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Library Web Development: A Decade in Review

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Library Web Development: A Decade in Review
The Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School

1994

Lamar Soutter Library
Web Site Images

“Pre-Web Technologies”:
Figure 1: A newspaper publisher's prototype Web site. Search engine for System Disk Archive. Search engine for 1990s.

1996

Web Technology Timeline

February 1995:
Mosaic, first graphical Web browser, released.

October 1994:
Mosaic/NetScape 0.9 released. Perl 4.05 released. Java language announced by Sun. December 1995:
JavaScript 1.0 released. December 1995:
JavaScript language announced.

January 1996:
ColdFusion 3.1 released. February 1996:
XML 1.0 Recommendation published.

December 1996:
HTML 4.01 Recommendation published. January 2000:
XML 1.0 Recommendation published.

Spring 2001:
ColdFusion 5 recommended. Summer 2003:
ColdFusion MX 6.1 released.

Changing Roles: Anecdotes from Medical Librarians

- In 1993 the manager of our research library wanted to know what this “interlibrary” thing was all about—perhaps we might make use of it in our library. She asked individuals on staff if they would be interested in investigating. They made statements like, “We don’t have time for that foolishness. The Internet is just a gimmick—a fad—no way will it last or have any real use here.” Having the loud sincerity, I did not refute the assignment. Within a year I had created the library’s Gateway. As soon as it was up and running, I started development of the library’s first Web page, which went live in 1995.

- In fall of 1994 we had just implemented a new E.L. At the annual user group meeting we asked the vendor representatives if they had plans to make the OPAC available via the Web. The vendor reps admitted the company hadn’t even considered this and had no development plans. Many attendees were puzzled by our request and why we thought Web access was important. When we attended the same meeting a year later, the interest level was much higher!

- In 1997 I developed the library’s website, it pre-dated the hospital’s website by a few years. Nobody in IT had any expertise in web development. I had taken some online workshops. I didn’t ask permission. I just went ahead and developed a website containing links to many resources. I felt they were most useful. It grew as time went on.”

Research Question

What presence have academic medical libraries had on the web over the past decade?

- How have advances in web technologies influenced the “look and feel” of the web site?

- What other developments contributed to the evolution of medical library web sites?

- How has the librarian’s role in web development changed in the last ten years?

Web Statistics

Medical Library Association - Annual Meeting 2004 - Washington, DC - Mary Piorrot and Robert Vander Hart

Source for web site images: http://www.alib.com.org