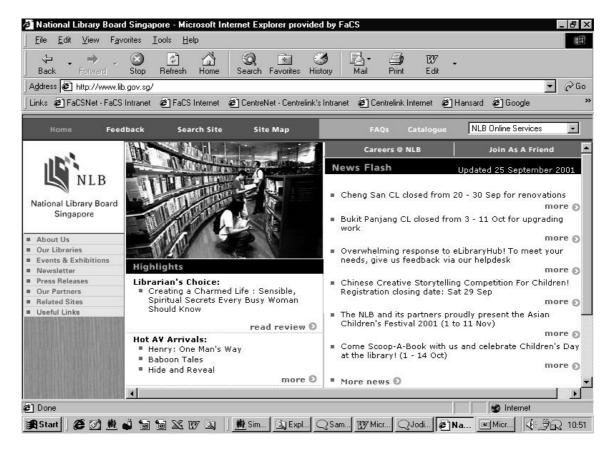
Technical aspects

Technically, the Defence portal is leading-edge in several ways. Content is not derived from static HTML pages, but generated dynamically through an object-oriented database platform. Other issues are the use of integrated, point-and-click content management (including standards-based metadata) and an integrated multi-media-enabled active directory.

A number of possible enhancements have been identified: these include introduction of collaboration tools (offering support for virtual workgroups and project teams), cross-domain searching, automatic site archiving, autonomous agent technology, use of a single sign-on, a 3-tiered publishing model, automatic menu element ordering and RSS support.

The portal has received wide recognition, and Lotus has offered to showcase it at the 2002 Lotus Global Government Forum in the United States.

Many leading international sites also use frames to provide ease of navigation and consistency - these include the National Library Board of Singapore and University of Michigan Library.

While the use of frames is still a controversial topic, they provide the ideal tool through which to integrate content, and are evident in all the above examples.

Information Portals function as electronic doorways into an organisation/service and its component parts. They help access appropriate data, collaborate and efficiently distribute information. Increasingly, however, what they do is "brand" the web site, create a "sexy" web presence, and establish a familial look and feel that users can relate to as their home space - much the same as they used to in the traditional bricks and mortar sense.

New uses of portals allow users to select content and subscribe to information all of which is presented in a consistent customisable and user-friendly format. Information is delivered and accessed in "clumps" through these gateways. The Yankee group predicts that Worldwide the use of portals by organisations particularly in the business arena will reach $1.2 billion by 2003. What they don't do however is to assess, select and manage the content.

Consumer and enterprise portals have developed quickly. The consumer side portal such as Yahoo.com offers end-user fast centralised access to search engines, email and newsworthy (or not so newsworthy) events. Traffick.com's Guide to Portals lists several types of portals:

- **Consumer** Portals; which offer a wide range of customisation options and functionality including: internet search and navigation, email, customised news,

calendars and contact managers, bookmark managers to save favourite web sites, real-time chat, intranet functionality and much more;

- **Vertical** or Niche Portals; category based web sites that are popular and economically significant, "subject gateways" are a type of vertical portal;
- Demographically-focussed portals which cater to specific ethnic group, age groups, alternative lifestyles and other groups are being called **Affinity** Portals;
- **Horizontal** Portals are general interest portals covering a wide range of topics and features such as Yahoo and Lycos;
- Enterprise Resource Portals (**ERP**), Enterprise Information Portals (**EIP**) or **Corporate** Portals or once called the "extranet"; and
- **B2B** or Industry Portals are those in the corporate sector that can act as real engines for the new economy, particularly those who advocate e-commerce.

Vertical portal or vortal and affinity portal, deliver information to narrowly targeted niche markets or select demographics with specialised subscriber based information. Enterprise portals combine the best platform based consumer portals by putting mission critical data applications at the users' fingertips, often replacing the traditional extranet functionality. Information portals help collect, filter and deliver information real time and this is where the key benefit lies. Users can specify what interests them most and change their personalised profile any time from anywhere.

The next generation intranet must be seen as a point of aggregation for fragmented data and documentation that has been posted often in a random fashion on the web. The current trends in the supply of electronic information, particularly those favouring vendor-aggregated content providing portal services and technologies, do not necessarily suit the library user. Library users do not know nor should they be expected to know what title has been acquired from which vendor. Rather they need to be provided with a strategy to "implement site-wide subject searching or browsing".

A good portal or gateway should provide seamless access for non authenticated users until restricted information is requested. Unlike Internet and intranet sites, most portals are proprietary providing application programming interfaces (APIs).

Web sites now play a central role in meeting the library's mission of delivering information and services. Increasingly the demand is any-time, any-where, any-place, seamless, customisable and referential. Whether or not libraries are sufficiently conscious of this evolving dynamic, they need to take more proactive steps in addressing the substantial technical and organisational challenges posed by the second generation web.

