What Should Be on a School Library Web Page?

Donna and her co-authors discuss essential information, resources, and links to include when you are creating or revamping your site.

By Donna Baumbach, Sally Brewer, and Matt Renfroe

Subject: Information architecture, curriculum and literacy resources

Technology: Internet/Web

Supplement: http://www.iste.org/LL/

As varied as the schools and the communities they serve, so too are the Web pages for the library media programs that serve them. School library media programs and library media specialists are resources for teaching and learning. They provide technology, print and nonprint materials, instruction, and organization to help teachers and students access and use information. The school library media Web page is a recent development, but as schools, classrooms, and society have become connected to the Internet, media specialists throughout the world are designing and maintaining Web pages for their programs.

You will want to begin by following some general guidelines for effective Web design, ensuring that your site is easily navigated by all different types of users and viewable in many different browsers. We give more specific guidelines in the online supplement, so we can spend our time here talking about the information you may include. Believe us, there is no set formula for an effective school library media center (LMC) Web page, but here are some of the things you might include on yours:

- online catalogs for not only your school LMC but also other libraries your students might use
- reference resources and assistance
- curriculum connections
- literacy connections
- general information about your LMC

Online Public Access Catalogs

With the advent of Web-based online catalogs, students and faculty no longer have to go to the physical library to view the catalog. The window that first brought a world of information into the library is now being used to share information with those in remote locations. Teachers and students can use their computers to access the library's collection 24/7. They can find the items they need, determine if the items are available, and put a hold on them. In many cases, they can even manage their accounts by checking due dates and renewing items online.

If information is expanding exponentially, however, so are students' and teachers' needs for it. School LMC budgets cannot keep pace, so linking to other online catalogs and sharing resources with other schools and library consortia can help with both problems. If the school LMC is a member of a larger database—such as district or state catalogs—make sure you include a link to that resource to provide teachers and students with access to materials in other libraries. (*Editor's note:* Find this and other URLs under resources on p. 51.) They can then request the materials they need using an inter-library loan form, which you could make available on the Web site. This enables students to access materials wherever they exist, helps save dollars at the local school, and provides a service tailored to each individual's needs.

Because the mission of the school LMC is to support the school's curriculum, its collection usually is focused on that goal. The collection may include some books and magazines related to students' personal interests. To provide a broader range of materials, include a link to the local public library.

High school students in Advanced Placement or dual-enrollment courses (courses that provide both high school and college credit) may need access to academic libraries. By including a link to the state's academic library network, you serve students in these courses and the faculty who teach them.

One last link to an online catalog that may be useful for teachers and their students is a link to the state library's catalog. Although these libraries were created to support government officials, their collections are often available to the general public.

Reference Resources

Do you keep your Internet browser open so that you can find answers quickly even when you are working in other programs? Have you replaced your print reference resources with ones on the Internet? We have. And more important, students have. According to a September 2001 study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 94% of youth ages 12–17 who have Internet access say they use the Internet for school research and 78% say they believe the Internet helps them with schoolwork.

You should include links to both free and subscription-based reference resources on the Internet—after you review them, of course. Although many of the high-quality electronic resources are fee-based, there also are a number of reliable free resources, including not only traditional reference resources (e.g., bibliographies, encyclopedias, geographical resources, biographical resources, "ready reference," government documents), but also Web sites where students can contact experts in various fields or receive help with their writing.

Most of the indexes that were once in print or on CD-ROM are now available on the Internet for a fee.

Resources such as Infotrac, SIRS, and Newsbank not only provide citations and abstracts but also full text articles with graphics. With 24/7 access, students can do research any time they have access to the Internet.

Reference Assistance

If students are able to access reference materials on the Internet, they also may need reference assistance. This could include tips for planning their searches, using Boolean operators, or evaluating Web sites. Library guides or "how-to" sheets on the LMC's Web page provide assistance when you are not available. One resource that is a favorite with students is Citation Machine, which helps them create correct reference citations. For students who don't need answers immediately, include an e-mail link to the reference desk.

Curriculum Connections

Because the school LMC and its collection support the curriculum, your school library media Web page should be an extension of that. Many library media Web sites provide links to current and relevant resources for standards and benchmarks included in teacher's lesson plans. Library media specialists extend collaborative efforts with classroom teachers during a particular unit of study by helping to locate and link to relevant online resources for students. Start by identifying and using keywords from objectives, benchmarks, and standards as starting points, or using popular educational Web resources such as Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators or Knowledge Network Explorer's Blue Web'n to find recommended and reviewed sites. Some online catalogs also include selected Web sites.

