Chapter 10
Open Access Web Resources for Library Continuing Education and Training

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ABSTRACT

Continuing education and training are essential for a vital and productive organization and for employee adaptability and job satisfaction. Libraries of all types are organizations that value learning. Training and development for library employees is expensive, and can be out of reach for smaller institutions, or libraries that are not well-funded. Regardless of funding, libraries of all types can benefit from the wide variety of training and continuing education opportunities available on the Web as open access resources. These include documentation, journal articles, reports and white papers, online courses, videos, podcasts, and so on, from many different reliable sources. This chapter surveys major sources and types of open access online learning, and evaluates their usefulness for library employees.

INTRODUCTION

The Web has had an impact on nearly everything we do. In the past 15 years, the ways in which we communicate, shop, work, and learn have been profoundly changed by the pervasiveness of Web technologies. The effect on teaching and learning has been particularly profound. There are many online programs of instruction, in every subject and

for every level and kind of student. The delivery of online instruction has become more and more sophisticated, supporting many styles and modes of teaching and learning. This can be a tremendous benefit to organizations of all kinds, who are faced with the need to continuously train and develop employees. Online training can save organizations money and can be instantly and simultaneously available to a large number of people. Such training can be self-paced and can take less time to accomplish when there is no need to travel or to

meet face-to-face as a group. Like place-bound people in every situation, employees can have learning opportunities they would not otherwise have had through the use of online education.

While it is clear that for-credit classes and programs are available, what about other kinds of learning? Librarians and library staff, like people in other workplaces and professions, need continuous learning to remain effective and to have job satisfaction. Library organizations are generally committed to providing resources for staff development, including webinars, in-person instruction from trainers or consultants, and in-house training provided by experts from within the organization. Most libraries of any size probably have some budget for staff development. In the current Web environment, however, there is a broad array of open access resources for librarians and library staff, available freely and at no cost beyond the cost of computers and Web connectivity. This chapter will survey and evaluate some of those resources to let readers know what is available, who the most prominent sources or providers are, and how to find training and learning resources that meet the needs of library employees. These resources will be evaluated in terms of their usefulness for different kinds of library employees.

This chapter surveys training and continuing education resources in different areas, including general resources (staff development for all library employees); technical services (acquisitions, cataloging, serials and electronic resources, preservation); public services (reference, instruction, user services); collection development (including special collections); information technology (IT); digital projects; and administration, supervision, and management. Resources include written texts, videos, slideshows, interactive resources, tutorials, courses, and so on. Examples have been chosen because they are from reliable and authoritative sources (well-known universities, library agencies and associations, other well-known organizations). The material surveyed here is generally current, relevant, and appropriate to the needs of libraries.

It may not be possible to "survey" the Web in any comprehensive way. Moreover, the material presented here may be gone tomorrow or next year, although the sources chosen are generally authoritative and stable. The purpose of this chapter is not to present a list of links, but to explore the kinds of open access Web-based learning that may be helpful to individual library employees as well as library organizations.

Libraries and Learning

Twenty-first century libraries exist in an environment that is both exhilarating and challenging. Continuous rapid changes in technology make it difficult to keep ahead of the curve and make rational and strategic choices. Information technology is integral to library services and library employees must be comfortable with new technology. Because libraries need employees who can quickly acquire new skills and expertise and be ready for change, they require an organizational environment that supports learning, because an authoritarian organization is not innovative or creative. In the early 20th century, organizations, including libraries, were attracted to "scientific management," an idea made famous by Taylor (1911), who did influential studies that led to training practices. This kind of training had a goal of standardizing and routinizing work processes, and teaching the "one best way," an approach that is called "Taylorism." Taylorism retains some influence in libraries today, but libraries are fundamentally learning organizations, which support learning above every other value. Organized learning can enhance an employee's capacity to achieve the goals of the library. While focused, specific, and generally Taylorist training may still have some place in libraries and other organizations, the more important kind of learning for today's libraries is the exploratory, holistic, and developmental learning that makes the library forward-looking and adaptable.

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