Idea Paper

A Needs Assessment: Information Literacy for Online Library Resources

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University of Hawaiʻi, Maui College (UHMC) has experienced a 53% growth in enrollment over the last five years and a significant increase in online courses ("UH-Maui College," 2011). The surge in enrollment also increases the amount of new students who have not yet acquired knowledge or skills regarding information literacy, more specifically, online library resources. Information literacy is an essential component of a successful academic career. The lack of this skill can diminish the learning experience because of delays and frustration that occur when a student attempts to complete course-related work which requires research. UHMC Library occasionally conducts face-to-face (F2F) demonstrations, however, students observe without physically interacting with the system. An online tutorial allows interaction, is available around the clock, and reaches a greater number of students who may or may not be able to attend F2F sessions. A needs assessment will assist with targeting the context, knowledge, ability, interest, preferences, and needs of UHMC students. The purpose of this needs assessment is to identify the behavioral and attitudinal use of online information resources by UHMC students and determine the need to implement instructional modules for online library resources at the UHMC.

In the current digital age, college students use the Internet for a variety of personal, professional, and academic reasons. Web-based resources can partially fulfill the academic purposes of college students due to online information seeking behavior and technology integration in pedagogical design (Kirkwood, 2008). Utilizing online library resources can benefit face-to-face, hybrid, or online learning environments. However, a recent series of studies at several Illinois universities revealed students' research behavior to be at a lower level than librarians were aware of (Kolowich, 2011). In other words, the students were exhibiting signs of

information illiteracy behavior. Thus, we can identify a gap between frequent use of the Internet and information literacy for students.

Al, Soydal, and Tonta (2010) found that electronic books users prefer the remote access, convenience, and over 45,000 available titles through ebrary. In the same study, Al, Soydal, and Tonta (2010) discuss promoting ebrary to increase awareness amongst students. An instructional module designed specifically for ebrary would increase students' awareness, teach them the necessary skills for accessing and using ebrary, and improve overall information literacy.

The target population is undergraduate students at the UHMC and consists of men and women of various ethnic backgrounds, most are employed in the tourism, government, retail, and restaurant industries, most are resident status, and most are between the ages of 18 and 65 years old (UH Institutional Research, 2011). The subjects will consist of students at the English 100 level and possibly students from upper division courses.

To conduct the needs assessment, I will contact the librarian, collect existing pertinent data, and take note of other helpful information. A mixed-method will be used to collect data. Qualitative data will measure students' preferences and perceptions. Quantitative data will measure more specific questions pertaining to usage. An online survey consisting of Likert scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions will be utilized. Example questions include: a) Do you utilize online library resources?; b) Please check the online resources you have used in the last month; c) Do you feel an online tutorial is necessary?; and more. An opportunity for students to contribute comments, feedback, and suggestions will be included.

The survey will be implemented through the UH e-mail system. Subjects will be asked to complete the survey which will return results for the needs assessment. The data will provide

valuable information which may determine the need for improving literacy knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

In order to determine the need for instructional modules, generated data will be analyzed to identify common themes, gaps, strengths, and weaknesses pertaining to student usage of online library resources. The data and feedback may warrant a recommendation for implementing online instructional modules.

This needs assessment will provide information which can be used to improve information literacy. Students, library staff, instructors, and administrators will receive the concept well because it will better equip students to complete course-related research assignments. The results will improve learning and teaching experiences as well as students' performance.

References

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