One way to help teachers and students is to organize sites by subject area, by department or teacher, or

even by Dewey number like the rest of the collection.

You may also include links just for teachers, such as links to subject area professional resources and standards, lesson plan databases, government resources for teaching and learning, and technology tools (e.g., quiz, puzzle, and Web page generators).

Finally, you can get teachers and students to help with reviewing sites by including a form to suggest a curriculum-related Web site. Also include tips for evaluating Web sites to help students think critically about the information they find on their own.

Literacy

Because today's school LMCs grew out of school libraries, and because reading is so important to the curriculum, reading and literacy continue to be central to the LMC mission. Although classroom teachers' efforts focus on teaching strategies to help students build vocabulary and increase comprehension, the school LMC gives students a place to practice what they learn with materials they enjoy. School libraries have been shown to influence reading scores while classroom libraries do not, and print-rich environments—for example, the LMC with its wide variety of fiction and nonfiction books and electronic and digital resources—encourage voluntary reading, the best predictor of literacy, as researcher Michele Lonsdale concluded in a 2003 report for the Australian School Library Association. The LMC Web site can support literacy by:

- Featuring new books and materials in the school LMC.
- Showcasing magazine holdings and full-text database subscriptions.
- Promoting books and media that support a school, classroom, or special theme including those of the LMC: Book Week, Teen Read Week, National School Library Media Month, and so on. (The

International Association of School Librarians maintains a "Today Is…" page of resources to help connect curriculum to celebrations.)
- Featuring study tips and tricks that will help students and teachers. For example, before high-stakes testing, describe things students can do before and during the test to ease anxiety and improve performance.
- Providing links to Web sites that will reinforce classroom efforts and student achievement in vocabulary development, comprehension, writing, speaking, listening, information literacy, and research.
- Describing school reading programs such as Accelerated Reader, Reading Counts, and Read 180, and showing how the school library media collection and services play an integral part in those programs.
- Highlighting authors of children's and young adult literature.
- Highlighting community reading efforts and events.
- Linking to reading lists and high-quality literacy sites.
- Providing book reviews by students, faculty, library media staff, and administrators to reinforce the importance of reading.
- Including photographs of students (and others in the school community) caught in the act of reading. (Make sure before you post these photos that this use of student images complies with school and district policies.)
- Including a "wish list" of books and other items needed in the LMC that others may purchase if they want to donate to the school or library media program.

You should change the highlighted items often to keep the site fresh and bring people back to see what is new.

General Information

When is the LMC open? What do I need to check out materials? Who

can I talk to about a research project? These are all questions that undoubtedly will arise, and you can easily answer them online.

A section about the library might contain the hours of operation, contact information (including the address for those viewing the site from off-campus), a link to your school's home page, and information about the staff. Pictures of the media center and staff share its character and help introduce those working in the media center. This makes it easier for teachers and students to identify those who can help with research and other projects. You could include a map (with Dewey numbers marked) and a virtual tour to acclimate students to the physical location. If students already know where to look for materials, they will have more confidence in their information literacy skills.

An online patron guide includes rules for library use, policies, and procedures. Information about circulation procedures, behavior policies, acceptable use policies, or when classes and/or students can visit is found in this section. This is helpful for parents as well as for teachers and students.
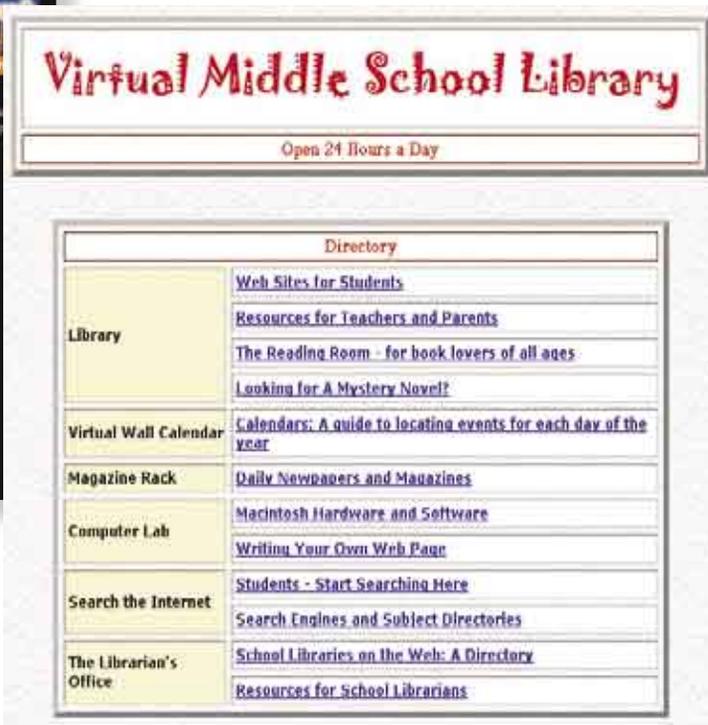
Dynamic Material

