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Instruction on the Web: Getting All Librarians Involved

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ABSTRACT

The Collection Development Council at Old Dominion University (Virginia) decided to involve all subject specialist librarians in creating guides to web resources in the disciplines for which they serve as bibliographers. The project was intended to help librarians become familiar with Internet resources in their fields of expertise and give them experience with World Wide Web searching. A worksheet for bibliographers and a sample guide were provided. Librarians were asked to complete a worksheet for one of their assigned areas of collection development in the next year. A separate Web Team would enter the guides, using HTML and mounting them on the library web site. The worksheet consisted of space for entering a title, URL and comments of resources in 15 different categories: Internet resource guides, monograph-type materials, periodical materials, electronic mailing lists, USENET groups, directories, software archives, graphics archives, sound archives, commercial information services, online business sites, online organization sites, data files, career resources, and other miscellaneous sites. One year after the project's inception, 28 of the 48 guides were completed. Those librarians who completed a guide gained experience and competence in searching the web, and the faculty and students have benefited. A sample guide on women's studies is included. (Author/SWC)

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Instruction on the Web: Getting All Librarians Involved

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The World Wide Web can certainly be a grand avenue for offering instruction about library resources--courses, tutorials, guides, etc., but how can we get all subject specialist librarians involved, instead of placing the responsibility wholly on the library webmaster, the instruction librarian, or the reference librarians?

Although our Web Team and the Instruction Services Librarian collaborated on ideas for structuring the new *Learning to Use the Library* page for the Old Dominion University Library, another group initiated an every-librarian-do-a-page endeavor. Our Collection Development Council, composed of seven librarians and a paraprofessional, decided that--since Internet resources are now a significant part of our collections--it would be good to have the librarians create guides to web resources in the disciplines for which they serve as bibliographers. As a side benefit, such a project would help all librarians become familiar with Internet resources in their fields of expertise and would give them ample experience with World-Wide Web searching.

The idea was presented at a library faculty meeting, with a worksheet for bibliographers distributed and a sample guide projected and explained. It was emphasized that the guides would a way of acquainting users with a cross-section of the type of materials on the Internet. The worksheets were revised slightly after the meeting and e-mailed to all librarians the next day. Librarians were asked to complete a worksheet for one of their assigned areas of collection development sometime in the coming year; the Web Team would take the responsibility for entering the guides, using *HTML*, and mounting them on our library website.

The worksheets consisted of space for entering the title, URL and comments (annotations, usually) of resources in 15 different categories: Internet resource guides, monograph-type materials,

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periodical materials, electronic mailing lists, USENET groups, directories, software archives, graphics archives, sound archives, commercial information services, online business sites, online organization sites, data files, career resources, and other miscellaneous sites. Each category was defined on the worksheet; the definition also appears in the web version of the guides. It was emphasized that the guides were not intended to be comprehensive and that not every guide would include resources in every category.

Even though the estimated time for completing a worksheet was four hours, my own first worksheet (on women's studies) took closer to twenty hours to complete. This may explain why only 28 of the 48 guides have been completed within the first year following the project's inception. It is expected that most librarians who have not completed their guides will finish work on at least one guide per year, as a specific annual performance objective.

It can certainly be said that those librarians who have completed such a guide gained both experience and competence in searching the web—and that our faculty and students have benefited.

The Old Dominion University Library Internet resource guides may be found at
<http://www.lib.odu.edu/reference/netguides/>.

[sample guide follows]

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Selected Women's Studies Resources on the Internet

This resource list attempts to provide a sample of women's studies related material available on the Internet. It reflects only a small cross-section of accessible resources. More in-depth searches can be performed using search engines such as Lycos , Yahoo, Alta Vista, Webcrawler, or Excite.

Resource Guides
Monographs/Working Papers
Periodicals
Electronic Mailing Lists
Usenet Groups
Directories
Software Archives
Graphics Archives
Sound Archives
Commercial Information Services
Online Business Sites
Organization Sites
Data Files
Career Resources
Miscellaneous Sites

RESOURCE GUIDES:

Think of these as bibliographies of women's studies related materials on the Internet, with hypertext links to cited items.

- Feminist Internet Gateway, comprehensive guide to information on women's health, work, sports, politics, etc. with links to government and other reference sources.
- Social Sciences: Women's Studies (Yahoo), Includes virtually all categories of interest to women—art, history, law, media, and much more. Provides links to forums, usenet groups, journals, etc.
- Women's Studies Database, conference announcements, calls for papers, employment opportunities, government resources, a picture gallery, etc. are provided.
- WWWomen, comprehensive search engine for resources related to women, including the arts, business, computers, the Internet, education, feminism, health, lesbians, magazines, fashion, sports, and more.

