

Library Resources to Enhance the Undergraduate Experience

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ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities are facing opportunities and challenges created by the confluence of new technology and millennial students, who are using technology to access information, collaborate, and interact. This new generation of students expects information to be targeted to them based on their role at the university. Lehigh has integrated targeted Library resources within its campus portal to meet our students' needs. Students' K-12 experiences also encompass a vast array of internet tools to find information. For students the skills of finding, using and citing this information is often lacking. Lehigh has been working for four years on an Information Literacy initiative to identify the needs of our students and to work with faculty to allow students to best use Lehigh's research tools and databases. Another component of the Information Literacy Initiative is the use of Lehigh's special collection materials and digital library to demonstrate the unique ways that library materials can be used to enhance instruction and ensure a unique course experience.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.3.2 [Computer and Information Science Education]: Accreditation, Literacy, curriculum, self assessment

General Terms

Management, Measurement, Design, Documentation

Keywords

Portal, Merged Organizations, Restructuring, Special Collections

1. Organization to Enhance Services

Lehigh's Library and Technology Services (LTS) has a unique organizational structure which has allowed for the rapid development of resources for undergraduates. This structure consists of cross functional teams throughout the Client Services division of LTS. The cross functional teams consist of librarians, computing consultants, instructional technologists, and enterprise consultants. These teams are assigned to each of Lehigh's four

colleges as well as to Lehigh's administrative offices. The structure is a truly merged organization and not merely a merger of the reporting structure at the top of the organization chart. The heart of the organization is a merged help desk which handles all incoming calls and walk up support for both library and computing issues. Other major divisions within LTS are Technology Management Services (systems, networking, operations, repair, and telecommunications), Access Management Services (cataloging and stack management), Enterprise Systems (Sungard Banner administrative application), Faculty Development, and Distance Education. The cross functional team structure has allowed the rapid development and deployment of our campus portal project as well as the implementation of information literacy and digital library initiatives utilizing cross function team members as well as members of LTS's functional teams such as faculty development, the digital library team and media services.

2. Portal Developments

Lehigh's portal development dates back to 2002 when Lehigh signed a contract with Campus Pipeline to implement a vendor supported version of uPortal. Note: this portal is now called Luminis from SunGard Higher Education. The campus portal was rolled out in 2003 and the use of library resources and staffing were critical to its success. The most important task in the implementation of any portal is the determination of content. The content team is a cross functional team headed by a librarian with computing consultants, help desk staff and enterprise consultants as members. The formation of these teams was a natural extension of our organizational structure with most portal project led by a team leader from Client Services. A number of major portal developments were initiated immediately. The first was the MyLibrary portal tab which used an open source program called MyLibrary which was developed by Eric Lease Morgan from the University of Notre Dame (see <http://mylibrary.library.nd.edu/>). This portal was integrated into our existing portal. The MyLibrary portal provides targeted library materials to our clients based on their role at the University. For example, when an mathematics graduate students accesses the portal their library materials in portal will consist of channels of math library resources and his support librarian for mathematics. It should be noted that Lehigh's portal statistics indicate that our graduate students are the heaviest users of accessing the targeted library information through the portal and members of the Engineering College are the biggest user. (see Table 1 and Table 2)

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Table 1. November 2007 unique visits

Undergraduate Students	38%
Graduate Students	49%
Faculty & Staff	13%

Table 2. November 2007 unique visits by College

Engineering	33%
Arts & Science	22%
Education	22%
Business	14%
Undeclared	9%

Other major portal activities are:

- The admitted and first year student portal which provides portal access to students once they are formally accepted at Lehigh. The targeted information received by students has been used to replace many of Lehigh’s standard orientation activities. This has allowed us to provide housing and course selection, access to student mentors and assessment tools such as our calculus readiness test and information literacy assessment tools, as well as the ability of accepted students to pay their deposits on line and transition immediately to a first year student.
- The alumni portal which students transition to upon graduation from Lehigh.
- A parent portal which allows parents to keep up to date on activities at Lehigh as well as keep track of their child’s financial and academic records if approved by their child.
- Graduate student portals modeled after our first year student portal.

3. Information Literacy

Lehigh’s Middle States accrediting body standard 11 states that “Information Literacy is an intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating and using information.” Lehigh was preparing for a ten year Middle State accreditation review which occurred in March 2008 in 2004 when the Information Literacy Initiative was started.

The goals of the program for students were to develop skills in using appropriate research strategies as well as finding and crediting appropriate resources. The goals for faculty were to develop skills in creating teaching assignments which avoid some of the issues that lead to plagiarism. To this end the Information Literacy web site highlights model assignments which use original resource materials to develop unique student assignments in a variety of disciplines. Faculty have participated in focus groups to determine the skills they think their students need. Another component of our program was the development of a research skill assessment instrument in 2004. The skills assessment tool was developed by Lehigh’s librarians and is an

instrument that gives real world examples for students to complete and be evaluated on five categories listed in Table 3. We are now in our fourth year of administering this assessment to incoming students and are in the process of administering this assessment to our graduating seniors to see if these skills have improved.

Table 3. Research Assessment Results (% score)

Category	2004	2005	2006
Defining Research Needs	91%	95%	81%
Accessing Information	63%	65%	68%
Locating Information	81%	80%	79%
Evaluating Information	73%	73%	67%
Ethical Principles	41%	85%	87%

3.1 Using Special Collections Materials

The Information Literacy project has provided an ideal location to highlight the work that is being done to incorporate primary resource materials into Lehigh’s courses. A good example of this is the course entitled “Problems of the Planets” which was co taught by a physicist and a philosopher and utilizes digitized versions of the 1534 text “On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres” by Nicholas Copernicus and a 1602 text ‘Instruments for the Restoration of Astronomy” by Tycho Brahe. This course explores the scientific and philosophical issues created the Copernicus text. A group of students were assigned to examine the Copernicus text and try to determine some of the marginal handwritten notes in the text and determine what significance they had. Another group of students designed a telescope using design cues from the Brahe text. Another good example of using primary materials is the use of our digital archive called “I Remain” which contains over 250 letters of historical significance from former presidents such as Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy and Johnson as well as other popular figures such as Benjamin Franklin and Babe Ruth. This material was used in a course entitled ‘Early American Literature: A First Course”. Students were assign a historical letter and worked with embedded librarians to decipher and place the letter in its proper historical perspective. These are just a few of the courses that have used our digitized text. Examples of others can be seen by accessing the Information Literacy web site at <http://www.lehigh.edu/informationliteracy>.

3.2 Digital Archive and Video Projects

Besides the use of digitized text and letters instructors have also found that students respond extremely well to creating video materials which then can be added to Lehigh’s overall digital archive. The facilities to do this have been greatly augmented over the last few years with the creation of Lehigh’s Digital Media Studio where students learn the basic skills for creating and editing video materials. A good example of this is the work that was done in a course entitled “Steel Lives” in which students in the College of Education receive instruction in using constructionist principles to create videos of former Bethlehem steel workers. These videos are placed in our digital archive that Lehigh is creating with other libraries called “Beyond Steel” which documents the rise and fall of the Bethlehem Steel company.