A Marketing Proposal for Library Instruction/Literacy Courses

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Methodology: Interviewing key staff in Reference and Instruction

Researching current trends in Marketing for Library Literacy courses

Project: The library instructed credit courses UC-174: Digital Research: Critical Concepts and Strategies, UC-270: Research in the Digital Humanities, and UC-270: Scientific Research in the Digital Age (*working title*) are under-attended and under-marketed. How can we promote our services and who are we promoting our services to?

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1   Introduction

The University Libraries at the University of Michigan offer library credit courses for the undergraduate student body to enhance their research skills. UC 174: Digital Research: Critical Concepts and Strategies is a course devoted to teaching first-years and sophomores about different search strategies useful in their academic success and beyond. UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities and UC 270: Scientific Research in the Digital Age (a working title) are courses for sophomores, juniors and seniors in the respective fields dedicated to heightening students research skills for their academic success and profession. Currently, UC 174 is well attended in the Fall Semester due to promotion and visibility during New Student Orientation. However, attendance for this class is not as strong during the Winter Semester. The UC 270s are both in the pilot stage. Both classes have been offered in previous semesters, but attendance has been very low, even resulting in an independent study for UC 270: Scientific Research in the Digital Age. This proposal is aimed to focus on these credit courses and how to increase our visibility, awareness, and class attendance.

2   Literature Review

Providing the steps to understanding information literacy is one of the most critical aspects of what librarians do. Information Literacy is defined, by the American Library Association (ALA) as "the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information." Traditionally, librarians have helped our patrons become proficient in developing this set of skills. ALA describes why it is so important to cultivate these:

> "Because we want to remove the obstacles to creativity which are caused by lack of understanding of the research process. We only want to introduce students to those skills which will allow them to succeed in their future chosen paths."

A lack of understanding is a primary reason students need to be in courses dedicated to teaching these skills but it is also a factor in students choosing not to attend these courses. The issue has become, do our student, faculty, and staff know what we offer? If not, how do we inform them?

In steps marketing and promotion, the American Marketing Association defines marketing as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." Though we are not a business and our primary goal is not to make a profit, we can use the different strategies that businesses have been using for years and incorporate them into our strategies to fulfill our goals. We must think about our target audiences and what types of promotional material or marketing would appeal to the different groups.

We know that one of our target audiences is faculty and staff. Promoting and marketing to this group is conducted in a much different capacity than with students. In an article by Katherine O'Clair in 2012, she discusses the importance of promoting to faculty members in a way that "sells what faculty will buy." She discusses how using business marketing strategies can allow us to meet the goals of both the faculty and the library. To do this, we must understand the desires and needs of our faculty, develop services

that they will find valuable, and then promote them effectively. We need to ask the questions "how do we connect faculty with the goods and services we have and help them see the benefits?" Above all, we need to find out everything we can about the faculty we serve, as well as what they think about the services we offer. Understanding what faculty teach, research, and are interested in will help to better understand how to provide services to them and their students.

As we step away from faculty, Jamie Graham discusses in her article how Kimbel Library of Coastal Carolina University meets the needs of the student body. She emphasizes how high visibility of the instruction librarians has increased the success of their instruction program. The instruction librarians at this university are teachers, liaisons and have faculty status, which allows them to interact with faculty through committee appointments, meetings, and other activities. This interaction allows them to have a much more integral part on the decision making process among the faculty, as well as build greater rapport with the faculty and administration. Graham talks about the importance of understanding the communication preferences of your target audience. She suggests that communication be conducted both in a media format, such as email (one of the most popular forms of communication), and in-person. It is valuable to remember that people communicate, just as they learn, in many different ways and providing multiple forms of communication can reach a great audience. Being visible and proactive in making library related courses imbedded in the curriculum, together with individual course related instruction increase the overall awareness and show our versatility.