MONOGRAPHS/WORKING PAPERS:

- "Lady Freedom Among Us" - a poem by Rita Dove, this poem by the U.S. Poet Laureate includes sound and video files.
- "Little Women" - by Louisa May Alcott, works by women authors such as Alcott, Austen, Cather, Chopin, Gaskell, and Jewett also available at this site.
- Victorian Women Writers Project, twenty-eight literary works by ten British women writers.

PERIODICALS:

A wide variety of periodical materials are available on the Internet. Some have corresponding print versions, while others are published in electronic form only.

- Feminist Studies in Aotearoa Electronic Journal, focuses on feminist theory, feminist perspectives in philosophy, contemporary feminist debates, etc.
- Godey's Lady's Book (1850), articles and images from this 19th century periodical.
Women's Wire, women's 'zine: news, health, resource links, etc.

ELECTRONIC MAILING LISTS:

These are electronic discussion groups where email messages from group members are distributed to all members of the group.

- WMST-L (subscribe listserv@umdd.umd.edu), serves academic and professional needs of teachers, researchers, and program administrators in the field of women's studies.
- WHERE-L (subscribe mailex@medcolpa.edu), women's health, education, and resource exchange list--a forum to discuss journal articles and exchange information on women's health issues.
 - ◇ *[A note on electronic mailing list availability](#)* [link]

USENET GROUPS:

Usenet groups are similar to electronic mailing lists, but posted messages are displayed in bulletin board fashion.

- SOC.WOMEN, discussion of issues related to women.
 - ◇ *[A note on Usenet group availability](#)* [link]

DIRECTORIES:

Many organizations make membership or staff directories available on the Internet.

- Directory of Women's Professional Organizations, comprehensive directory (addresses, telephone numbers) organized by category: legal, medical, business, etc.
- International Directory of Women's Political Leadership, guide to organizations and leaders, provided by the University of Maryland's Center for Political Leadership and Participation.

SOFTWARE ARCHIVES:

A tremendous amount of computer software is available for downloading over the Internet. Much of it is free.

- SIByl: The Social Science Software Information Bank, provides information on wide variety of software, including program descriptions, availability, and references. The Menstrual Distress Questionnaire and many population study programs are among the most relevant to women's studies.

GRAPHICS ARCHIVES:

Sites which maintain downloadable graphics or picture files.

- Women's Studies Resources - Picture Gallery, images of famous women from Susan B. Anthony to Hillary Rodham Clinton.

SOUND ARCHIVES:

Sites which maintain downloadable audio files.

- Vincent Voice Library, choose "general sound samples" to hear audio clips of Amelia Earhart, Florence Nightingale, Betty Ford, etc.

COMMERCIAL INFORMATION SERVICES:

(Fee-based systems): Many commercial information services are accessible through the Internet. Please note that full use of these services requires subscriptions and/or fees which are the responsibility of the individual.

- Dialog, a wide ranging information service offering access to several hundred independent databases.
- Legi-Slate, this Washington Post division indexes bills, recently introduced legislation; also maintains information files.
- WomensWeb, offers a miscellany of products, inspirational messages and links.

ONLINE BUSINESS SITES:

Sites maintained by businesses for the sale, marketing, etc. of goods or services.

- "Her Heritage" CD-ROM, American biographical encyclopedia on CD-ROM as well as other products.
- Seven Sisters Catalog advertises products made by women around the world.

ORGANIZATION SITES:

Many organizations are setting up homepages on the World Wide Web. Some organizations may choose to include organizational publications, directories, or other useful information.

- Feminist Majority Online, provides news, a feminist research center, a university network, and Internet gateway, and help options for violence/health/career/etc. information needs.
- NOW: National Organization for Women, provides news, issues, contacts, information, social action options and links.

DATA FILES:

An increasing number of raw data files are available for downloading over the Internet.

- Bureau of Labor Statistics, allows for specifying exact information, including range of years, that can be extracted.

CAREER RESOURCES:

Sites offering career leads for practitioners in a given discipline.

- inforM Women's Studies: Employment, employment opportunities in women's studies and related fields.

MISCELLANEOUS SITES:

- American Memory, a search of these historical collections from the National Digital Library Program on the subject "women" turned up 1200 hits including photos, motion pictures, sound recordings, and documents.
- Women's Connection Online, "an intelligent, thoughtful community for women."
- WomensNet@IGC, a global community of women activists, and organizations whose purpose is to increase women's rights.
- Women's Web, contents from 5 major U.S. women's magazines.
- Women's Studies Resources, resources for research and training in the field of women's studies.
- United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.

◇ *Additional sites for government or intergovernmental agency based information* [link]

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