As mentioned earlier, you can highlight new materials to keep teachers and students returning to the Web page. This keeps teachers apprised of new materials that can enhance their lessons. You can showcase commonly checked-out books, even creating a Top 10 list each month or quarter. This creates a "buzz" and encourages other students to take a look at what their peers are reading.

Another way to keep people coming back to LMC Web pages is to provide links to "word of the day," "problem of the week," "today in history," "quote of the day," and similar Web sites. They may also link to current news, sports, weather, and

▲ Although no single LMC site may need all the elements discussed in this article, the Roseburg (Oregon) High School Library site features those most relevant for the school's students and teachers.

▶ This Virtual Middle School Library can provide a guide for you in deciding which materials to include on your site.

education features of interest to the school community.

You already know that the resources offered in your LMC are essential to the school community. The LMC Web page offers you a tool to ensure that teachers and students know that, too. Evaluate what your Web page includes, what it is missing, and what it no longer needs. Your school community will thank you.

Resources

Accelerated Reader: http://www.renlearn.com/ar/

ALA Calendar of Promotional Events for Libraries and Literacy: http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/piocalendar/literacycalendar/calendarliteracy.htm

Blue Web'n: http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluewebn/

Citation Machine: http://www.landmark-project.com/citation_machine/

Infotrac: http://www.infotrac.com/

International Association of School Librarians' "Today Is…" page: http://www.iasl-slo.org/today.html

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators: http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/

Lenhart, A., Simon, M., & Graziano, M. (2001). *The Internet & Education: Findings of the Pew Internet & American Life Project.* Available: http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?Report=39

Lonsdale, M. (2003, March). *Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement: A Review of the Research.* Report Prepared for the Australian School Library Association. Available: http://www.asla.org.au/research/

Newsbank: http://www.newsbank.com/

Planning Your Library Web Site: http://www.infosearcher.com/cybertours/tours/tour07/_tourlaunch1.htm

Read 180: http://teacher.scholastic.com/read180/

Reading Counts: http://src.scholastic.com/ecatalog/readingcounts/

Resources for School Librarians: http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/reslibs.html

Roseburg (OR) High School Library: http://www.roseburg.k12.or.us/rhs/library.html

School Libraries.NET: http://www.school-libraries.net/

School-Libraries.org: http://www.school-libraries.org/resources/

School Libraries on the Web: http://www.sldirectory.com/

SIRS: http://www.sirs.com

SUNLINK: http://www.sunlink.ucf.edu/

Virtual Middle School Library: http://www.sldirectory.com/virtual.html

Dr. Donna Baumbach has been a faculty member at UCF for most of her career. A professor in the College of Education, her areas of specialization are school library media and educational technology. She is director of the SUNLINK project, Florida's K–12 public school union catalog.

Dr. Sally Brewer is an associate professor at the University of Montana-Missoula, where she teaches library media and technology courses.

Matt Renfroe has been the Webmaster for the UCF/DOE Instructional Technology Resource Center for more than eight years. He is also the Webmaster for the SUNLINK project.

Doug Johnson edits L&L's *Media Matters column. He has been director of media and technology for the Mankato (Minnesota) Public Schools since 1991. Doug is a veteran author whose works have appeared in books, journals, and magazines and serves on ISTE's board of directors.*

This is a supplement to "What Should Be on a School Library Web Page?" by Donna Baumbach et. al.

