New Directions for Online Services
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Overview

In almost all our interviews and surveys with students and faculty, online services and the ability to do as much as possible on the web has been one of the most requested features. The UCB Library has a strong history of providing content and resources, such as databases, online. Over the past couple of years, the Library has begun to experiment with various online reference services. With the acquisition of a new Integrated Library System (ILS), the UCB Library has a rare opportunity to select a tool that will allow us to offer many more online services than are currently available.

National Trends

Self-service functions in the academic library have been identified as a trend at least since 2000 and have continued to persist. The 2007 ACRL environmental scan states, "librarians must be ready to provide access to the library's collections and services anytime and anywhere". In line with several web 2.0 tenets, such as user created content, user control, quick and responsive services, and personalization of content, self-service allows users to organize their library support as they see fit. Some examples of popular projects taken on by libraries across the nation:

- Exploring open source software options to create online content and services
- Use of wikis and blogs to create more dynamic pages for librarians and students
- Gaming in libraries for point of need instruction
- Digitized special collections made accessible and searchable through photo-sharing sites
- Use of social networking sites for marketing/outreach

Another key trend in academic libraries as identified by Clifford Lynch in the 2007 ALA program, "The Future of Academic Libraries" is the virtual user. This is the user who never sets foot in the library. They are able to get everything they need from home. The library can choose to see this scenario as a success, building services to support the virtual user.

Local Issues

- Outdated ILS system that prevents implementation of new services and efficient processes
- LSO is in the process of selecting and migrating to a new Content Management System, which will give web workers more control over changes to library web pages and possibly more support for other programming languages
- The use of new technologies will require additional staff training/new staff with needed skills

Opportunities for New Directions and Potential Starting Points

**represent services and abilities targeted to Library staff that will benefit users
Reference Services:

- Expand online reference
- Database backed FAQ's (allows the user to search for an FAQ)
- Create a single search, whether it's a type of metasearch, or other, to remove silos of information
- Short online tutorials at the point of need.
- Text messaging reference

Library Webpages:

- Integrate online reference with the Library webpages
- Allow users (faculty, staff, graduate students, possibly undergraduates) to obtain accounts that allow them to create a page with the resources the individual user needs - similar to a personal Google homepage and delicious.
- **Allow librarians to create dynamic pages, reuse content, etc. Tools such as Drupal allow for this content. Move away from programmers writing public pages.
- Short Video/audio tours of the collections and major public services (ILL, Circulation, Reference, etc).
- An online component for The Browne Gallery Exhibit
- The ability to search efficiently across the Library webpages, including the ERF or its future version, could be tied to the new ILS
- Greater presence/marketing for e-books
- Move away from the proxy and the VPN to "single sign-on" or similar services
- Allow for pages to be compliant with various portable devices (cell phones, PDAs, etc)
- Online software packages for students accessible via VPN/Proxy or other such services
- Virtual media center online with streaming media on websites

Collections:

- Netflix DVD circulation service (e.g. University of Washington's Netflix account for students-allows students to "borrow" movies from the Library)
- Self-service textbook library or collection for student use (e.g. Texas A&M University Libraries)

Social Networking/Web 2.0:

- Create Library presence in Facebook, Myspace, etc. Services such as email and some forms of chat reference can be provided. See ENVI's facebook page.
- The Library website could host virtual communities of users, similar to Facebook.
- **Encourage Library staff to write entries in wikipedia about the collections, services, etc.
- Library can host various software applications for students: blogs, wikis etc. Policies can be set for limits on access.

ILS Functions and Circulation Functions:
A new ILS is integral in determining the possible kinds of online services that can be developed. The following are suggestions of considerations when evaluating our replacement ILS.

- More online/web-based self-services: book renewals, holds/pickup, requests, manage accounts, pay fines, reserve study room or laptops. For holds, allow the user to specify a "home" pickup location (pickup anywhere).
- Laptop checkout
- Automatic alert system (email/text courtesy message) when a book is about to be overdue, item reserved is available. User can select how be notified (email, text, phone, etc).
- Self check-out and self check-in for most items
- **Incorporate RFID into the Library. RFID can allow users to walk out with a book and his/her ID card and have the book automatically checked out to the user at the security gate. Allow library staff to shelf-read with the wave of a wand. This would also free up staff time to provide other services as well.**
- New catalog functions: Integrate online reference and other services with the catalog (such as linking the Congressional Record tutorial with the catalog record for the Congressional Record), allow media files to be uploaded, ability to modify web content and displays in catalog, "discovery based" will make it easier to use e.g. FRBR if it’s supported by the new ILS
- **An efficient Electronic Resources Management system.
- Self service "on hold" and course reserve shelves
- Universal discharge
- Unmediated resource sharing and delivery (e.g. Innovative Interfaces InnReach module: LINK+)
- **Automated Materials Handling Systems (AMHS) are designed to check in, sort and place on book trucks library materials returned via a bookdrop. Systems can be used with barcodes or RFID. This would free staff time to provide other user services.