Libraries can no longer think of their web sites as collections of HTML pages but view them as dynamic resources for information and services that users will use in highly individualised ways. Dynamic technologies are required to create on-the-fly/real-time access using push/pull technologies that allow for data to be manipulated into the pages as they are delivered. No single portal is going to provide access to everything that you and your clients need. Rather than resisting technology and uses of it – libraries need to use

their enthusiasm to their advantage by seizing the opportunity to be at the forefront of these portal opportunities. However, information technology must not drive the business of libraries but should be the enablers of service and of information. Too often technologists see it as their role to determine the needs of a business organisation rather than listen and support it.

Making users return - sticky websites

A key underlying challenge of any Internet site is ensuring visitors will return. The use of portals to provide easy access to a wide range of information is certainly a good starting point; however specific consideration should be given to exactly which facets will make users come back.

`Stickiness' of a site refers not just to return visits, but also the average time spent - the longer a user stays for, the more likely that they will come back. As suggested by Fichter, it involves "cocooning the surfer with activities at a Web site to keep them occupied".

One important issue in determining a sticky site is the depth of content available. Most library sites, particularly portals, already rate well here, as they are true resources, rather than brochures with minimal content; however the resource issue does focus thinking on whether further external links could be useful. Closely related is the provision of niche content, which is customised to a specific group's needs. Other common factors identified by Fichter include editorial content; up-to-date, relevant information; relationship building; tools for building communities such as discussion forums; and extra features such as calendars, chat rooms and email alert services.

An important point to note about website design, constantly reinforced through literature, is the significance of content over glitz - a visually impressive site, implementing leading-edge animation and graphics, will be useless without content that users need.

Future marketing of libraries

While this paper has focused on the need for libraries to create a strong Internet presence through branding and co-branding, marketing in general is becoming more and more important to of libraries.

Libraries today face challenges from a number of fronts. With the Internet's rise, there is a widespread (albeit false) assumption that everything can be found there, and that libraries are becoming redundant. As discussed above, commercial vendors are also eyeing the potential of reaching customers directly, without using the library as an intermediary. We need to overcome such threats, and debunk the fallacy, by heavily promoting in-house `Search the Internet Effectively' courses, and promoting the ability of librarians to add value to information by identifying only the most pertinent items. Such marketing should take place through a number of mediums - within the Library, through organisation-wide newsletters, and integration within the internal course training schedule. The Defence

Library Service is a good case of how a wide variety of mediums were used to promote a new portal, and how this was applied to promotion of the library service as a whole.

There is also a definite need to better understand customers, and what they are looking for. One of the best ways to achieve this is through market research. Electronic user surveys are technically possible today; the University of Canberra Library uses these tools to gain feedback about the usefulness of electronic databases, and identify possible areas of expansion. Lease Morgan also suggests information should be obtainable from log files of OPAC usage, to report on what real information customers are seeking. Once more is known about the library's customer base, it can be segmented into user groups, which can be targeted on a specific basis.

To maintain a role in the information-seeking process, libraries need to regularly run courses in effective retrieval through databases and the Internet as a whole. Actively promoting information literacy programs reminds everyone that the Library is still important, and reinforces its role.

Resources can be divided into a number of categories: internally created content, externally created fee-based content and externally created free content. The health Summit Working Group (http://hitiweb.mitretek.org/hswg/) provided a seven-point evaluation criteria, which serves as useful tool that libraries might employ in looking at the marketing potential of their web presence:

- Credibility: sources, currency, relevance/utility and review process
- Content: accurate and complete with relevant disclaimers
- Disclosure: informing the user of the purpose of the site, profiling or collecting of information
- Links: evaluated according to selection, architecture, content and back links
- Design: encompasses accessibility, logical organisation and internal search capability
- Interactivity: feedback mechanisms and means for exchange of information among users
- Caveats: clarification of the role of the site

Another essential element is relationship marketing, which, as suggested by Besant and Sharp, addresses the twin concerns of getting and keeping customers through building personal, long-term bonds. However, the principles are equally applicable to other groups - such as database vendors, internal partners such as information technology staff, and like-minded librarians with whom cooperative ventures could be established.

The growing importance of marketing for libraries was well put by Rowley: "…marketing will become an ever-present component of our experience as we enter the 21st century".

Conclusion

The rhetoric has been there for some time, but the reality is now dawning that the time for libraries to move into the e-publishing arena has come. Clifford Lynch comments that if libraries have learnt how to bring bits into the future then they may embrace digital publishing as an increasingly important adjunct to the printed work. While physical spaces are still important, the bricks and mortar of today and the e-space of tomorrow are expanding faster than we can conceptualise. Traditional barriers for access to information sources are becoming more and more diminished thanks largely to the Internet and the myriad of information technologies, which allow us to retrieve, store and disseminate information.

Libraries need to establish a home presence using the technologies available (internet, web, vortals, portals, information clumps, and sticky web sites) and forming strategic alliances with information vendors and publishers. The use of a portal offers an individualised slice of the library's information resources and facilitates faster, seamless access to the resources as they are tailored to the users own preference. It is clear that libraries cannot be the sole custodian of information and access but must form both cooperative and commercial partnerships to maximise their information presence.

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