Items to Consider Including on School Library Media Center Web Pages

General Information
- [ ] Name of school and school library media center
- [ ] Contact information
- [ ] Address
- [ ] Phone number
- [ ] E-mail address
- [ ] Staff names, titles and e-mail addresses (or one library e-mail address)
- [ ] Mission statement for school library media center (and perhaps how that relates to school mission/purpose/objectives)
- [ ] LMC hours
- [ ] LMC policies/procedures
- [ ] Date of last Web page update
- [ ] Site map
- [ ] Photographs of staff, students, faculty facilities, special events *(in keeping with school and district policy about photographs on Web sites)*
- [ ] Clip art *(observe licensing arrangements and copyright law)*

Links To
- [ ] School Web page (and be sure the school Web page links to the LMC)
- [ ] School LMC Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)
- [ ] District and/or state union catalog
- [ ] Other school libraries in the district
- [ ] Public library
- [ ] Community college and/or college libraries
- [ ] State library
- [ ] Appropriate virtual libraries
- [ ] Government resources
- [ ] Frequently requested resources

- [ ] Grade/age appropriate search engines
- [ ] Selected online databases (periodicals and reference)
- [ ] Lists/descriptions of current LMC newspapers and periodical subscriptions
- [ ] Local news sources
- [ ] State and national new sources
- [ ] Local and state weather
- [ ] Information about reading programs (e.g., Accelerated Reader, http://www.renlearn.com/ar/default.htm
  Reading Counts, http://src.scholastic.com/ecatalog/readingcounts/
  Lexiles, http://www.lexile.com/DesktopDefault.aspx?view=pa&tabindex=1&tabid=27&tabpageid=97
  Battle of the Books, http://www.akla.org/akasl/bb/bbhome.html state reading programs)
- [ ] Recommended reading lists for all student reading levels and interests
- [ ] School book or reading clubs
- [ ] Book reviews by students, faculty, staff
- [ ] Other book review sites
- [ ] Information about and links to information literacy (standards, evaluation forms, models, tools, etc.)
- [ ] Steps in your schoolwide research model(s) (e.g., Big6, http://www.big6.com/
  FLIP-IT, http://www.aliceinfo.org/FLIPit.html
  FINDS, http://www.firn.edu/doe/

instmat/home0015.htm
Research Cycle, http://questioning.org/rcycle.html
Research Process, http://witloof.sjsu.edu/courses/250.loertscher/modelstrip.html
Information Search Process (ISP), http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kuhlthau/Search%20Process.htm
InfoZone, http://www.assd.winnipeg.ca/infozone/
I-Search, http://www.literacymatters.org/content/isearch.intro.htm)
- [ ] Online tools to help with research and reporting: graphic organizers, citation and bibliography tools, note taking tools,
- [ ] Frequently used writing and research tools: dictionary, thesaurus, etc.
- [ ] Writing and style guides
- [ ] Study skills and tips
- [ ] Test taking tips
- [ ] Resources for Teachers
- [ ] Links to information literacy standards
- [ ] Links to state and or district standards
- [ ] Links to lesson plans, electronic gradebook, district resources,
- [ ] Anything useful to teachers and administrators
- [ ] Resources for specific teachers' units and assignments
- [ ] Resources for parents
- [ ] Subject area resources to fit your curriculum
- [ ] Useful forms (teacher forms: plan-

ning and materials requests, reserve materials, suggestion forms, etc. and student forms: permission to tape or use images, checklists, templates, materials requests, ILL, suggestion forms, etc.)
☐ Tutorials (created in house or located elsewhere online) for students and teachers: technology, research, writing, etc.
☐ Slide shows and PowerPoint presentations (created by LMC staff, teachers and/or students)

Announcements
☐ New materials
☐ Special LMC events and related resources (book fairs, family nights, changing hours, special guests, one school/one book events)
☐ Special school events and related resources (field day, prom, homecoming, SAT or other testing days, graduation, etc.)
☐ School newsletter, LMC newsletter or LMC column in school newsletter or paper

