Using a Library Learning Object Repository to Empower Teaching Excellence for Distance Students

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Session goals

- Walk you through our considerations as we built our repository
- Share our story with you so that you can apply it to your own context

A repository may not necessarily be the solution to your challenge!
Go to www.menti.com and use the code 76 63 56

How would you sum up your three major job responsibilities?
Odyssey

- Library learning object and educational content repository
- Created and maintained by University Libraries at Virginia Tech
- Currently holds around 40 items: videos, tutorials, handouts, games
- Topics include basic and advanced research skills, digital literacy and citation/citation management
- All content is openly-licensed
Virginia Tech

University

- Comprehensive, public, land-grant university
- 33,000 students
- Located in Blacksburg, Virginia, with 5 extended campuses around VA
- Primarily focused on campus-based learning instead of creating online programs
  - 12 online grad programs, 10 online certificate programs

Libraries

- 4 campus libraries, 3 in Blacksburg and 1 in DC
- Massive structural and strategic reorganization in 2014
  - Presented both challenges and opportunities
  - Subject liaison model
- Many librarians could interact with online and extended campus students
Online Learning at VT Libraries

- Previous distance learning librarian retired in 2012
  - No replacement
- Subject liaison model - distance/online students dispersed among many librarians
- Little outreach to distance/online students
- Needs
  - Modular and adaptable content
  - Content in one place
Online Learning 2014-2015

- Spring 2014 - Planning for online learning platform begins
- April-August 2015, three new hires:
  - Web Learning Environments Application Developer
  - Two librarians, one focused on online learning and one focused on educational technologies
- New hires charged with creating the platform
- Staffing changes
Needs Assessment

- New hires with no institutional context or knowledge
- Realized that no one on campus could give us the information we were looking for - no central distance learning center
- Embarked on wide-scale needs assessment in October 2015
  - Sought to learn about current library use in online classes, as well as the needs of online and extended campus students
  - Wanted to identify duplication as well as gaps in service
  - Interviews, site visits, survey
- A chance to build relationships with extended campus users - Blacksburg campus the “mother ship”
Findings

- No existing tool fit our needs
- Content created at library was scattered around platforms
- Number of students taking online classes doubled from 2006 to 2016
  - Included Blacksburg students and extended campus students
- Most students (64.7%) and faculty (74.9%) didn’t require library resources in online classes
- 13.5% of students didn’t use library resources because they didn’t know how
- Faculty needs could be met by a learning object repository
Why a repository?

- Wanted a single place to store content
- Didn’t want to be prescriptive in how content was used
- Needed it to be modular
- Wanted to be able to control quality
- Wanted it to be open
- Needed a variety of content - not just videos
Building a repository

- What to include - what is a learning object?
  - Self-contained, reusable object to be used in learning
  - Library-related content or broader vision?
  - Other repositories already exist - could we become a part of?
    - OERCommons
    - VT's institutional repository
  - How much control would we have?
Omeka

- Chosen over other platforms such as DSpace and Fedora/Hydra or developing one from scratch
- Easy to install, with easy-to-use plugins
- File persistence not needed because objects will be updated as needed
- Librarians are able to add most items themselves rather than relying on web developer
- Not perfect - challenge to incorporate html5, need to create custom metadata options, built-in search feature not great
Features - Visuals
Odyssey is a place for educators to find high-quality resources to use in the classroom, including videos, tutorials, assignments, modules, quizzes, and games.
Learning Objects

- Digital Citizen Wellness
  - Subject: Digital Citizenship

- What Kind of Digital Citizen Are You?
  - Subject: Digital Citizenship

- Sample Technologies for Communication
  - Subject: Online Communication

- Best Practices for Online Communication
  - Subject: Online Communication
Tags

Human Development
Undergraduate students
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

School of Public and International Affairs
Composition
First-year students

ENGL 1106
Graduate students
faculty
Features - Accessibility
Let’s pretend that you’ve been designing a poster for an assignment or conference presentation,
Features - Openness
Features - Findability
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<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
<th>A video demonstrating how to add and cite an image in a poster.</th>
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<td><strong>Creator</strong></td>
<td>Lisa Beckford</td>
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Future plans

- Wide-scale campus marketing
- Add new content to support new and growing areas of library instruction at VT
- Usability testing round 2
- Upgrade to OmekaS
- Implement LTI to allow easy integration into Canvas
- Build a sorting/filtering system for the objects
- Ensure accessibility of all objects
Conclusions / Applications

● Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration!
● Needs assessment and the pace of change
  ○ Do need to consider users’ needs
● Consider what fits your needs and goals
● Be in it for the long haul
● It’s worth it!
Thanks!

Any questions?
You can email me at lisab5@vt.edu
Check out Odyssey at odyssey.lib.vt.edu
Slides available at tinyurl.com/odysseyDLS2018pdf
Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

● Presentation template by SlidesCarnival