Tips for Making Engaging Videos for Your Library

Sarah Anderson, Jennifer Hootman, and Zach Miller

With more and more library staff faced with creating videos for their library, we thought sharing a few tips on the subject may be welcomed. Our Minitex video team (Sarah Anderson, Tammi Halverson, & Zach Miller) has been growing in skill and experience over the last couple of years creating videos on Minitex conferences, services, personnel introductions, History Day and more.

1. **Tell a story.** Storytelling is one of the most powerful teaching techniques. Create a story for your video content whether it's for promoting library services or for teaching purposes. List the outcomes you have for the video and think about situating those outcomes within a story or scenario.

2. **Plan ahead.** A well-planned script and storyboard will save a lot of time in the end. It's also important to be open to unplanned yet necessary changes that arise as you work on your video. Have a step-by-step plan for your video shoot and a script, but remember to be flexible.

3. **Keep it short.** Draw in viewer attention right away and keep it short. Two minutes is a good target for keeping audience attention. *Use as few words as possible to get your point across.* But remember, even though you are trying to keep it short, keep text on the screen for long enough to make it easily readable. This is where flexible scripting is important. If you’re not experienced with writing for video content, your first-draft script may be too wordy, long, or complex. Be ready
to revisit your script. You'll likely need to shorten sentences and be more succinct in telling your story.

4. **Have fun.** Make sure everyone on camera is comfortable and having fun. Awkward interactions can make your viewers feel uncomfortable. And, let's be honest, your viewers expect to be entertained!

5. **Be creative.** Grab your drawing pencils or guitar. Or recruit artistic colleagues or friends to help out. Great visuals or peppy music can make subjects that might not be the most entertaining seem, well, entertaining! But, there is a limit. Stay away from flashy or gimmicky effects that can distract from your message.

6. **Be consistent.** Use the same fonts and colors throughout your video and stick with visual representations that fit with your branding.

7. **Monitor stats & feedback.** Most social media tools like YouTube allow you to keep track of how many have viewed your video. This can be a helpful indication of your reach and interest. Consider allowing comments as well. Viewer feedback can help you identify any problems with the video or questions about its content.

Not every video is going to be a hit with every viewer. Just learn and grow. Creating videos is more of an iterative process than a linear one. Check out the Minitex and Reference Outreach & Instruction YouTube channels for our latest videos!

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**Learning Communities in Libraries**

*Beth Staats*
Kris MacPherson, a Research and Instruction Librarian with St. Olaf College, presented an intriguing session at ARLD Day, titled “Family History Learning Community.” She began the session by defining a learning community. A learning community includes membership, or a sense of belonging or personal relatedness. A learning community includes influence; it matters that you’re there and part of it. A learning community includes integration and fulfillment and a shared emotional connection.

What Kris started as an hour-long Summer Fun session held over the lunch hour for library staff, students, faculty, and the college community on family history and Ancestry.com grew into something more permanent. Eventually, she and colleagues organized and advertised the class and decided that this particular learning community would meet once a month. She set a meeting of 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. when most people could attend. She sent out an announcement and got an amazing response. The class was on library resources for family history, but primarily focused on Ancestry.com, to which St. Olaf subscribes.

The classes included a time for sharing when participants could talk as a group in order to build that sense of community. They also included the introduction of new material like types of new genealogical and historical records and how to locate them. The bulk of the hour was used for individual work time with time near the end to regroup and discuss what happened in that class. Kris uses LibGuides to organize her class content on family history. These can be found at http://libraryguides.stolaf.edu/familyhistory.

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Opening up with Islandora

Carla Pfahl

Presenters: Linda Richter, Innovation Coordinator PALS, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; Anne Stenzel, Archives Technician, and Daardi Sizemore, Archivist/Special Collections Librarian, Minnesota State University, Mankato; Pam Sukalski, Librarian, Southwest Minnesota State University
Islandora is an open source software for institutional repositories. Islandora makes it possible to create and edit metadata and to discover, view, and manage repository assets. PALS selected Islandora as its institutional repository option in 2012 and began beta testing with Southwest State University in 2013. Anne Stenzel, MSU Mankato, and Pam Sukalski, Southwest State University, spoke about their experiences creating their institutional repositories with Islandora, and Linda Richter spoke about features of Islandora and working with libraries to set up access.

