D'Amour Library Web Site Redesigned and Enhanced

Over the summer, D'Amour librarians evaluated and redesigned much of the Library's Web site, which can be found at http://libraries.wnec.edu. The intent of the project is to make information searches more intuitive, and thus simpler, for all College users.

One new feature of the Library Web site is a catalog search box on the front page. Now, library users may search for books, DVDs, and other library materials right from the home page. Also added to this page are links to database lists, reserve readings, and subject guides, so the Library's most useful research resources are easier to find.

On the right side of the new home page is a calendar of D'Amour Library events, such as drop-in workshops and Athenaeum lectures. Beneath the calendar, What's New features announcements about new library services and resources.

The front page also includes a direct link to information about the Ask a Librarian service, in which reference librarians are available to answer research questions via Instant Message.

The menu on the left side of the page has also been reorganized. Students and faculty may now access useful resources through pages designed just for them; look for For Students and For Faculty in the menu. Also linked from the menu are the Help/How Do I? pages, where common research processes are explained and frequently asked questions are answered. The topics were chosen based on common reference questions and information literacy class topics. Here also, you'll find a more detailed guide to the redesigned web site (see “How do I navigate the new library Web site?”).

Perhaps the most important new feature of the Web site is the digital suggestion box, Make a Suggestion, linked from the left-side menu. Members of the Western New England College community may send suggestions for the Web site and other library services to the Director of the Library, Priscilla Perkins.

Please let us know what you think of the D'Amour Library Web site's new design and content. Feedback from faculty, students, and staff will help us further improve access to the many research tools available at D'Amour Library.

Jessica Kem Gorman, Information Literacy Librarian

The Bestsellers Are Here!

In an effort to bring you the most current books and movies, we have several new collections in the library. Please make sure to check out our DVD's on the first floor. You will find both brand new films, as well as wonderful classics. We have many music CD's, both current and classic rock. Most recently, we've added a leased book collection from Baker and Taylor. We are able to get bestsellers right away instead of waiting for paperbacks. We truly do welcome suggestions for DVD's, CD's and books you'd love to read! Send us your suggestions on the D'Amour Library Web site (find Make a Suggestion on the left hand menu), or in the suggestion box at the Circulation Desk.

Vicky Ludwig, Acquisitions/Collection Development Librarian
First Year Students’ View of the Information Environment

During the Fall semester 2006, I had the rewarding experience of working with many of the incoming students at Western New England College. These students gained an introduction to generalized academic information sources and search strategies in their First Year Seminar and English 132 classes. However, this was only an introduction. Students will benefit greatly from increased exposure to academic information sources in their majors and supporting interdisciplinary areas.

First year students arrived on the Western New England College campus in the fall with a greater awareness of information literacy issues than any previously-surveyed incoming students. Reviewing the data from the 2004–2006 Information Literacy pretests, it is evident that students’ knowledge of information sources has changed over the years surveyed. Students have become progressively more aware of the need to use a variety of information resources beyond the freely available, or visible, Web. They have also begun to understand that there are different types and qualities of information.

The most recent Information Literacy pre-test survey was administered over the summer of 2006. The instrument included 18 questions about students’ use of information sources, beliefs about ethical and appropriate information use, and methods of research during their last year of high school.

Incoming students seem to be more aware than previous classes of the need to use academic information sources to inform and provide context for their research papers and projects. When asked whether they agree with the statement, “All the information I need for my college research is available from the free Web with a search engine like Google,” only 9.1% of the 2006 incoming students found the statement to be true. When asked, in previous years, if they agreed or disagreed with a similar version of the above statement, “All information I need for my research is free on the Web,” 17% of the incoming 2005 students answered “Agree” while 71% of the 2004 respondents answered “Agree.” Although first year students use Google and other search engines frequently, they understand that these tools may not provide access to appropriate scholarly information for their coursework.

This change in incoming students’ information literacy may be attributed to greater exposure to information literacy training in high school; this observation is confirmed by the results from other pre-test questions.

Incoming first year students are eager to learn about accessing quality academic information sources to further their exploration of academic subjects. This characteristic has been observed anecdotally and is confirmed by the pre-test results. These results show a progression of awareness in the students’ thinking about the quality of information. When asked in the pre-test survey to determine whether the following statement is true or false, “All information is of equal quality,” only 2.5% of the 2006 incoming students responded “true.”

Reading the same statement in previous years, 10% of the 2005 students and 21% of the 2004 responses agreed with the statement. Students were also asked about their ability to recognize the difference between scholarly and popular periodical articles. The results indicate that 47.1% of incoming 2006 students believe they can tell the difference, while 33.1% of the students report they cannot tell the difference between scholarly and popular sources.

Similar results appeared in the October 27, 2006 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, where the Educational Testing Service reported on their ICT [Information and Communication Technology] Literacy Assessment Core Level, a nationally-administered test of the information skills of college and high school students. Among the findings they reported are:

1. Students generally recognized that Web sites whose addresses end in .edu or .gov were less likely to contain biased material than those with addresses ending in .com.

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Faculty Authors Honored at Annual Tea in D'Amour Library

On November 1, 2006, members of the Western New England College community gathered in D'Amour Library's Clarke Reading Room to honor faculty who had published books, journal articles, conference proceedings, and other publications over the past year.

