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Library As Place: Online

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WESTERN'S
ONLINE FORUM



Library as Place, online

Viking Village at Western Washington University Libraries

Online Northwest

Feb. 11, 2011

Andrea Peterson

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Outline

- Viking Village: the tour
- Why is this a library thing?
 - Learning Commons online
 - Social media as a significant information source
- Building and maintaining Viking Village
 - Drupal
 - Building the community
 - Managing the content
- Assessment / Usage of Viking Village
- The future of Viking Village
- Questions?



Viking Village: the tour

- [The homepage](#)
- [The forum](#)
- [Media and creative work](#)
- [ASK](#)
- [Groups](#)
- [Profiles](#)
- [Blog collector](#)



Why is this a Library thing?

Or – Shouldn't this be managed by Academic Computing?

The Learning Commons online

- Libraries are more than organized collections of materials. We frequently promote ourselves as gathering places and community spaces that facilitate the creation of knowledge. Viking Village takes this concept online, creating a place where students, faculty, and staff can share and discuss information, ideas, events, share their creative work, and more. Viking Village receives more traffic than the Library's website and is frequented by thousands of students, staff, and faculty who engage in dialogue about politics, share information with incoming freshman about life at Western, share their creative work, and more. Western's budget office uses the site heavily to foster transparency and dialogue about difficult budget decisions. In addition, the site supports direct questions to the Library and other support services on campus.



Why is this a Library thing?

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Western Libraries' Mission Statement:

Western Libraries connects—people to place, people to people, people to learning.

- Place—both the physical and virtual presence of our library. We encourage learning, collaboration, and community through our environment.
- People—the Western Community and everyone we serve.
- Learning—the promotion of critical thinking and information literacy. The library provides access to the information and resources necessary to the learning process.

Western Libraries' Vision

Western Libraries are integral to student success at Western Washington University. A destination university deserves a destination library, and in that role we seek to become Western's first source for quality information. We will develop unique resources and mechanisms to share University intellectual content with the world. We will become the intellectual center of campus, an interactive gathering place for students to interact with information and with each other. We will be innovative in the way we approach the fulfillment of user needs and nimble in the structure of our organization. We strive to be recognized as the premiere comprehensive university library in the Northwest.



Why is this a Library thing?

Or – Shouldn't this be managed by Academic Computing?

We encourage learning, collaboration, and community through our environment.

- On Viking Village, students have the opportunity to begin and engage in dialogue about issues they care about, they are called to utilize information resources appropriately by their peers, think critically, hone their arguments, and maintain civility. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)
 - After significant discussion about student issues on the forum last year, the AS saw the highest percentage of student voting in 12 years (22.14%).
- Viking Village is a primary means of forming a study group or a new student group on campus. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)
- Viking Village provides an outlet for students and faculty to share thoughts and feelings about campus tragedy [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#)



Why is this a Library thing?

Or – Shouldn't this be managed by Academic Computing?

Western Libraries are integral to student success

- Viking Village helps us meet this goal in some less traditional ways.
 - Student to student mentoring and support [[1](#)][[2](#)][[3](#)][[4](#)]
 - Transitioning to a new environment [[1](#)][[2](#)][[3](#)]
 - Book sales, finding a roommate, rideshares [[1](#)]
 - Community 24 / 7 [[1](#)] [[2](#)] [[3](#)] [[4](#)] [[5](#)]



Why is this a Library thing?

Or – Shouldn't this be managed by Academic Computing?

Viking Village provides a common context for our community in the real world

[Hey you and the moment we've been waiting for](#)

- 107,881 views since 11/02/10 as of 1:38pm today
 - (next highest is 17,696 reads since 11/20/2008)
- 644 replies

"Thanks to all of you ☺

I read this daily hoping someone has posted something about me. But because I of this I go out of my way to smile and be extra nice to any stranger I come in contact with, or pass while walking around campus, or sit by on the bus.

And then I realized even if this post didn't exist I should be doing that...



Social Media is a significant information source.
We could use it a lot more effectively.

Viking Village is the Universities' social information environment which we influence and manage.

- “Our profession is crumbling and we blame the Web for killing our business model. Yet it's not the business model that changed on us. It's the culture. Mainstream media were doing fine when information was hard to get and even harder to distribute. The public expected journalists to report the important stories, pull together information from sports scores to stock market results, and then deliver it all to our doorsteps, radios and TVs. People trusted journalists and, on our side, we delivered news that was relevant—it helped people connect with neighbors, be active citizens, and lead richer lives.

--From “Why the News Media Became irrelevant – and how social media can help”, Michael Skoler, *Nieman Reports*, Fall 2009”



Social Media is a significant information source.