Miscellaneous
☐ Information about famous or well-respected alumni
☐ Information about school/ faculty/student awards and accomplishments
☐ LMC "tip of the day"
☐ Contests (and winners)
☐ Information about special events and holidays with related resources (American Pickle Week, National Library Month, etc.) See ALA calendar link below.
☐ Links to online gradebook (password protected)
☐ Link to live "Ask a Librarian" resource if available
☐ Links to song lyrics
☐ Links to popular cartoon sites
☐ Links to word of the day, math problem of the day, question of the day, puzzle of the day, resource of the day, etc.
☐ Counters to track Web page use (for reports and evaluation)
☐ Photos and descriptions of special physical features of the LMC: sculpture, art, murals, windows, new arrangements, displays
☐ WebQuests and learning games developed by library media specialist and staff
☐ LMC annual report
☐ LMC statistics
☐ What research says about LMCs
☐ Quotations about libraries, books, technology, learning, etc.
☐ Quotations from your happy LMC patrons (students, teachers, parents, administrators)
☐ LMC recognition by others: awards, media mentions, Web page awards

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Useful Web Sites for Planning and Maintaining LMC Web Pages

Example Pages

School-Libraries.net
http://www.school-libraries.net/
Created by school library media specialist Peter Milbury, this directory lists Web pages created or maintained by school library media specialists worldwide. Updated monthly.

School Libraries on the Web
http://www.sldirectory.com/
Library media specialist Linda Bertland maintains this directory of school library media centers on the Web.

LMC Page Planning Tools

School-Libraries.org
http://www.school-libraries.org/resources/
These online resources help school library media specialists make effective use of the Internet.

Planning Your Library Web Site
http://www.infosearcher.com/cybertours/tours/tour07/_tourlaunch1.htm
A cybertour of school library media Web pages, pointing out some of the best sites along the way! Ideas for developing and organizing a school library media center Web page.

Creating a Web Page for Your School Library
http://www.iasl-slo.org/creatingweb.html
Ideas and resources for creating and evaluating your school library media Web pages.

Writing School Library Web Pages
http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/resf/wpages.html
Links to dozens of resources to help you create and maintain a SLMC Web page.

Six Steps for Web Design
http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/online/steps.htm
Tips from Tammy Payton about effective school Web page design with additional links to resources. Steps apply to a school library media center Web page as well as other school Web pages.

Resources to Include on Your Web Pages

Resources for School Librarians
http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/reslibs.html
A comprehensive listing of links in information literacy, information access, technology and other topics that could be useful in developing a school library media center Web page.

Why and How to Use Blogs to Promote Library Services
http://www.infotoday.com/mls/nov03/fichter.shtml
In this article, Darlene Fichter describes how blogs, short for Web logs, can benefit libraries of all kinds and how they can be integrated into Web pages.

ALA Calendar of Promotional Events for Libraries and Literacy
http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/piocalendar/literacycalendar/calendarliteracy.htm
The American Library Association lists library-themed events, such as Teen Read Week, National Library Week, and Library Card Sign-up Month here. Links to information about promoting these events also is provided.

General Web Design Tools and Guidelines

Design Tenets for Web Pages
http://www.bham.wednet.edu/technology/webtenets.htm
From "less is more" to "have a committee review the pages before publishing on the Web" these are excellent guidelines for all schools and SLMCs as well. From Bellingham (Washington) Public Schools.

Separating the Wheat from the Chaff: How to Tell the Good Web Sites from the Bad
http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/chaff.html
Kathy Schrock summarizes lessons learned from looking at thousands and thousands of Web sites. Includes links to instruments your students and teachers will find useful in evaluating Web sites and information.

Creating School Web Pages
http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic61.htm
Annette Lamb shows you how to explore, plan, design, create, and revise good school Web pages.

Web Design That Won't Get You Into Trouble
http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/jun01/kennedy.htm
How to avoid legal trouble when creating a Web page: copyright, links, accessibility, advertising, first amendment issues, and other things you may not have thought about but don't want to hear about from a lawyer. Includes links to related legal sites for non-lawyers.

The Usable Web
http://usableweb.com/
More than 1,000 links to articles and sites to help you develop the most usable Web site possible. Everything you need to know and more.

Richard Waller Web Site Evaluation: Seven-Point Checklist
http://www.waller.co.uk/usability16.htm
Things to have and things *not* to have on any Web site.

The Virtual Middle School Library: Writing Your Own Web Page
http://www.sldirectory.com/compf/write.html#top
Designed for middle schoolers but useful for school library media specialists, this page offers links to the basics involved in creating and maintaining a Web page: HTML editors, elements of Web design, cascading style sheets, writing for different browsers, graphics, backgrounds, counters, promoting your Web site, and tools for validating your Web site and checking for accessibility.