Pictured at left is Jonathan Beagle, Assistant Professor of History and author of *Boston: A Pictorial Celebration* (New York: Sterling, 2006).

D'Amour Library also maintains a cumulative directory of faculty publications on its web site. Find a link under For Faculty in the left-side menu.

Notable New Books In D'Amour Library

- Haddon, Mark. *A Spot of Bother.*
- Wozniak, Steve. *iWoz.*

Database News

D'Amour Library has expanded its collection of online databases through the recent purchase of *Communication & Mass Media Complete, Grove Art Online, Chicago Manual of Style, Education Research Complete,* and *SociINDEX with Full Text.*

*Communication & Mass Media Complete* provides extensive coverage of the journal literature in communication, mass media, and related fields, including full-text access to 285 journals.

*Grove Art Online* provides online access to the entire text of two standard reference works - *The Dictionary of Art* and *The Oxford Companion to Western Art.* This database includes over 3,000 thumbnail art images and line drawings, many of which are available in color.

*The Chicago Manual of Style* is the searchable, online version of the popular style guide.

*Education Research Complete* replaces *ProQuest Education Complete;* it provides indexing, abstracting, and full text of hundreds of education journals, books, and conference papers.

*SociINDEX with Full Text* replaces *Sociological Abstracts.* It contains full text access to 473 journals, 700 books, and 6,800 conference papers in sociology.

These databases are accessible both on-campus and off-campus via D'Amour Library's Web site.

Dan Eckert, Interlibrary Loan and Serials Librarian

(First Year Students, continued from page 2)

2. Some students were too willing to believe print materials, failing to distinguish authoritative from mass-market sources.

3. Students were generally poor at identifying biased Web content.

From an anecdotal perspective, I have observed that although many students recognize that all information is not equal, they are unable to articulate specific criteria to evaluate information sources. After students participate in the First Year Information Literacy program, their ability to identify evaluation criteria that could be applied to information sources should increase. Results from the Information Literacy post-Test, administered in December, will assess this observation.

Mary Jane Sobinski-Smith, Head of Information Literacy

Mary Jane Sobinski-Smith and James Gladue, winner of the iPod nano, from the D'Amour Library information literacy survey, Summer 2006.

I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of Library.
- Jorge Luis Borges

Doing research on the Web is like using a library assembled piecemeal by pack rats and vandalized nightly.
- Roger Ebert

My Alma mater was books, a good library... I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity.
- Malcolm X
From the Director’s Desk

A new year! A chance to look ahead to the promise of a great semester as well as an opportunity to examine the past semester. And in D’Amour Library it was a terrific fall!

The Library’s two new laser printers got terrific workouts from the Library’s many users, consuming 868 reams of paper and many, many ink cartridges. Computer use rose as did the use of the IM-based “Ask a Librarian” reference service. A new lease plan added current bestsellers to the leisure reading collection, and the circulation of our growing DVD and compact disc collections increased dramatically. And during exams, students happily took advantage of the free coffee and cookies to help get them through evening study sessions.

It is always exciting to welcome new and returning students regardless of which semester it is. This past fall, not only did we welcome a new class of students, but we also welcomed four new staff members. In mid-August, Deborah Levehim joined us for the year, first as our temporary information literacy librarian and this semester as the archivist. Deb earned her M.S.L.I.S. in August from Simmons College. During her interview, she “wowed” us with her lesson plan dealing with the dos and don’ts of using Google for research. And she continued to impress us as she deftly handled many information literacy sessions each week. Deb comes to librarianship after careers in teaching and the publishing world. The beginning of October brought us Damian Biagi, our cataloger. Damian is also a new librarian, having earned his degree from Simmons College this summer. He is well-qualified for his position after a year at the Law School Library where he gained experience with both copy cataloging and serials. He, too, jumped right into his duties handling the more complex media items as well as the conventional book format right away. This semester we promise to share him more with the students as we add reference duties to his busy schedule. We feel privileged to serve as mentors to these fine new librarians.

There are also two new faces at the Circulation Desk. Erin Nau and Susan Nieske became the Library’s new evening circulation supervisors in mid-October. Splitting the week, Erin and Susan are responsible for all aspects of the circulation and reserves operations including supervising our able student assistants and ensuring the closing and reserves operations. Both of them come to the College with tremendous service experience and have quickly shown the care and concern for students that is at the center of the Library’s mission.

Saying hello to new people means we said goodbye to others. In May 2006, Evelyn Salz retired as the College Archivist after 11 years of valued service. Evelyn reports that she loves retirement! Career moves took Steven Folsom, Michael Evitts, and Shanna Burke from us after contributing so much to the Library and to the students. We miss them all, but we wish them well as they make their indelible marks elsewhere.

The new semester, like the new year, is just underway. We are planning an exciting Spring semester with new Athenaeum speakers, concerts, and movies that expose us to the arts from other countries. We will also see improvements to WILDPAC, the online library catalog, and the addition of many new resources in all formats. The Library is a great place to be for research, for resources, for instruction, and for enrichment. Join us!

Priscilla Perkins,
Director, D’Amour Library

D’Amour Library has a Screen Name!

Have a research question or problem but you're nowhere near the library? IM your question to the reference librarians at D’Amour Library. Our screen names are:

AIM (AOL Instant Messenger): askdamour
Yahoo! Messenger: askdamour

Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

-P. J. O’Rourke