

If Reporters Can Do It, YOU Can Too!

**A Small Academic Library's Experience With
Embedding**

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WHAT IS EMBEDDING?

2 types:

- Physical: librarian(s) stationed in a particular academic department's building
- **Electronic: librarian(s) 'stationed' inside a professor's CMS (Course Management Software) course shell**

WHY WE DECIDED TO START THIS SERVICE (Started it in the Fall of 2009)

- Well, sure, "everyone else is doing it," but... ☺
- Outreach: Wanted to create a point-of-need opportunity for students, one that existed *inside* their course shell. Wanted to be WHERE THE STUDENTS ARE.
- Felt we were in a position - in terms of a good working relationship with our faculty and IT department - to make something like this possible.

FACTORS AFFECTING ITS POTENTIAL SUCCESS

Positive

- Very good rapport with our IT department!
 - Our Head of IT: **"We all have titles but really we all work together and share the responsibilities to provide the best support we can."**
- All 3 of us (Reference librarians) wanted to do this; we were enthusiastic about it
- Very good rapport with our faculty
 - Our faculty have always been very supportive of what we do
 - Although it was a challenge initially getting the word out, faculty who learned of it were very supportive

Negative No, Challenging! ☺

- Never done it before
- Initial set-up inside the CMS was not looking particularly easy. Started out as 23 steps, pared down to ONLY 18 steps. :-\

SOME NUTS & BOLTS INFO

CMS we use is **Jenzabar**

Different 'levels' of Embedding offered (Also see:
<http://lits.columbiasc.edu/edenslibrary/embed.html>)

- BASIC: Provides links to library resources:
 - Library website
 - online chat (Meebo)
 - generic instructional resources
 - Ex. handout on evaluating WWW or a library tutorial
 - custom-designed handouts

- MID-LEVEL: BASIC +
 - persistent links to some course readings
 - helpful / new books
 - best databases / database trials
 - tips from other librarians, faculty, and students
 - course-specific instructional resources
 - point-of-need instruction

- FULL-SERVICE: MID-LEVEL +...
 Librarians (aka “Research Coach”) can
 - participate in online course discussions
 - see/comment on bibliographies submitted by students
 - possible assessment of information literacy skills
 - other privileges allowed by faculty member

SIGNS OF SUCCESS: Positive feedback from surveys:

Students:

“I found out the hard way that project members did not know...what proper research consisted of. To have this resource at the beginning of class would have been a huge help. If the students realized what a gold mine of resources the library and coaches provide they may produce a higher standard of work.”

“I enjoyed the process and look forward to spending more time in the library.”

Faculty:

“I am thrilled with the individualized assistance you have given the students.”

“You were a huge help. They [the students] were truly grateful.”

PROBLEMS/ISSUES/CONCERNS & SOLUTIONS

Problem: Was initially a lengthy, complicated process to set up

Solution: We simply have the faculty member log in to the CMS and we do all the rest

OR

If something goes wrong or we cannot otherwise get together with the faculty member, IT can often give us the necessary Permissions.

Problem: Thought we might have to deal with Copyright Issues (posting full-text articles inside the CMS)

Solution: We haven’t really had to deal with this yet (faculty tend to deal with this on their own, usually by putting articles on reserve), BUT...

- We’ve created a short list of resources for our faculty
<http://lits.columbiasc.edu/edenslibrary/copyright.html>

- It's always good to encourage faculty to use articles to which the library has full-text access via a subscription database; that way, you can simply link to the article. (But, you need to be sure both on- and off-campus students can access it.)

Problem: Might faculty (or students) feel this could be an easy replacement for in-person Information Literacy sessions?

Solution: We are not billing it as such. We are billing them as two services which can and should go hand-in-hand with one another. But we do realize that some faculty may be pressed for time and may feel the need to forego the IL session in favor of Embedding. If this is the case, we will certainly support that faculty member and his/her class in any way we can via Embedding.

Problem: What to do when embedded in a course, but you're out of the office? (i.e. vacation, etc.)

Solution: ?????? Not sure yet. We're toying with that one. ??????

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

We're thinking of Embedding by default - from the very beginning of the semester - into the 3 core General Education courses that have the heaviest library research component: Communications (COMM) 100, ENG 101 and ENG 102

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