We must also make sure that we have the means to produce the different promotional material and marketing plan within the library. Polger and Okamoto engineered a study that explored the responsibilities and challenges faced by academic librarians whose major responsibilities include the overall promotion of the library. They conducted a survey, via SurveyMonkey, across several listservs and library sizes both in the USA and Canada, and received 215 responses. From this survey, the Polger and Okamoto discovered that 34.7% of the respondents spent 10-20% of their time on promotion in a given day. Most of the participants stated that promotion and marketing was added to their title and not something that they had previous experience in. 48.1% of respondents are sometimes partnering with the marketing/promotion department at their institution. They also discovered what promotional activities are being pursued, why the librarians were taking on the responsibility, and what the challenges were.

Top five ways to determine what promotional activities to pursue are:
- Survey and assess user needs
- Network with colleagues
- Receive requests from college/library administration
- Review the literature
- Develop promotional activities connected to curriculum

The study showed that the top five reasons that led to the respondents taking on the marketing/promotional responsibilities were:

- ‣ Need for a contact person for promotion and outreach
- ‣ Marketing plan was needed to promote the library
- ‣ Library was under-utilized
- ‣ Needed to promote information literacy and/or library instruction
- ‣ I have an interest in marketing and promotion

The top five challenges were:
- ‣ Juggling many responsibilities at once
- ‣ Lack of funding/budgetary issues
- ‣ Lack of time
- ‣ Lack of staff/resources
- ‣ Developing new ideas

Understanding how much the audience influences the type of marketing and promotion created is important to creating the marketing plan. In providing Information Literacy courses, we often think about the student body and how to reach them. In turn, we must think about the faculty, staff, advisor, etc. who are in constant contact with these students and have no firm understanding of the services that the library can provide and how to reach them. We must also recognize the time and energy that the library staff has as the marketers and promoters and what other challenges that they may face that may hinder them from devoting more time to this area.

3 Methodology

Marketing in libraries is a trend that many libraries are familiar with. Libraries know that they must promote themselves in a way that catches the attention of the variety of age groups and dynamic interests of our students.

The University Libraries at the University of Michigan has not yet produced an official study on the effectiveness of their promotional material, but they have a wealth of knowledge within the staff. In conducting my project, I met with many of the Learning & Teaching and instruction staff, as well as the instructors of UC 174 and the UC 270s. During these meetings/interviews, we discussed the different steps that have been taken to promote the services. Not only did I meet with the staff directly focused on learning and teaching, but also with other officials in the library system to get their opinions and talk about what they see as working and not.

3.1 Findings

The following findings have come from the many different discussions had throughout my project. Many of these presented themselves on more than one occasion.

- ‣ PhD students are more interested in taking the UC 270 courses, but cannot get credit for the course because these courses are 200 level and need to be 400 level.

- The science class was not being attended because there is a similar class in the Chemistry department.
- We need less physical/paper promotion and more digital promotion.
- Is it possible to use 500 student workers among the library as advocacy "tools", by talking to classes, etc.?
    - Library Human Resources has a list of supervisors that could be used to reach the students.
    - Perhaps we should try to get the library student staff to take the UC 174 class or at least know which students have taken it?
- Festifall (Carnival-like event) is great for promoting. Is there something like this at the end of the fall semester? Does the library host other events for students that we could promote at?
- Use CTools announcement space for marketing. It is a place that everyone uses.
- Graduate Student Instructors need to recommend class (figure out ways to incorporate this).
- Research Guides
    - Possibly create a widget or something for the 174 & 270 courses.
    - Separate out the 270 course description so that they can be easily added and manipulated
- Use campus bus signs
- Plug into orientation presentation that if they cannot sign up for the class in the Fall that they can take it in Spring/Winter
- Create an informational slide about UC 174 & UC 270 for faculty presentations by librarians
- Share flier for classes, sent via librarian to professor by email or print
- Create web page for faculty and a page for students
- Advertise in community learning centers located in most dorms

4   Implementation Plan

The following are ideas put together from the many meetings and interviews conducted, to be used for the marketing and promotion of the UC 174 and UC 270 class.

