Are Google Books and Library Catalogs Enough? Developing an Online Research Advisory Tool in the Humanities

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**Question:** How do we bring knowledge and stakeholders together?

**Content**

Google

**Librarian**

**Client**

**Location**

**Solution**

Create an annotated bibliography using open source software that can search multiple fields using metadata standards for easier upgrades and transfers.

**Procedure**

1. Select the titles
2. Write the descriptions
3. Select the proper platform
4. Build the browse feature

**Early Problems**

- Static HTML pages not searchable
- Unstable platform MS Access
- Display issues
- Design issues with homegrown PHP / MySQL solution

**Current Iteration**

www.lib.cua.edu/rat/

**Uniqueness of the Research Advisory Tool**

- Annotations focused on established needs of CUA clientele
- More extensive citations than LibGuides
- Searchable in multiple ways
- Not static like web pages
- Content from multiple sources centralized in one record
- Searchable across multiple disciplines

**Problems**

- Subject librarian not present
- Information desk staff unfamiliar with specific subject disciplines
- Two separate reference desks in Mullen Library and many reference rooms
- Too much information on the internet / Google
- Anemic library catalog records
- Obtuse catalog records
- Non-existent catalog records
- Reference tools not current
- Multiple locations of reference works (print and online)
- Clientele unsure what he / she is looking for

**Examples**

- Too much information
- Drinking from a water hose
- Librarian not present
- Two reference desks in Mullen Library
- Anemic catalog record
- What is that title again?!

**Technical Specifications**

The RAT uses the Scout Portal Toolkit platform (http://scout.wisc.edu/Projects/SPT/). SPT is open source software that is licensed under the GNU General Public License. The RAT is currently hosted on a server running Mac OS X Server, Apache, MySQL and PHP.

**References**


**Contributors to the Research Advisory Tool**

Content: Dustin Booher, Jonathan Krause, Nicholas Denysenko, Magdalen Ross, Charles Chukwuani, Taras Zvir, Nathan Mueller, Mollie Crisp
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