Institution Case Study:
Project Gutenberg

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Date Completed: March 21, 2011

PLACE INFORMATION AND INTRODUCTORY GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Location Address-URL:

http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page

Introduction and Location Background

Each institution is unique in its own way. The idea of this case study is to analyze its components by the following general sections and detail considerations that are either good or poor. Being a case study, observations are subjective to the observer. This introduction takes into account the following general points of consideration (not all points will necessarily apply to this institution): *location data, purpose/mission of the institution, its background/history, and general feel of the facilities on arrival, etc*.

Project Gutenberg is a not-for-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to providing digitized text through their Website www.gutenberg.org. Founded in 1971 by Michael Hart, it is the oldest, continuously running digital library. Primarily offering free works in the public domain because the copyrights have expired, they report that they have over 33,000 titles available with over 100,000 free e-books total through their partners, affiliates and resources (Project Gutenberg, 2011).

The site uses a decentralized structure in its selection of material to be added to the online collection. Individual volunteers work on the works that they are interested in or have available. It offers these selections in multiple formats for download, to include the e-text format developed by them. No matter the diverse and exotic formats offered, the core philosophy of the project never loses focus on the fact that computers, as well as humans, must be able to read these texts as well. That is why standard ASCII is always a format option–a data standard that is understood by just about all computing platforms with diverse operat-

ing systems, making the text not only readable, but searchable as well. The Project's ideology truly begins and ends with accessibility, replication over very diverse current and future technologies, and preservation–all the hallmarks of a great library.

COLLECTION SPACE OBSERVATIONS

Virtual Collection

Section general rating: 5
Rating scale: 1 = bad, 2 = bad-average, 3 = average, 4 = average-good, 5 = good

This section focuses on specifics in collection management of the institution's collection space. The general rating (listed above) took into account the following general points (not all will necessarily apply to this institution): *the virtual collections (e-books, etc.), online databases, intranet, and Internet availability; as well as the ease of access, organization, and how searchable they are.*

Specific considerations worthy of a 1 (poor) rating or 5 (good) rating are detailed below. Considerations rating 2-4 will not be as well documented. The idea is to highly document practices which can either be avoided (in the case of poor) or utilized (in the case of good) in future planning and design in either library renovations or new establishments.

The site's search capabilities are streamlined and simple. Once you found your selection, they offer multiple options in various popular formats for download. For example, I did a search for one of my favorite books, Sun Tzu's The Art of War, and for the 1910 Lionel Giles translation, they offer download formats in Generated HTML (367 kB) for Web browser viewing, EPUB (163 kB) for general e-readers, Kindle (219 kB) format, Plucker (194 kB) an open source e-book reader and PDA format, QiOO Mobile (188 kB) a free java e-book format, and plain text UTF-8 (336 kB) which is critical for basic Notepad viewing and machine generated speech readers.

These diverse and portable electronic formats are available for many of the e-books in their collection making each selection easy to view on just about every electronic device you would use for reading–whether it is your smartphone, e-reader, laptop, or desktop. These multiple formats also assure that the electronic collection of Project Gutenberg will remain relevant with future technologies. Open formats, as consistently targets by Project Gutenberg, are almost always backwards compatible or easily converted into newer formats, as opposed to closed or proprietary formats that demands licensing fees and third-party approvals for future robustness--as in the model consistently followed by Apple and their formats.

SERVICE DESKS AND AUXILIARY DEPARTMENTS OBSERVATIONS

Auxiliary Desk and Support

Section general rating: 5
Rating scale: 1 = bad, 2 = bad-average, 3 = average, 4 = average-good, 5 = good

This section focuses on specifics of the auxiliary desk and support in the institution's service desks and auxiliary departments. The general rating (listed above) took into account the following general points (not all will necessarily apply to this institution): *Inter-library Loan (ILL), cataloguing, preservation, stacks department, IT, facility maintenance, security, etc.*

Specific considerations worthy of a 1 (poor) rating or 5 (good) rating are detailed below. Considerations rating 2-4 will not be as well documented. The idea is to highly document practices which can either be avoided (in the case of poor) or utilized (in the case of good) in future planning and design in either library renovations or new establishments.

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