Library Web Development: A Decade in Review

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The Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School

1994
1996
1998
2000
2002
2004

Lamar Soutter Library
Web Site Images

Pre-Web Technologies

Web Technology Timeline

February 1989: Mosaic, first graphical web browser released

October 1994: Mosaic Netscape 3.0 released
Perl 4.0 released

June 1995: Java Language introduced by Sun
December 1995: JavaScript 1.0 released

January 1996: ColdFusion 1.0 released
February 1996: IE 3.0 released

December 1998: HTML 4.01 Recommendation published
January 1999: XHTML 1.0 Recommendation published

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

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

Changing Roles: Anecdotes from Medical Librarians

1. "In 1993 the manager of our research library wanted to know what this "internet thing" was all about—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 be of real use here.' Having the liberal sensitivity I did not refuse the assignment. Within a year I had created the library's gopher. As soon as it was up and running, I started developing the library's first web page, which went live in 1995."

2. "In fall of 1994 we had just implemented a new E.D. At the annual user group meeting we asked the vendor representatives if they had plans to make the ODS 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!"

3. "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 very successful. I grew at a very fast pace on this.

Source for web site images: http://www.atsite.org