

Alicia Virtue and Loretta Esparza

# Faculty reconnect

Creative outreach to keep faculty up-to-date in the digital whirlwind

Academic library Web sites are often the nexus of e-campus activity, proactively connecting students with quality resources that are an integral component of their learning experiences. Library resources are focused on meeting student-centered objectives for engagement, retention, and academic success through sophisticated discovery tools and personalized services that extend the library into student learning environments.

How do academic libraries include instructors in this whirlwind of technologically innovative and student-targeted services? Building faculty awareness can be especially challenging in community colleges, where a significant portion of the instructors are adjunct faculty who are not as easily accessible for traditional communication strategies.

## Looking out for faculty

The librarians at the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) have been actively building an outreach program to increase faculty awareness of library resources and expose faculty to the creative and dynamic nature of a sophisti-

cated array of library services. Here are three examples of services provided by the library:

- **Digital trends workshops.** The librarians stepped beyond the realm of bibliographic instruction to share what is perhaps the best kept secret about academic libraries—that librarians are the college futurists who vigilantly monitor emerging trends in

technology, information delivery, communication theory, and other converging disciplines to impact the way information is delivered and influence the nature of learning environments.

They presented workshops about emerging digital trends that could help faculty support objectives for

student retention and success. The digital trends highlighted ways new technologies are redefining where, when, and how students learn. Examples such as holographic imaging, social media apps for the classroom, and



A view of the Santa Rosa Junior College Libraries' FacPack. View this article online for more detailed images.

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tools that promoted user-generated content were presented to showcase the inventive, collaborative, and participatory opportunities available to create transformative instructional moments.

One workshop correlated new learning technologies with the primary facets of student success by fostering academic preparedness, persistence, and college connection. Another workshop investigated 25 creative discovery tools for Web and handheld apps to keep faculty apace with innovations in their disciplines. In essence, the librarians helped faculty identify coming changes to education, and re-envision the role of the academic librarian in those changes.

- **Customized programs.** Just as the library has expanded and personalized its services to students, the librarians also developed customized programs for faculty. Recognizing the work pressures full-time faculty face, the librarians created ways instructors could learn more about library innovations while earning obligatory professional development credit. Through a program called The Librarian Is In, faculty meet one-on-one with a library liaison to explore ways to integrate library innovations into their class assignments—and earn professional development credit for attending the meeting. Through a series of invitational Library Salons, instructors receive personalized, hands-on exposure to new databases, e-resources, and discovery tools in a relaxed social setting, also for professional credit. These programs have resulted in a pool of faculty members who have an up-to-date understanding of the sophisticated ways in which library programs can support and improve their classroom instruction.

- **Targeted Web services.** For busy faculty, particularly the “roads scholar” adjunct instructors who are often only on campus to teach and then leave, the librarians mirrored the strategy of creating quick hooks and instant success points that are often required in order to keep students engaged in reference and instruction interactions. They created a Web-based library guide for faculty that

presents library services in short, chunked text that is quick to grasp and is varied with visual and audio information. This quick overview presents seeds of possibility and invites the faculty to explore further. The guide was given a catchy, easy to remember title, calling it the SRJC Libraries FacPack.

### **FacPack: Where librarians and faculty meet**

Previously, a section of the SRJC Libraries Web site was devoted to presenting information about faculty services. Although the information was easily accessible on the Web, all content updates needed to flow through a Webmaster, limiting the opportunity for librarian collaboration on a shared outreach tool. In order to alleviate this inherent bottleneck, FacPack was created as a LibGuide so it could be quickly and easily modified by all librarians.<sup>1</sup> The LibGuide format is simple to manage. It is easy to check for outdated links and to identify lightly and heavily used sections. The new platform also allowed the incorporation of effective usability and design strategies gleaned from recent LibGuide studies of use and structure.<sup>2</sup> It improves response time for updates and provides new ways to gauge faculty interests and solicit feedback. This shift in platform allows the design and content to be influenced by the diverse creative talents of all SRJC librarians.

This evolution from standard HTML pages to a LibGuide platform resulted in a dynamic tool that centralizes services and available technologies that faculty can use for instruction. This centralized presentation allows faculty to easily see the full range of library services and efficiently locate and use library resources. FacPack holds the added advantage that many instructors are already familiar with LibGuides from using them in their classes.

### **Meeting faculty needs**

FacPack was designed to meet faculty needs not only on a practical level, but also to appeal to their sense of scholastic community. It includes videos with SRJC librarians describ-

ing specific library resources and inviting faculty to incorporate these resources into their instruction. There are also photos of SRJC librarians and students in various parts of the library.

There is an emphasis on personal services, such as library liaisons, course-integrated instruction sessions, and customized LibGuides. In this way, FacPack humanizes the library and conveys the willingness of librarians to collaborate with faculty. It also reinforces the potential of a positive relationship and shifts the perception of the library as a building with books, computers, etc., to that of a place where tech-savvy librarians are colleagues and allies.

In the spirit of collaboration, FacPack was a team effort from its inception, and had been discussed at various department meetings. When it was close to being finalized, it went through two tiers of feedback. First it was reviewed by an initial group of librarians, who volunteered to give in-depth suggestions. After further refinement, feedback was solicited from all librarians to capture and reflect all insights.