They are by no means set in stone and both the UC 270 courses are currently under construction and are subject to alteration.

4.1 Deliverables

The follow is a list of the different material that I have worked on. The highlighted items are things that are "Happening Now." *See Appendix for samples of the all the deliverables.*

Spotlights: Located on the library homepage, they provide condensed information about different things happening in the library. I drafted a potential gateway spotlight for UC 174.

Digital signs: Located throughout campus, they are large monitors that display information about things going on around campus.

New postcards: We currently have postcards that are handed out during new student orientation and other such events, but they may not be reaching our broad audience base.

<mark>Housing poster</mark>: Housing has bulletin boards that we can put informational posters on. The poster can be used in different venues.

Faculty slide: Some of the library staff give presentations to faculty about different library services that we offer. It was suggested that we make a slide for the different courses that the library provides.

Faculty flier: Similar to the faculty slide, this flier could be emailed out to the faculty, advisors, staff, etc. to provide information on what we have to offer, so they can inform their students

Video script: Currently, the UC 174 course has a video for the students to watch and to get an idea of what the course has to offer. We would eventually like to provide a similar video for the UC 270 course

Questions Document: For the postcards and other marketing material, I have provided a short list of questions that could be used as prompts on different promotional material.

<mark>New website material</mark>: Created text and image for UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities for the current Library Courses page.

4.2 Potential Audiences

The list of potential audiences for the promotional endeavor is extensive. It includes a variety of initiatives being conducted throughout campus for both students and staff. The following list comprises most of the groups considered in my research:
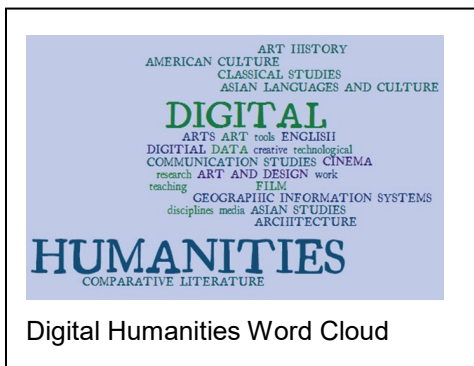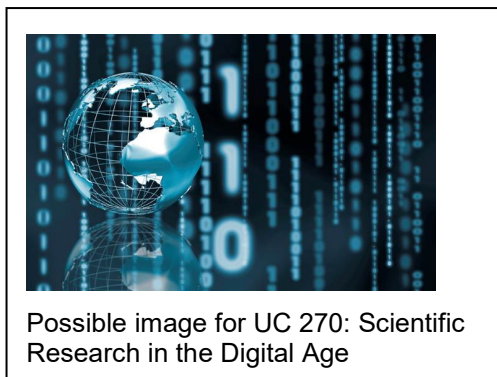
‣ Summer Bridge (~200 people): Students admitted to the university who are seeking extra assistance over the summer.

‣ Juniors and Seniors (270)

‣ Housing staff

‣ Sophomore Initiative: Opportunities distinctly for sophomores, including a set of courses, for them to build into academic experience

‣ International Students: They have a new International Orientation that provides them the option to attend the library orientation

‣ Academic Advisors

‣ Honor's Program students

‣ Graduate Student Instructors

‣ Welcome events for graduate students, faculty, undergraduate students

‣ New Graduate Student Fair

▸ New Faculty events

Though we are creating different material for some of the different groups, there are also some transferable materials that can be distributed among a variety of groups, i.e., material created for faculty could be used for staff and other instructors or advisors.

4.3 Imagery

While exploring what material could be used to promote the courses, I put together possible images that could be used in for the different courses. Examples of different deliverables with these images can be found in the Appendices.