We could use it a lot more effectively

Rewrite of the previous statement:

- “Our profession is crumbling and we blame the Web for killing our business model. Yet it's not the business model that changed on us. It's the culture. [Libraries] were doing fine when information was hard to get and even harder to [find]. The public expected [librarians] to [know the best resources, pull together information from [any subject area], and then deliver it all [through the reference desk or Library Instruction]. People trusted [librarians] and, on our side, we delivered [information] that was relevant [and vetted]—it helped people connect with neighbors, be active citizens, and lead richer lives.”



Social Media is a significant information source

We could use it a lot more effectively

“The truth is the Internet didn't steal the audience. We lost it. Today fewer people are systematically reading our papers and tuning into our news programs for a simple reason—many people don't feel we serve them anymore. We are, literally, out of touch.

Today, people expect to share information, not be fed it. They expect to be listened to when they have knowledge and raise questions. They want news that connects with their lives and interests. They want control over their information.”

--From “Why the News Media Became irrelevant – and how social media can help”, Michael Skoler, Nieman Reports, fall 2009”

EXAMPLES: Gender, race, ethnicity dialogue, [WikiLeaks](#), [TSA](#)



Social Media is a significant information source.

We could use it a lot more effectively.

- Viking Village is a different approach to Social Media than creating a facebook page or distributing library news through Twitter. The content is user-generated, and while we create the space for learning, the learning frequently happens without the participation of librarians or faculty. On the other hand, unlike most of what happens on facebook or twitter, we have the opportunity to observe it happening and participate if and when it is appropriate. Like the concept of the learning commons, Viking Village is a space which facilitates and enables learning.



Building and maintaining Viking Village

Drupal with over 50 modules

- CCK + associated modules: embedded media field, feedfield content permissions, imagefield, link, Computed field, node reference
- Views
- Imagecache
- Content profile for profiles
- Forum:
 - Forum access, Advanced Forum, Advanced Profile Kit, Author Pane, Flat comments, Quote. Signatures for forums, User badges, User stats
- Flag, flag note (used for flag as offensive, like, and Books I've read – will be using for zombie war tracking as well)
- Advanced Poll
- Fivestar
- Calendar, Date
- Private Message
- OG, OG Forum
- CAS (Shibboleth, LDAP modules also available)
- Create from web
- AddThis
- Countdown timer
- Form Block
- Jcarousel
- Pathauto
- Quicktabs
- Rounded corners
- Devel
- FeedAPI (Used to suck in data from google calendar)
- Hierarchical select for genre selection
- Taxonomy manager
- Panels
- Rules, triggers, actions
- Subscription (notifications also worth considering – may be more flexible)
- Tagadelic
- Wysiwyg, TinyMCE



Building and maintaining Viking Village

- Promoting and Advertising – building the community
 - Advisory Board with cross campus representation
 - Seeding the board with support from a civil discourse course
 - Access from campus portal
 - Continued issue related to access for faculty



Building and maintaining Viking Village

Managing the content

- The need for moderation
 - Began with simple flag system
 - Two moderators in Spring, 2009
 - Currently 6 student moderators plus an intern
- Technical tools for moderation
 - Flag, flag note, triggered rules
 - Hidden moderator forum
- Building a moderator culture

Assessment Project:

- Taskforce: 3 staff / faculty, 4 students
- Developed and defined categories
- Reviewed all threads and categories in teams of two, with a mediator available to review any conflicts
- Reviewed log files
- Surveyed users
- Created report
- Discussed results with group of Administrators

Assessment / Usage

Analysis of threads from Fall, 2009 (Full details available)

| ALL FORUM, including Dialogue, Feedback and Exchange | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|---------|--|--------|-----------------------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Initiate Dialogue | | | Seek Information | | | Exchange Stuff | | | Totals | Percent |
| | Threads | Commen | Views | Threads | Commen | Views | Threads | Commen | Views | | |
| Academic | 12 | 219 | 10,784 | 181 | 673 | 53,135 | 647 | 491 | 65,795 | 131,937 | 19% |
| Living Learning / Campus | 42 | 1,064 | 48,109 | 348 | 1,311 | 109,254 | | | | 160,128 | 23% |
| Living Learning / Non-Campus | 24 | 414 | 20,124 | 238 | 1,616 | 100,466 | 486 | 360 | 206,876 | 330,604 | 46% |
| Social Issues | 57 | 1,913 | 79,658 | 2 | 3 | 431 | | | | 82,064 | 12% |
| TOTALS: All forum | 135 | 3,610 | 158,675 | 769 | 3,603 | 263,286 | 1,133 | 851 | 272,671 | 704,733 | |
| Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Dialogue | | Information Seeking | | Exchange | | | | | |
| 2,037 | Threads | 7% of threads in Dialogue | | 38% of threads in Information Seeking | | 55% of threads in exchange | | | | | |
| | | 27 comments / thread | | 5 comments / thread | | .75 comments / thread | | | | | |
| | | 1175 views / thread | | 342 views / thread | | 241 views / thread | | | | | |
| 8,064 | Comme nts | 45% of comments in Dialogue | | 45% of comments in Information Seeking | | 10% of comments in exchange | | | | | |
| 694,632 | Views | 23% of views in Dialogue | | 38% of views in Information Seeking | | 39% of views in exchange | | | | | |

