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Designing and creating centralized and sharable reading lists

Using LibGuides collaboratively

Clinical veterinarians often pursue earning specialty credentials in a medical subject or technique similar to human medical specialties. These specializations have requirements beyond the doctor of veterinary medicine degree and are generally granted after a qualification examination. Most examinations

have a recommended study reading list. Four librarians and a staff member representing four U.S. institutions used LibGuides¹ as both a collaborative tool and a

platform to centralize these reading lists and provide other institutions opportunity for local importation and customization. The team created a master list of materials in a template so librarians at other institutions can copy the templates to their LibGuides¹² or LibGuides²³ and customize with their local holdings.

Additionally, librarians with collection development responsibilities in these areas can consult the lists to help with collection development. This article discusses the techni-

cal aspects of the project, which would easily transfer to other collaborative projects.

Background

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) credentials more than 40 veterinary specialties through their Recognized Specialty Veter-

inary Organizations (RSVO).⁴ Although each RSVO has a distinct process and criteria for certifying specialists, a written examination is common. With one exception, RSVOs have a reading list for exam preparation. Veterinary specialists,

who represent expert opinion about the specialty, compile the reading lists and write the examination questions. Therefore the reading

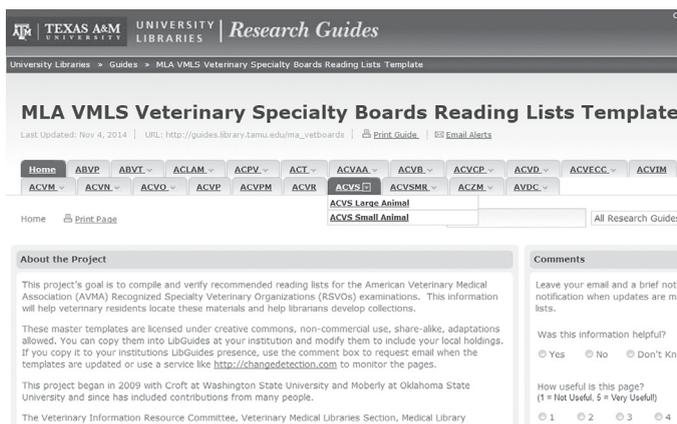


Figure 1. Tabbed navigation in LibGuides 1 showing subpages nested as a drop-down menu from a tab. View this article online for more detailed images.

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lists are useful to both RSVO candidates for study and veterinary librarians for collection development.

Each reading list varies in format and bibliographic details. Some provide accurate and current full bibliographic details. Others use shorthand, specialist language to refer to materials. Out of date titles, particularly titles listed, properly or improperly, as an eponym can puzzle librarians and candidates.

Reasons for pursuing the project include:

- Candidates sought the authors' help to identify the proper resources and locate local copies.
- The lists have value for collection development

and analysis in library collections supporting veterinary education and research.

- The lists have value for collection development and analysis for medical, one health, agricultural, and animal science collections at libraries not supporting veterinary research or education.

Methods

Four veterinary librarians divided the RSVOs, acquired reading lists, and verified resources. When questions arose (e.g., if a resource or edition was unclear), the librarian assigned to that RSVO contacted the person for clarification. This design leveraged or developed a relationship with the RSVO and kept communication clear and minimal. A former phase of the project created an HTML version, which was successfully implemented at North Carolina State University, but difficult to share and collectively maintain.⁵

For this final phase, the team selected Lib-

Guides because of its ease of use and ease of sharing, and most of the libraries at the 30 U.S. AVMA-accredited veterinary schools subscribe to it. This is critical because the perceived primary audience for the project is veterinary librarians at these institutions.

Using LibGuides allows librarians and other interested parties to copy the authoritative lists and customize them with local holdings information. LibGuides are easily copied from institution to institution, facilitating sharing templates⁶ among institutions. Also, LibGuides can be exported to an HTML version from the native system to share with institutions that do not subscribe to LibGuides.

A library staff member was brought in to advise on technical aspects of LibGuides, help create the LibGuides structure, and write procedures.

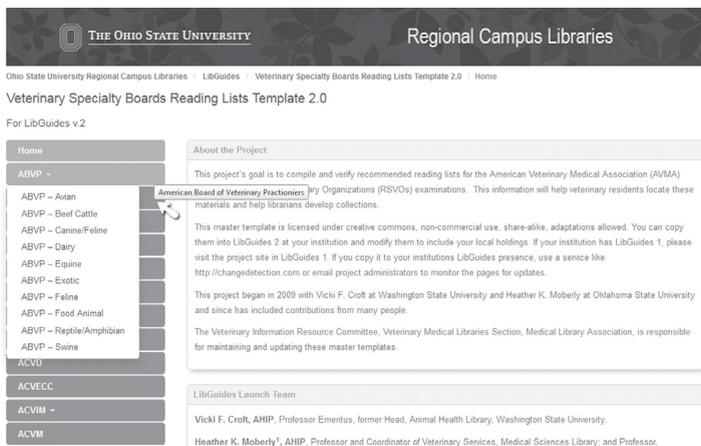


Figure 2. Side navigation in LibGuides 2. Hovering over the side navigation tabs display the expanded name of the RSVO and the list of subpages, if any.