Possible image for UC 270: Scientific Research in the Digital Age

Digital Humanities Word Cloud

Possible Image for UC 174: Digital Research: Critical Concepts and Strategies

New Beginnings: Sunrise & Roots

Below are a few ideas of possible images to be created once we figure out what exactly UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities will entail.

▸ Person at computer with images for the different humanities fields shine out Ike a cloud with digital lines as a background

▸ Head speaking the words "digital humanities?" Computer speaking back "yup!"

▸ Multiple hands on a keyboard typing in the different fields of humanities

- ▶ Images of the different databases that can be used for digital humanities research on a computer screen with someone looking at computer
- ▶ Person with I <3 Humanities shirt on using a computer with stats coming out

5   Next Steps

The follow includes some possible futures steps that can be taken into account for increasing visibility.

▶ Social Media	o The current social media presence needs to be used more frequently, with the goal of advertising library courses. o It may work better to have a student worker be in charge of this task as part of his or her hours because students tend to be more aware of the trends with social media and understand the need to present in online space ("out of sight, out of mind").
▶ Student Workers	o The University Libraries system has over 500 student workers. This is a huge source to tap into as it may be beneficial to see how many of our student workers have taken library classes and how many of them would be interested in doing some advocacy for them.
▶ Video for 270 course	o With a video already present for the UC 174 course, it was suggested to create a video for UC 270 as well. It may be possible to use students who have taken the course as actors in this video. o I created a rough script for the video, for consideration.
▶ New emblem/icon for 174	o Though the "Bird on a Bike" is fairly new, the message it sends is unclear. o Upon thinking too hard, the bird cannot move, go forward, it is stuck, although it does hint at a new mode of transportation. o An image that conveys new research skills is needed.

6   Appendix A

Spotlights

Located on the library homepage, they provide condensed information about different things happening in the library.

Struggling with a research project?

Take a ride, explore something new

We know it's hard and you can make it easy by taking UC 174 (Digital Research: Critical Concepts & Strategies)!

Why take it? You'll learn research tips to save you time and tools for creating a citation list.

See link for more information. Register through Wolverine Access.

Take UC 174!

Digital Screens

Located throughout campus, they are large monitors that display information about things going on around campus.

Interested in learning how digital tools can advance your research?

IMAGE COMING SOON

UC 270 (Research in the Digital Humanities) is the course for you!

You'll learn digital humanities research methods and how to navigate the world of digital and print resources!

You'll create an online portfolio!

Take UC 270!

Contact Sigrid Cordell at scordell@umich.edu. Register at Wolverine Access.

Postcard samples

We currently have postcards that are handed out during student orientation and other such events, but they may not be reaching our broad audience base.
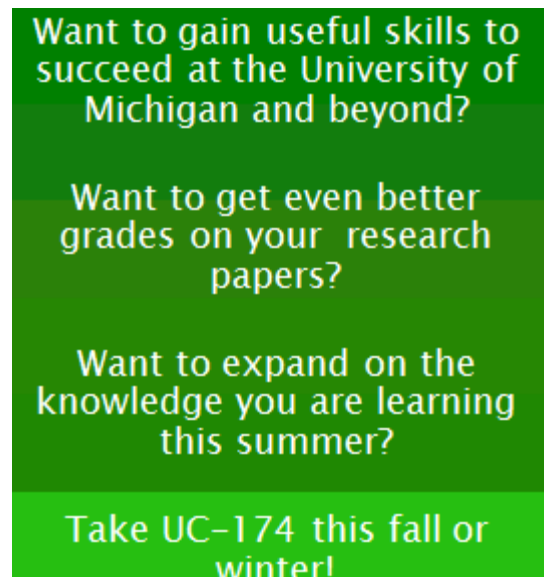
Housing Poster

Different examples of the same poster. We kept the bird on the bike for consistency, as of now. We will be changing 'research paper' to 'research project.'

Professors' Flyer

Could be emailed out to the faculty, advisors, staff, etc. to provide information on what we have to offer.

Are your students struggling with the research process?