Pam Sukalski spoke about her experience creating an institutional repository for Southwest State University, http://archives.smsu.edu/. She took the lead on the project, working with PALS staff and SWSU IT and marketing staff. She said the PALS staff were of tremendous help throughout the process. They have digitized 3 of their 4 student newspapers dating back to 1968 with the fourth coming. They have also digitized their alumni publication, Focus, from 1980 to the present. The site offers a “search within” feature, name search, date, search whole collection, or just a specific issue. They are working on adding an “Honor Roll” in appreciation of the donors that helped make the site and digitization efforts possible. She also mentioned that the technicians found the workflow with Islandora much easier to understand and use than ContentDM.

Daardi and Anne spoke about MSU Mankato’s initiative to invest in an institutional repository and the creation of ARCH, University Archive’s digital collections, http://arch.lib.mnsu.edu/, which houses their photographs, student magazines, student newspapers, and oral histories. Their work began in 2006 using the ContentDM format. In 2014 they migrated to PALS’ Islandora. The reasons for migrating to Islandora were ease of format, relationship with PALS, and the support PALS offered. With Islandora they are looking to improve their social media connectivity and use Google Analytics as well as expand their access to archival collections.

With Islandora, anyone can share or tweet what they find in the collections. No login is required. It works easily with Facebook and their library’s Facebook page to which they can post directly from Islandora. They also appreciate the easy search mechanism in Islandora and the flexible metadata options for records. They noted that their metadata is more detailed than Southwest State University’s but both work well for search and retrieval.

MSU Mankato Archives’ next steps are to create bookmarks and “My Favorites” tagging options within ARCH and add new collections such as yearbooks, more oral histories, and manuscript collections so that ARCH serves as a platform for highlighting the University.

Linda Richter talked about what Islandora can do and the advantages of having an open source platform. It is very customizable – you can decide how much metadata you want to store with each item, and it features Google Analytics integration, social media connections, bookmarking, GIS integration, and image annotation. More information about PALS service for Islandora and links to all MnSCU repositories can be found via http://islandora.mnpals.net/.
Library Aspirations & Challenges

Beth Staats

One session I attended at ARLD Day was titled “Minnesota Libraries into the Future: A Kitchen Table Conversation,” presented by Michael Dowling, Director of the Chapter Relations Office of ALA. This was an interesting session because it didn't involve any sort of presentation; instead it consisted of attendees contributing thoughts on academic libraries’ aspirations, challenges to those aspirations, and ideas on how to overcome those challenges. Though the attendees were primarily academic librarians, many of these same aspirations and challenges run through all types of libraries. Here's a sampling of some of the comments and thoughts shared:

Aspirations

- Instead of one-shot information literacy classes, incorporate credit-bearing information literacy courses into college curriculum
- More collaboration with other institutions to reduce costs
- Sustainable staffing models to foster innovation
- Advocacy and lobbying to prevent budget cuts
- Ensure long-term control of electronic collections
- Align librarian views of library with that of users' views
- Library leadership to be more actively vocal within the institution
- Saturating the academic field with library presence

Challenges

- Marketing- getting people to hear what libraries have to offer
- Recognition of importance of information literacy by administration and faculty
- Lack of adequate funding
- Misperceptions of what information literacy really is
- Restrictive licenses and copyright
- Bureaucracy of library/campus/university systems
- Difference between library as a space and library as a service
- Recent increase in adjuncts and communication difficulty
• Shifting job descriptions

After the group came up with the lists of aspirations and challenges, Michael asked what can associations, working with themselves or others, do to achieve these aspirations and overcome the challenges? Here are some of the group’s responses:

• Increase in education information and support on skills not currently covered in library school, including:
  • Marketing
  • Instruction
  • Advocacy
• More opportunities for high quality programming and education
• More emphasis on ALA accrediting schools
• Facilitating practical collaborations
• Continue to do studies that show what users really want

Can you think of any other aspirations, challenges, or ways to reach or overcome them? If so, please share with us by leaving a reply below.

As a brief follow-up, Michael Dowling shared a thank you “to all of the MLA members who participated in the ‘Minnesota Libraries into the Future’ session at ARLD Day. The turnout was one of the biggest at any of these programs at various state conferences. It shows the interest of the academic library community in Minnesota to create a bright future for libraries and all that you serve.

“The results of the discussion are now posted in ALAConnect’s Strategic Planning Community. There are also results from other associations at http://connect.ala.org/strategicplanning.”

As he mentioned in the session, the facilitated discussion is part of a wider effort from ALA with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to assist libraries turning outward to help their community. Here is the link to the step-by-step guide to “turning outward” to your community: http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/sites/ala.org.transforminglibraries/files/content/LTCGettingStarted_DigitalWorkbook_final010915.pdf.