First, each librarian built LibGuides for their assigned RSVOs on their own institution's LibGuides site. Then the host institution⁷ built a master template⁸ to gather all the lists into one location. Using the LibGuides 1 feature to create a new guide using a template, the URL for each librarian's lists in LibGuides 1 was imported into the host's LibGuide system. After these were imported, the host institution staff member (referred to later as "host"⁹) created a new guide and reused pages or boxes from the imported lists to build the templates' structure.

After the structure for the master templates was created and reviewed, the imported lists were deleted from the host institution's LibGuides system.

To provide librarians at other institutions with access, the host selected “Guide Settings,” then “Co-Owners, Editors & Collaborators” from the orange toolbar in LibGuides 1.¹⁰ In the pop-up box’s “Collaborators” area, each collaborator’s email address was added. Deleting collaborators is done at the same location. After a collaborator was added, they received an email with a specific URL and a password to log into the templates and edit the lists.

Recently the team created a copy of the template in LibGuides 2 for institutions using the new version. After institutions using the templates migrate to LibGuides 2, the team will retire the LibGuides 1 version¹¹ and maintain the LibGuides 2 version.¹²

RSVOs have different annual examination schedules and list release dates, so to make the project sustainable, the team created a private project management LibGuide. This guide is the team’s internal updating and planning schedule. A box for each RSVO tracks when reading lists are updated for the current exam cycle, when the examinations are scheduled, time-saving links to RSVO websites, and correspondence or notes from the examination committee members responsible for the reading lists.

The team wrote and vetted separate documentation for importing institutions¹³ and the project team to further ease use and encourage consistency.

Pitfalls

LibGuides’ linked boxes and resources show promise for enabling future automatic updates.

Linked boxes or resources are significant because changes made in the original location updates all linked copies at the same time. In contrast, if an author makes a copy of a box or resource rather than linking to it, they can customize that copy without changing the original or any linked copies.

We could have designed the system to automatically update all linked guides. However, LibGuides is not designed to both link to boxes of information and allow nonhosts to add information, which defeated the templates’ purpose to customize local holdings. Depending

on uptake, we might have many copies of templates at many institutions, making systematic updates difficult and authoritative sources difficult to ensure.

These templates, once imported into non-host institutions, need to be maintained and updated locally as the reading lists are updated. Librarians at institutions that import the templates are encouraged to sign up for email updates or use a change detection service (e.g., changedetection.org) for the master templates.

Usability

Although we accomplished our goal to gather the lists into one location and clarify citations, the team recognizes potential stumbling blocks for usability. Several LibGuides 1 usability studies show students in particular don’t like or recognize a lot of tabbed navigation or drop-downs (Figure 1) as a place they can navigate.¹⁴ When developing the LibGuides 2 version of the template, the team chose to use vertical navigation, which displays all subpages when clicked.

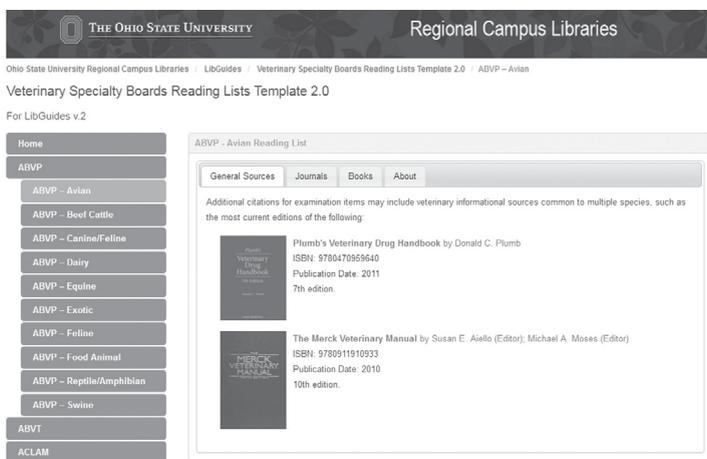


Figure 3. The Avian subpage of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners reading list, showing a tabbed box in LibGuides 2.

