

# Chapter 10

## Web 2.0 Technology as a Teaching Tool

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In response to two different pedagogical challenges, namely delivering varied library instruction to a big first year class and delivering a focused library instruction to a varied group, librarians at an academic institution created online guides. These guides, built in LibGuides with many Web 2.0 tools included, effectively delivered the desired instructional service. This chapter outlines the details of the challenge, the steps taken to create the guide, and the use of the guide and possible future uses.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the challenges that academic reference librarians face is how to deliver a service to large groups of users. These users could be homogenous,

restricted to one class perhaps, or they could be varied. The service that academic reference librarians deliver could be focused on teaching a single resource in depth, or it could be to provide varied instruction on a range of tools. This chapter

explains how Web 2.0 technologies can be used to face these challenges, by exploring the creation of two online guides for two very different purposes.

### **PURPOSE 1: REFWORKS GUIDE TO A VARIETY OF USERS**

As a librarian for a number of subjects at the university, one is often called upon to teach staff and students how to use many of the resources that the university library has to offer. There is a great deal of activity, mainly at the start of the academic year, when the librarians are called upon to teach and orientate postgraduate students in their subject areas. Besides teaching the students how to use the library catalogue and how to do searches in subject related databases, there is also a need to teach RefWorks. This valuable resource is a bibliographic management tool, which gives substantial help to both students and academic staff when it comes to organizing references and creating a bibliography or reference list in the style of their choice. Being introduced to the RefWorks program at the outset of the academic year and having knowledge of its uses and abilities, would benefit the students. They would be aware of this tool and know how to use it, as and when it becomes necessary for example when writing a paper, an essay or completing their thesis.

The decision to use Web2.0 technology in the form of LibGuides and SlideShare to create an online RefWorks guide was initially intended for teaching. However, this guide can be used, not only as a vehicle for teaching in the classroom, but also offers an online reference service after the classroom event. The beauty of using such a guide is that it is available to the greater university community, besides the students whom the librarian usually teaches. Users would be able to refer to the RefWorks LibGuide anytime at their convenience. Having a RefWorks guide also means that librarians covering other subject portfolios are able to refer to the RefWorks guide

at the reference desk when students or staff need RefWorks guidance.

The Web 2.0 technology has a lot to do about sharing. Embracing this type of technology gives one the freedom to share knowledge with a wide range of users. People needing to use the tutorials, not only as a learning tool but also as a teaching tool, would be free to download, e-mail or print the Microsoft PowerPoint tutorials created in the guide.

### **PURPOSE 2: AN UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING TOOL**

The second need was to provide a reference service to a large first-year class that needed to submit two essays as part of the curriculum. These 1000 students had to include some journal articles and other reputable sources in their essays. The initial essay was, for the most of them, their first introduction to library resources and using the library in general. This meant that they all needed instruction on how to use the library and access the information that they required.

In the past, the librarians took a reactive stance, waiting for the students to come and ask the librarians for what they needed for their essay. This led to 1000 student all coming into the library a week before their essay was due, and asking the same questions which the librarians had to answer over and over again. This was frustrating to the students, and the librarians would become impatient. By coming into the library to ask the librarians for help, these students were making certain parts of the library very busy. This would bother other users working in that area. A more proactive strategy was needed.

One option was to go into the classroom to give a library instruction lecture. However, from empirical evidence, this would not work. Not all students attend the lecture. Library lectures are often considered simplistic and the students do not take notes. This resulted in more questions,

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