## Energizing outreach

FacPack can be used in all library outreach efforts, including electronic or printed publications and library awareness programs. In this way, it parallels the use of research guides for instructional efforts. FacPack can be easily mentioned in college newsletters, instructional notes from administration, correspondence updates, and other communication to faculty from their departments.

The content of FacPack keeps faculty current with ongoing innovations in library

resources and technologies, including new and expanded e-books and databases, citation and research paper support tools, and plagiarism detection software that is offered through the library. It alerts faculty to resources that might be overlooked, such as the library mobile Web site, research widgets to embed in class Web pages, and a self-guided library tour available at the SRJC campus.

By scheduling a faculty orientation about the library, instructors can receive flex credit toward the hours required for Faculty Professional Development Flex (FPDF) activities. This flex time incentive proffers an immediate and tangible benefit for faculty to meet with their library liaison. During faculty orientations, FacPack serves as a concrete tool that is

easy to reference. Viewing FacPack eliminates any vague ideas or uncertainty about library services that faculty might have and replaces them with beneficial information and easily accessible resources and contacts.

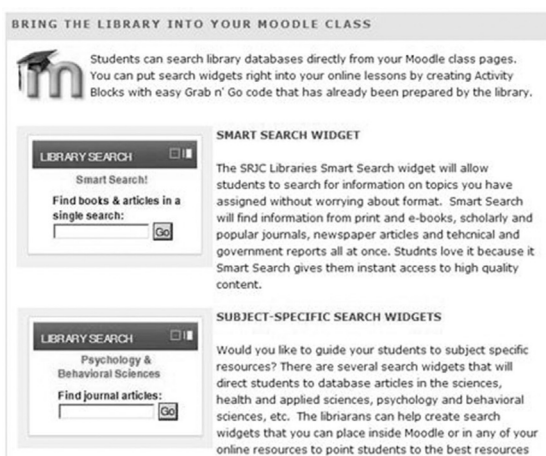
A nuance of FacPack is that it encourages personal professional

development and personal learning networks, which are ongoing endeavors in the academic community that transcend college FPDF requirements. FacPack has a “Keep Learning” section that highlights educational resources at the library and advocates investigation of relevant topics by providing outside vetted sources.

## Outcomes

Since changes in technology continue to redefine education, faculty require library awareness instruction just as students do. FacPack provides a concrete solution to the

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Screenshot of SRJC Libraries FacPack.

of WebTV's programs on in the background during housework is just the ticket. *Access:* <http://www.clarin.com/webtv/>.

### Less commonly taught languages (LCTLs)

- **Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA).** The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota is "one of the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI National Language Resource Centers, whose role is to improve the nation's capacity to teach and learn foreign languages." The Web site for CARLA is an especially rich source of material for those who want to learn LCTLs (generally understood to be any foreign language other than the Big Three: Spanish, French, and German.) Here users get to find language-specific electronic list information, group-sourced instructional materials, and even a list of contact information for language experts willing to help neophytes. When it comes to the Web site's freely available learning tools on nearly two-dozen tongues, quality varies. For example, Portuguese and Turkish offer little more than a few online exercises and access to an electronic list, while Hebrew and Chinese each boast extensive collections of audio files and other resources. *Access:* <http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/materials/mbl.html>.

- **Center for Language Technology and Instructional Enrichment (CeLTIE), Recorded Materials Archive.** Indiana University-Bloomington's (IUB) CeLTIE "aims at providing leadership and technological expertise to support excellence in language teaching, learning, and research." While many of the audio files online at their Recorded Materials Archive are password-protected and available only to the IUB community, there's quite a bit of freely available material that will be useful to the beginning, intermediate, or even advanced students. The free content draws on a mix of Foreign Service Institute Language Course material, as well as hard-to-find instructional material in LCTLs like Modern Greek and Classical Hebrew. *Access:* <http://www.iu.edu/~celtie/catalog1.html>.

- **FSI Language Courses.** This non-governmental site allows users to find and download old Foreign Service Institute training materials, including entire texts and (wherever possible) their accompanying audio cassette tapes. The materials are in the public domain, and cover more than 40 languages (among them LCTLs like Korean, Arabic, Hausa, and Vietnamese). *Access:* <http://fsi-language-courses.org/>.

- **Thai-language.com.** Online for well over a decade, this Web site is essentially a one-stop shop with "13,826 audio clips, over 55,349 dictionary entries, 826 images and illustrations, message boards, and a fun world-wide community of folks who are interested in Thai language, culture, residency, and travel." As an added bonus, visitors to site can even read and listen to the fairly extensive Thai training materials used decades ago by the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. State Department (which are now in the public domain). *Access:* <http://www.thai-language.com/>. *~*

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*("Faculty reconnect" cont. from page 82)*

question of how to find ways to keep faculty aware of the ongoing innovations that are a hallmark of academic libraries. It gives faculty a fresh look at library instructional programs and research services available to support their classroom and professional development needs.

By adding this resource to the library outreach toolkit, the library program has opened additional avenues for instructor feedback and increased the opportunity to foster collaboration.

### Notes

1. FacPack screenshot ideas, <http://libguides.santarosa.edu/facpack>.

2. Christine Tawatao, with Rachel Hungerford, Lauren Ray, and Jennifer L. Ward, "LibGuides Usability Testing: Customizing a Product to Work for Your Users," *Proceedings of the 2010 Library Assessment Conference Proceedings: Building Effective, Sustainable, Practical Assessment* in Baltimore, October 24–27, 2010. *~*