

Presentation Notes: “Technologies in the Service of Teaching and Research: Appropriate and Creative Approaches”

Digital Librarian Position job talk; George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

Today, I’m going to speak about appropriate and creative technologies in the service of teaching and research. There are two primary themes to this presentation that circle around the idea of access. The themes are objects and audience. The idea of the public library has been about access in terms of storing objects and in making those objects available to an audience.

Most of you are knowledgeable on how libraries have traditionally created access, so this presentation focuses on new means of creating access and possible projects that could help enlarge that sphere of access.

Appropriate and creative approaches to technologies for teaching and research must be founded on principles of access as they aid in developing new ways to sort, present, and use materials. While many materials remain analog and not digital, so many materials are now born digital or digitized that the new concerns are not only how to make material accessible, but how to make that material searchable, indexable, reconfigurable, and how to interest users in viewing and using the vast amounts of material now available.

Video:

- Video game metaphor, before there was very little: Pac-Man and finding things was easy, but you had to get to them
- Now, there’s so much, like Oblivion, but figuring out what you want and how to use it is hard.
- Libraries are like game books that tell how to play, what to do, how to do it, and why it matters. They make playing possible.

Access: Entry Points

Audience: appearance of ease, affordances, projects as use-cases, making people see what they want. Academic libraries have scholars and students as primary user groups. These groups have very different needs, so approaches to technology need to encapsulate all of their needs. It isn’t possible to present a singular vision for access given the differences in the audience. So, it becomes necessary to present different users with different entry points into the technologies.

Students:

- Facebook (show), YouTube (show student video)
- Academics: traditional search interfaces (even Amazon.com has the traditional search, it just has lots more)
- But, how/make library searches like Amazon?

- Literary social networking: Goodreads.com, shelfari.com, librarything.com, bookswellread.com, whatsonmybookshelf.com

All:

- Web Searches: Make resources accessible via Google
- Projects where students work to develop resources that scholars need: helps students learn the system and interests scholars because of the resources.
- This moves into the next type of entry point.

Access: Exciting Projects

Reaching Academics for Research and Teaching: Changing Needs of Academia: Projects and Delivery for Academics. Appropriate and creative approaches need to reflect the larger changes in digital media—podcasting, the Institute for the Future of the Book’s Sophie Project, the Electronic Literature Organization’s electronic art collections, and so on—and the changing needs of academia with digital media.

- Work with university press (like UMich)
- Lists/RSS feeds for newsites like UF news, run on site of catalogs; other side with “favorite books” like amazon.com
- Examples on Database pages like UFDC collection
- Teaching courses on...
- Thesis/Diss. If avail, make available to search engines and optimize
- UF Library YouTube
- Courses to have students do some of the digitization and press releases for digitization projects
- GatorTimes, use it to help find and create new projects: comic/book/video/UF reference/thesis of the week from the collection
- Build institutional resources
- Maps and MSN/Google Maps, layers, connecting maps and making a world overlay as an interface (CIS students) or Geo students with GIS
- Interconnect with other projects like Recess!/CCLC using random book of the week with RSS or another feed
- Shark Files, butterfly museum, book of the week
- Academic projects, like videos of SecondLife with Paul Fishwick’s class

Reaching Students

Technologies in the service of teaching and research include organizing, managing, and presenting vast amounts of data within a friendly user interface so that users can find and use the material.

Recombining old and new for benefit of both

It also includes making new projects out of existing material in order to revitalize older material and to bring old and new material into discussion with one another.

Infrastructure

Access must be treated as the necessary groundwork for technologies for teaching and research, and it must remain and be a constant – solid, reliable support, and preservation of all materials.

Multiple Means of Access

Access includes digitizing material and making it usable by making it searchable in a variety of ways and presenting it within an easy to use framework. This initial architecture serves as the backbone for additional digital projects and collaborations, and for many future possibilities as the technology changes.

Conclusion

Creating the appearance of ease and promise of fun are part of the appropriate and creative approaches to technology for teaching and research.

Written Response to job applicant question: “Technologies in the Service of Teaching and Research: Appropriate and Creative Approaches”

Appropriate and creative approaches to technologies for teaching and research must be founded on principles of access as they aid in developing new ways to sort, present, and use materials. While many materials remain undigitized, so many materials are now born digital or digitized that the new concerns are not only how to make material accessible, but how to make that material searchable, indexable, reconfigurable, and how to interest users in viewing and using the vast amounts of material now available. Appropriate and creative approaches need to reflect the larger changes in digital media—podcasting, the Institute for the Future of the Book’s Sophie Project, the Electronic Literature Organization’s electronic art collections, and so on—and the changing needs of academia with digital media. Technologies in the service of teaching and research include organizing, managing, and presenting vast amounts of data within a friendly user interface so that users can find and use the material. It also includes making new projects out of existing material in order to revitalize older material and to bring old and new material into discussion with one another. Access must be treated as the necessary groundwork for technologies for teaching and research. Access includes digitizing material and making it usable by making it searchable in a variety of ways and presenting it within an easy to use framework. This initial architecture serves as the backbone for additional digital projects and collaborations, and for many future possibilities as the technology changes.