Back to May 2015
Engaging with Students in Online Courses

Matt Lee

A central tenet of learning is making connections – between ideas, concepts, and even people along the way. Michelle Desilets and Jennifer Dejonghe of Metropolitan State University presented “Engaging with Students in Online Courses: Forming Real Connections in Digital Spaces” to illustrate how they've helped students make connections in online learning environments.

They began with general guidance on putting together an online learning experience, whether semester-long or one-shot. First, don't attempt to copy and paste in-person lesson plans into an online environment. They are too different to transition wholesale. Second, think about modularizing content in order to scaffold students through different learning processes. Doing so can also help make your content flexible – perhaps to embed in someone else's course. Third, they offered some common themes they've identified in their successful online lesson plans:

- Students are autonomous to make choices and incorporate their own interests
- Students are very intentionally positioned as creators of information
- Student work is tied to the community or the real world in a practical way
- Collaboration and joint creation is encouraged
- Students see each other's' work and provide peer feedback
- Instructors show their authentic personalities

Desilets and Dejonghe went on to share examples of lesson plans they've led. Many incorporated interesting ideas ripe for the picking, including using Reddit AMA-style forums to generate questions for guest speakers, editing Wikipedia collaboratively, using video for student book-talking, and crafting real-life social media plans for community businesses. Find example lesson plans, literature for review, and the session PowerPoint at tinyurl.com/ARLD2015.

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Setting the Cornerstone: Creation of an Institutional Repository
Since 2000, the Minnesota State University, Mankato, Library has put forth the initiative to focus on increasing its digital collections. That initiative led to the recommendation of creating an institutional repository. In 2013, they hired Heidi Southworth as the new Digital Initiatives Librarian who would spearhead the effort to bring this to fruition.

After Heidi came on board, the “Digi-Squad” was formed. A seven-member library digitization taskforce, the Digi-Squad is represented by various library units with diverse backgrounds and experiences. This, Heidi notes, is the key to its success. Their mission was to create a digital home for the scholarly and creative achievements, research, and history of the University. Their goal was to provide a product recommendation within three months of its formation and an implementation of the program by the Spring of 2014. While the implementation was pushed back to June 2014, it was still considered a success.

Through their vendor selection process, they decided to go with bepress Digital Commons, a well-developed, professional, customizable, and highly discoverable presentation and publication platform with excellent customer support. They didn’t want an open source product because they wanted a service to help keep the focus on getting around the campus to gather material – not spending time programming. The two main digital initiatives at MSU Mankato are ARCH, the University Archives’ digital collections portal on the Islandora platform, which is open source and hosted via PALS. ARCH, http://arch.lib.mnsu.edu/, houses the school’s photos and history. The project using bepress Digital Commons is called Cornerstone and is focusing solely on University publications: http://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/.

Once the product was selected, the next steps focused on the many different issues that needed to be addressed before the institutional repository could be built, such as licensing, design, branding, structure and hierarchy, metadata, and converting existing content. The first collections they worked with were the theses and dissertations, starting with content and metadata from ProQuest and converting to the Cornerstone metadata. They used Iowa State University’s conversion tool to help facilitate this process.

The next steps were to get the word out about the program and raise awareness. Heidi started giving
presentations within the campus community and basically having conversations in the hallway, the
elevator, in campus meetings, and with anyone who would listen. She got the support of the Council of
Deans and was invited to talk to the President’s cabinet. With the marketing campaign and support
from many key players in the University, she continued delivering her message about the repository
and asking college departments to start submitting their publications for inclusion. The psychology
department was the first to work with her. She is also working with a faculty member to start his/her
own journal. All volumes of the University's own journal, *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, have been
added to Cornerstone.

There currently is a total of 1629 items in Cornerstone which have 40,026 downloads from all over the
world. They have an interactive Google map on the Cornerstone home page highlighting downloads
from the different places.

Heidi will continue her work adding publications, cultivating faculty and student work, and marketing
Cornerstone by highlighting impact reports and documenting individual accounts. As well, she will be
working on digitizing a collection of 368 aerial photographs, data management, the creation of two
possible journals and a conference, digitizing six years’ worth of graduate posters, and much more.
ELM Resources for the Gardener in You

Jennifer Hootman

As the season for planting and caretaking of gardens begin, take a look at the gardening-related resources available in ELM.

