Library of the Health Sciences Debuts New Website

By Ryan Rafferty

In the summer of 2009, the UIC Library overhauled its website. The overhaul brought many great new features to the Library website, but left LHS faculty, staff, and, most importantly, our users unsatisfied. Members of the Library Administration, LHS libraries, IT, and the Web Oversight Committee met in the fall (2009) to begin discussions and to start organizing a plan to redesign the LHS web space. In 2010, key personnel from each of the LHS libraries and the Library IT department made up a small team that undertook the LHS Website Redesign project (Abigail Goben-Chicago, Peg Burnette-Peoria, Felicia Barrett-Rockford, Ryan Rafferty-Urbana, Bob Sandusky-IT, Ling Wang-IT).

The LHS Website Redesign Team began regular meetings in the fall of 2010. Bob Sandusky guided our little group and kept us on the path to success. As projects of this size often do, deadlines came, went, were extended, and extended again. Content was created, deleted, recreated, edited, and revised. By the summer 2011, the new website began taking shape and by the start of the fall semester we felt like we could set a “cut-over” date for the end of the semester. Despite a busy semester for all of us, we kept our schedule and the redesigned LHS website went live on Friday, December 16th.

One of the biggest changes brought about by the redesign is the addition of an LHS “landing,” or “home,” page (Figure 1). It is intended to unify and magnify the LHS presence within the UIC Library web space. Similar to the current UIC Library home page, it incorporates a tabbed search interface which allows users to search PubMed or other key collections. Links focused on information specifically about the LHS Libraries, collections, newsletters, clinical tools, and services are also featured on the landing page.

The site libraries’ web pages also received a refresh. The menus on the left side now display LHS-centric navigation and links. PubMed can be searched using the search box at the top left of each page. The content on the right is also more LHS oriented. It was decided to insert an Ask-a-Librarian IM widget into the content on the right for all LHS pages. This provides easy access to a popular form of reference assistance.
The LHS Website Redesign Team believes the changes strengthen the presence of the UIC Library’s Health Sciences information on the UIC Library website. The redesigned website promotes LHS collections, resources, and services while maintaining continuity of the UIC Library website on the whole.

Ryan Rafferty
Regional Assistant Librarian and Assistant Professor
Library of the Health Sciences-Urbana
rraffer2@uic.edu