WKU Libraries Website Task Force: Executive Summary

Purpose
The Website Task Force was formed by the Dean of WKU Libraries in August 2013. Its purpose was to “discuss aspects of our website, starting with and focusing on the homepage,” with an eye toward efficient improvement.

Method
I. A website usability study in which WKU students completed a number of common tasks carried out on the library website
II. Student interviews
III. Faculty interviews
IV. Review of the options for changes to the library website template
V. Review of the results of the library survey from spring 2013
VI. Review of the literature to identify best practices for library web layout and design
VII. Discussion among the members of the committee (representing all three library departments, as well as the library systems office), leading to the creation of conclusions and recommendations for improvement of the Library website

Recommendations

Library Website: Layout
- The photo gallery box is universally disliked
- Committee recommends the use of the OU Campus Template used on the WKU home page
- Left sidebar tabs would allow “above the fold” access to priority functions and links
- Consider who uses the link: internal links below the fold, external links above the fold

Library Website: Content
- Website content should be arranged by priority, based on the library survey results
- Refine with additional user surveys as needed

One-Search Box—
- This resource is used heavily by students for almost every purpose
- Making improvements to the layout and functioning of One-Search Layout should be a priority

Vocabulary and Language—
- Consider simplifying the links to branded resources: KenCat, TOPCAT, etc.
- Try to use simple language for all links
- Even common terms like ejournals and databases seem to confuse our users, particularly in a packed environment like the links around the One-Search box

Continuing Improvement
- Committee recommends that the Libraries maintain an ongoing process of revision
- Consistently seek input, assess performance of website, and analyze results for the purpose of developing updates and improvements

Responsibility
- Specific individuals should be charged with reviewing and assessing the website on a regular basis
- This responsibility could be managed by a group within the WKU Libraries’ Web & Emerging Technologies Advisory Committee

Submitted March 24, 2014
John Gottfried, Chair