The Libraries offer credit courses for undergraduate students to enhance their research skills.

Your students will learn:

Online search strategies and research tips

Critical evaluation of sources

Tools for creating bibliographies

UC 174: Digital Research: Critical Concepts and Strategies

Offered Fall & Winter term for 7 weeks, 2 hours a week

Please make your students aware of this opportunity.

Students can sign up on Wolverine Access.

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Faculty Slide

For faculty or staff presentations

Question Database

For the promotional marketing material, a list of question prompts that can be used in multiple platforms.

STUDENTS

Want to gain useful skills to succeed at the University of Michigan and beyond?

Want to expand on the knowledge you are learning this summer?

Want to get even better grades on your research papers?

Fed up with not knowing what a bibliography is or how to put one together?

Struggling with a research project?

Interested in learning how digital tools can advance your research?

Curious how to get started in the research process?

Want to impress your professor with your research skills?

Aiming to make the Dean's List?

Excited to participate in the academic success of the University?

Want to gain useful skills to strengthen your success at the University of Michigan and beyond?

Looking for grades rooted in A's?

Want to grow on the knowledge you are learning this summer?

PROFESSORS

Looking for ways to help your students find better sources for their papers?

Have a few students needing some assistance with research?

Are your students struggling with the research process?

Video Script

Below is an outline for a video for the UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities course. It entails what each scene could contain, but not the verbatim.

Length: 2-3 minutes

Theme: Created like a trailer with opening disclaimer or comedic 'warning'?

Shot #	Concept	Actions or Visuals	Other (sounds, FX, music, callouts)
opening		Music with course image	
1	What is digital humanities?	Two students or a student and an instructor or librarian talk about what the digital humanities is. Knowledgeable character possibly provide example to student asking the question.	
2	Didn't you know we have a class called UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities?	Knowledgeable character talks about what the class has to offer. • Learn digital humanities research methods (describe) • Navigate the world of digital and print resources (describe) • Create an online portfolio (describe)	
Closing		Music with course image and sign up instructions at Wolverine Access	

New Website

Edited the current library courses page to include UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities. Will go live as soon as an image is ready.

Library Courses

View | Edit | Revisions | Devel

The University Library offers two courses, for credit, on perfecting your research skills. Taught by librarians, you will participate in hands-on computer exercises, group discussions, and more, designed to maximize your research activities in other courses.

For general information about these courses, see the LSA Course Guide, and register for the course in Wolverine Access. For specific questions about library courses, please contact Doreen Bradley (dbradley@umich.edu).

UC 174: Digital Research: Critical Concepts & Strategies

Struggling with a research topic or paper? Want to gain useful skills to succeed at the University of Michigan and beyond? UC 174 is the course for you!

In UC 174, you will learn:

- Online search strategies and research tips to save time
- Critical evaluation techniques
- About tools for creating bibliographies

This one credit mini-course meets for 2 hours a week for 7 weeks. Open to first and second year students.

UC 270: Research in the Digital Humanities

Interested in learning how digital tools can advance your research?

In UC 270, students will:

- Learn digital humanities research methods
- Navigate the world of digital and print resources
- Create an online portfolio

This is a three credit interdisciplinary course. No prerequisites are required. Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors.
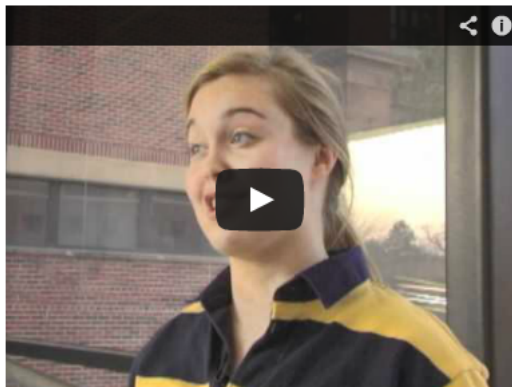
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