- Wild Ones Journal
- Organic Gardening
- Landscape Journal

And check out these ebooks for excursions beyond the garden.

- Country Roads of Minnesota: Drives, Day Trips, and Weekend Excursions
- Natural Wonders of Minnesota
- Hiking Minnesota

LearningExpress Library Updates

LearningExpress Library made some updates recently to back-end processes. Your users should not notice any difference in interface or content. However, if your library uses a proxy server to provide access to LearningExpress Library, please make sure the resource is displaying properly. If you have any questions, please let us know: http://www.elm4you.org/contact.

Good luck to all test-takers this May! Remember LearningExpress Library for test-prep resources, including coverage of the upcoming Advanced Placement (AP) exams, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), and others.

Back to May 2015
Content Updates to Kids InfoBits

Edited from Gale

Kids InfoBits Presents: Literature has been added. This is a new content set created exclusively for Kids InfoBits. 63 literary topics are covered, with each topic having a Basic overview aimed at lower elementary students and an Intermediate overview aimed at upper elementary students. Every article has an image representing the topic. Example topics include:

- Adventure Fiction
- American Dream
- Biography
- Caldecott Medal
- Haiku
- Heroes in Literature
- Nonfiction
- Parts of a Book
- Parts of a Poem
- Rhyme
- Short Story
- Villains

Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia — more than 600 articles have been updated. Examples include:

- Afghanistan
- Alabama
- Hans Christian Andersen
- Maya Angelou
- Canadian Literature (English)
- Jimmy Carter
- Chicago
- Ebola Virus
- Lake Erie
Ransom! Reminder

Matt Lee

In reality, time isn't really running out on Ransom!, the ELM database search game. But in a playful sort of way, all of Minitex's blue ILL tubs have been KIDNAPPED and are in desperate need of rescue!

If you or your colleagues are looking for a fun way to explore ELM this summer, spend a little time with the game. We bet you'll learn something new as you search ELM to help identify the villain.

z.umn.edu/ransom
Jennifer Hootman

You likely encounter a number of students or patrons studying for a college or graduate school admissions test and asking for test prep materials.

ELM's LearningExpress Library is a robust resource for exactly that! For instance, in the College Preparation Center, you'll find ACT, SAT, AP, and more with practice tests, tutorials, and reviews. Likewise, in the College Center you'll discover test prep materials for the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and more.

Using the free, online software, Canva, I've developed several flyers to help you promote LearningExpress Library test prep resources through your library links. These flyers can be customized with your library's information and downloaded as a pdf or image file.

Take a look at the available flyers. If you'd like any one of them or all, simply email me your library's name and LearningExpress Library direct link. And I will send you a pdf and image file of the customized flyer(s).

Back to May 2015

Engaging with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy

If you missed the Georgia Library Association’s Carterette Series Webinar, Engaging with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, you may want to catch the recording. The webinar featured speakers Trudi Jacobson and Craig Gibson. Check the Carterette Series Webinar Archive page for a description of the webinar. And be sure to stick around for the questions at the end of the presentation.

Back to May 2015
Helping Students to Ask the Right Questions

Matt Lee

The folks at Project Information Literacy recently interviewed Dan Rothstein, co-author of the 2011 book Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions. Rothstein’s work focuses on helping teachers change their approach from asking the right questions of students to encouraging students to ask their own questions. It’s a seemingly simple distinction, but arms students with metacognition skills that are transferrable to other classes and into the world outside the classroom. Knowing what questions to ask is an essential skill for citizens in a democratic society.

The method Rothstein and his co-author developed is called the “Question Formulation Technique.” It provides basic rules that students can use to draft questions, shift close-ended questions to open-ended questions and vice versa, prioritize those questions, and reflect upon them. It was designed to be simple (and certainly doesn't seem radical on first blush), but the approach reportedly changes classroom dynamics for the better and gives students the power to direct their own learning. Take a look at the interview “Dan Rothstein: The Necessity of Asking Questions” for more detail and examples.

Back to May 2015

One-Second Poll: Best Fictitious Librarian
One-Second Poll: Best Fictitious Librarian

Which fictitious librarian is the best? (Note: visual reference below)

- the ghost from Ghostbusters
- Bunny Watson from Desk Set
- Mary from Party Girl
- Rupert Giles from Buffy the Vampire Slayer
- Lucien from The Sandman
- Batgirl's alter-ego Barbara Gordon
- Other:

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
And here is the result of last month's poll:
Do you tend to attend the annual conference?

- No: 82% (55 respondents)
- Yes: 18%

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