LibGuides 2 includes a new tabbed box feature nesting content within a simpler navigation structure (Figure 3). Tabbed boxes eliminated the need for sub-templates used in LibGuides 1 and condensed the master template into a single entity for other institutions to import.¹⁵

Future plans

We added WorldCat holdings for monographs, DOI links for articles, and PubMed Central links for available journals to the LibGuides 2 version of the template. This will truly centralize the lists and make them easily updatable without importing institutions performing maintenance. It also eliminates the need for importation. In the past, we were reluctant to implement this step because WorldCat has many records for the same work, making it challenging to select the best record. However, WorldCat's clustering of related works improved since this project began, which makes this choice more appealing.¹⁶ Librarians can now quickly select a record that compiles all versions and printings of a work and includes links to other editions.

After gathering corrected lists, creating LibGuides templates, and building a sustainable model, the authors will turn the project over to the Medical Library Association's Veterinary Medical Library Section (MLA VMLS)'s Veterinary Information Resources Committee, which will maintain and sustain the lists. In the future, librarians may either direct users to the VMLS-branded master template or generate their own copy. Both cases rely on WorldCat's ability to detect the user's location to provide holdings information. The former benefits institutions that don't subscribe to LibGuides.

We're investigating additional LibGuides 2 template options for librarians to customize lists to point to holdings in their institutions' collections.

Conclusion

Though imperfect, LibGuides 1 was an excellent collaborative tool to meet this project's needs. We hope to resolve some of the templates' pitfalls as we transition the project to LibGuides 2 and to the VMLS Veterinary Information Resources Committee for future maintenance and evolution.

Acknowledgement

With acknowledgement and thanks to Vicki F. Croft, Washington State University.

Notes

1. LibGuides is Springshare's library content management system; see www.springshare.com/libguides/. For purposes of this article, "LibGuides" is used when the version does not matter.

2. For the purposes of this article, "LibGuides 1" is used when referring to that specific version.

3. Springshare released their updated LibGuides 2 system in 2014. "LibGuides 2" is used when referring to that specific version.

4. American Veterinary Medical Association, "Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organizations," <https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Specialties/pages/recognized-veterinary-specialty-organizations.aspx>; "AVMA American Board of Veterinary Specialties," <https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Specialties/Pages/default.aspx>.

5. NCSU Libraries, "Board Examination and Residency Reading Lists," www.lib.ncsu.edu/vetmed/boards.

6. A template was custom built in LibGuides for each list. Others can import and customize it.

7. The host institution is the institution hosting the master and subtemplates in its local LibGuides system. The Oklahoma State University Libraries originally hosted the LibGuides 1 version, which Texas A&M University Libraries hosts. The Ohio State University Regional Campus Libraries hosts the LibGuides 2 version.

8. The master template is the centralized LibGuides switchboard for navigating to the appropriate specialty board list. There are master templates for both for LibGuides 1 and for LibGuides 2. See Medical Library Association Veterinary Medical Libraries Section, "MLA VMLS Veterinary Specialty Boards Reading Lists Template," http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vetboards. "Veterinary Specialty Boards Reading Lists Template 2.0," <http://osu.campusguides.com/VetBoardLists>.

9. The host is the LibGuides "Author" of the master and subtemplates at the host institution

who manages the technical portion of the collaboration.

10. When logged into LibGuides, the orange administrative toolbar appears at the top of the page to allow guide editing, layout, and permissions. In LibGuides 2, some of these tools are moved from the orange toolbar to guide, page, or box.

11. Located at http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vetboards.

12. Located at <http://osu.campusguides.com/VetBoardLists>.

13. An importing institution or nonhost institution is an institution importing any, or all, of the master templates for local use. These institutions are encouraged to customize the templates with local holdings information.

14. Jenny Corbin and Sharon Karasmanis, Health Sciences Information Literacy Modules Usability Testing Report (Bundoora, Australia: La Trobe University Library, 2009), <http://arrow.latrobe.edu.au:8080/vital/access/HandleResolver/1959.9/80852>; Rachel Hungerford et al., *LibGuides Usability Testing: Customizing a Product to*

Work for Your Users (Seattle: University of Washington Libraries, 2010), <http://hdl.handle.net/1773/17101>; Kate A. Pittsley and Sara Memmott, "Improving Independent Student Navigation of Complex Educational Web Sites: An Analysis of Two Navigation Design Changes in LibGuides," *Information Technology & Libraries* 31, no. 3 (2012); Dana Ouellette, "Subject Guides in Academic Libraries: A User-Centered Study of Uses and Perceptions," *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 35, no. 4 (2011).

15. In LibGuides 1, separate subtemplates were created to help organize the larger reading lists in LibGuides 1. See Medical Library Association Veterinary Medical Libraries Section, "ABVP Template," http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vb_abvp; "ACVIM Template," http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vb_acvim; "ACVP Template," http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vb_acvp; "ACVPM Template," http://guides.library.tamu.edu/ma_vb_acvpm.

16. Janifer Gatenby et al., "GLIMIR: Manifestation and Content Clustering within Worldcat," *Code4Lib Journal*, no. 17 (2012). *z*



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