

3rd DRAFT Design guidelines for LibGuides at Potsdam 6/30/09

1. A common color scheme that will differentiate tabs from box headers, and will make the active tab stand out from the other choices. The best choice of the current settings in LibGuide is shades of blue/gray. Should SUNY Potsdam maroon become available, this will become the standard.
2. Non-essential information will be suppressed, including “Share”, “Latest update”, and the search box (already hidden).
3. “Comments and “Rate resources” options will be disabled.
4. Guides will have a centered “Title”, but no “Description.
5. Use the “Common Form” LibGuide as the model for guide creation, and LINK to boxes on that form that you are using unchanged. COPY boxes that you need to modify for the guide you are creating. Common Form = <http://potsdam.libguides.com/content.php?pid=48381>
6. Have the Meebo box on the top left of the opening page of every guide – but not on lower pages, except “Help”.
7. Have the “Profile” box on the top right of every opening page, but not on lower pages, except “Courses” and “Help”.
8. Have certain standard tabs on every guide.
 - a. Title tab – same as title of the guide
 - b. Reference
 - c. Books, media, etc.
 - d. Articles
 - e. Sub-topics (as necessary for a given discipline. Use sparingly)
 - f. Courses
 - g. Help

Rationale: Some degree of standardization helps people navigate. Users still often approach information seeking with the need for a particular format of material – book, article, video, etc – so that should be accommodated.
9. In general, use the left column for explanation and advice linking to the standard boxes on the common guide as appropriate, the center column for the main content, and the right column for supplementary content
10. Do not separate resources based on subscription or free – an irrelevant fact for users.
11. Other sub-topics tabs on the opening page will be determined by the nature of the discipline. In general, subject categories are preferred to format categories.
12. Opening page design:
 - a. Top left – Meebo
 - b. Top center – The title of this box is the title of the guide. The text in the box refers viewers to tabs above.
 - c. Top right – profile box
 - d. Lower left – news feeds – if any/desired
 - e. Lower center - a box called “Other Research Needs” with text links to pages such as “Citing Sources”, “Copyright Issues”, “Identifying Scholarly Articles”, etc.
 - f. Lower right – keep blank
13. Reference page:
 - a. Top left and lower left– using reference works (2 advice boxes from Common Form)
 - b. Top center – major ref. tools, including GVRL searchbox for subcollection if available.
 - c. Top right – online research guides (general only, not aimed at a particular class)
 - d. Lower left – ---- see top left above

- e. Lower center – additional ref. tools
 - f. Lower right – leave blank unless needed for other subject-related ref. tools
14. Books, media, etc. page:
- a. Top left and lower left – searching for books in catalogs (2 advice boxes from Common Form)
 - b. Top center – links to main book search tools, including BearCat, WorldCat, and a link to our general page for finding books. Link to this box from the common form.
 - c. Top right – ILL (advice box from Common Form)
 - d. Lower left - ---- see top left above
 - e. Lower center – other book search tools as relevant, ex. GoogleBooks, specialized library catalogs, e-books...
 - f. Lower right - LC outline for the subject
15. Articles page:
- a. Top left and lower left – Finding articles / ArticleLinker (2 advice boxes from Common Form)
 - b. Top center – Article search tools with MultiSearch at top; title centered, in color, list of databases included in multisearch under searchbox; link to MultiSearch Advanced. Then links to main individual databases for subject – in order of importance, not alphabetically.
 - c. Top right – ILL (advice box from Common Form)
 - d. Lower left - --- see top left above
 - e. Lower center – secondary databases for the subject, in order of importance
 - f. Lower right - periodical tools, browsing and title search (two boxes from common form)
16. Sub-topics page(s):
- a. Top left – Advice as suitable for the resources on the page (i.e primary sources, maps, film...). To be created by the librarian making the guide as appropriate.
 - b. Top center – The title of this box is “Main resources for: sub-topic”. The text in the box refers viewers to tabs above for main resources. COPY (don’t link) this box from the common format guide and change the labels for subject/sub-topic as appropriate for the guide.
 - c. Top right – ILL (advice box from Common Form)
 - d. Lower left -- use as needed
 - e. Lower center – use as needed
 - f. Lower right -- use as needed
17. Courses page:
- a. Top left – ask for librarians to help (advice box from Common Form)
 - b. Top center – links to guides or other materials for current courses.
 - c. Top right – profile box
 - d. Lower left - Info. Lit. at Potsdam (advice box from Common Form)
 - e. Lower center – how to request a guide or info lit classes (advice box from Common Form)
 - f. Lower right - -- blank unless needed for other items, e.g. online tutorials.
18. Other guidelines:
- a. Use lists that allow use statistics to be logged wherever this would be wanted.
 - b. Add illustrations where appropriate to enliven page as long as it does not disrupt the structure/architecture of the page – esp. on the opening page.

- c. For lists of links, use the :”Simple Web Links” format that puts description in pop-up balloons with 256 char. max. Intro. text can only appear at the top of the list. Use two boxes if you need another header for the next group of links.
- d. Use the LibGuides link checker regularly to check for broken links (but it will not find broken inks behind our proxy server or links that successfully redirect).
- e. Additional boxes may be added on the pages below the boxes specified in the guidelines as long as they are page appropriate.
- f. Pages created for specific individual classes should be linked in the courses area (not the research guides area of the reference tab) for ease in finding them even if the course has not had a library “session” (for example, a libguide created for the Freud class or the Communication Theory class). These are intended to assist the librarians help the students, even if the faculty member has not requested a class.

Foundation Principles:

Less is more

Goal is efficiency for the librarian, effectiveness for the student, and consistency for the user

Follow guidelines.

Use the common form.

Link to common form boxes and links on master lists, rather than recreate.

Share ideas

Why?

Frees staff to work on new creative web projects

Information can be updated in one place (instead of several places)

Consistency makes it easier for our users to navigate the site

Enhances coordination between formal (IL class) and informal (Ref Desk) instruction.