From April, 2010 assessment:

- **Forum Scope:** 7000+ participants, 9700+ threads, 31,000+ comments, 2,800 hits / day
- **User Assessment:** Positive user comments = 75%; Negative = 25%
- **2010:** Traffic is about 73% higher than last year

| System: Time period | # of visits (Google Analytics) | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| VV: Sept. 20 – Oct. 20, 2009: | 65,717 | |
| VV: Sept. 20 – Oct. 20, 2010: | 113,803 | 73% increase |
| *Library: Sept. 20 – Oct. 20, 2010 | 107,980 | |

- * Traffic exceeds that of our library website, which also has a much higher bounce rate due to use of library website as home page on 80 student stations + 55 laptops available for checkout

Statistics from Fall, 2010

| | New users | *Unique Users (Site statistics) | New media | ASK | Comments | **Site hits (Google) | ***Unique Visitors (Google) |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----|----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 24 hour avg. | 10 | 480 | - | - | 110 | 3,315 | 2,307 |
| Last week | 106 | 1,242 | 9 | 4 | 1,351 | 30,166 | 11,979 |
| Last 2 weeks | 226 | 1,633 | 11 | 8 | 2,937 | 64,882 | 22,784 |
| Since Sep 22 | 1102 | 3,522 | 35+ | 37 | 13,543 | 306,944 | 98,576 |

* Unique users = site statistics, looking through all users who have logged into the site during the time period specified

** Site hits = google analytics, total hits on the site

*** Unique Visitors (google) = unique IP addresses. Some users access the site from multiple IP addresses, multiple individuals may access the site from the same IP address .

90% of our traffic comes from Washington State, 79% from Bellingham.

Assessment / Usage

User perspective

- “I appreciate all your comments – **having access to this forum before moving to Bellingham has given me a wealth of info already** – everything from property managers to avoid to best sandwich places to this. Thanks! =)” – transfer student on the forum
- “**Viking Village has already become part of the Western experience.** It's a great way to get us talking about things and to reach out to other students with whom we might not otherwise communicate. I always learn something new and hear interesting opinions, and I have even found a ride home for the weekend thanks to the Exchanges section.” – survey response

Assessment / Usage

User perspective

- “It's been since spring quarter last year that I have not been able to contact or even socialize with any other students on the forums. This was the one place that I could openly ask questions, write personal messages, and attempt to gather people for various activities. Now, however, it has become increasingly difficult to do so. **I mean, it's not impossible to live without the forums. But in this technological era, no one is going to want to communicate via any other means.**” -- Banned user asking for reinstatement:
- “I regularly review the Viking Village discussion topics from the MyWestern homepage. **As a faculty, I find it useful for understanding the issues and opinions held by students, and I refer to it 2-3 times per quarter in my lectures.** I believe it is a valuable resource and I assume it should come at a relatively low cost.” – faculty response on survey

Assessment / Usage

User perspective

“.... Having to articulate reasons behind your beliefs can be very challenging and watching my peers do this on the forum has inspired me and made me proud of the university community that I belong to and am honored to be a part of.”

-- final reflection from a student in Carmen Werder's Comm 339 practicum

Assessment / Usage

User perspective

Response from Administrators:

- Not the best use of staff time and resources when facing reduced staffing and increasing demand for core services. It is time intensive for moderators, staff monitoring in their offices, and staff who need to respond to questions or issues raised on the site.
- Low value
- A place for people to complain
- An administrative burden
- Requires a deliberative step to go to the Viking Village – wouldn't go there otherwise
- Lots of responsibility placed on the moderators, particularly the student moderators
- Primarily the domain of students

The future of Viking Village

- Primary Goal of the Library: to find a sustainable future for Viking Village
- New Advisory Board with broader representation, including multiple faculty, president's office, University Communications, Student Affairs, Academic Technology, Students, TLA, intern, University Residences



Questions?