

# White Paper on Library Marketing and Outreach

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Submitted by the ALL-SIS Task Force on Library  
Marketing and Outreach

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## Introduction

Academic law libraries are charged with providing access to information and services to a wide variety of users including students, faculty, law school staff, attorneys, and the general public. Libraries constantly evolve in response to changes in teaching and learning styles, the format of information resources, methods of scholarly publishing, and the practice of law. These changes must be informed by the needs of our users; in turn, we need to inform users of the resulting improvements. Our services and resources are only valuable to our users if those users are aware of what we offer and are able to successfully use them. Although academic law libraries serve many types of users, this paper will focus primarily on marketing and outreach to students. However, many of these concepts can be used when marketing to other types of users. This white paper will identify the challenges facing academic law libraries, explain why libraries need marketing and outreach plans, and highlight examples of marketing and outreach successes.

## Why Libraries Need Marketing and Outreach

Library marketing is *outreach*. It is making people aware of what we can do for them, in a language they can understand...[we] need to tell people we're here, explain to them how we can help, and persuade them to come in through the doors, virtual or physical.<sup>1</sup>

Conversations about whether libraries will thrive or even exist in another twenty years are ubiquitous. Thanks to the Internet, users no longer see libraries as the predominant source of information. It is assumed that everything is available online or that Google searching leads to more efficient and effective research. As a result, "public perception is at least ten years behind the reality of what we do and how we do it[.]"<sup>2</sup> Changing this perception will only happen through the hard work of librarians to design and implement quality marketing and outreach programs.

Students' ease with locating information in their everyday life using Google or Wikipedia does not always translate to success in scholarly research because they do not have the same familiarity with navigating these information resources. Surveys of incoming law students regarding their legal research abilities confirm that students overestimate their abilities. Ian Gallacher's 2006 survey of incoming law students regarding their legal research abilities found that 37.1% were "very

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<sup>1</sup> NED POTTER, THE LIBRARY MARKETING TOOLKIT xiv-xv (2012).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at xv.

confident,” and 44% were “somewhat confident” in their research skills.<sup>3</sup> Yet as Patrick Meyer wrote in his 2008 article on the legal research requirements of new attorneys, reports from supervisory practicing attorneys and law firm librarians say new attorneys’ research skills need improvement. Meyer concludes that in order for the research training of law students to remain in sync with the research needs of law firms, law school instruction needs to include print research components and to ensure that students have “a thorough understanding of the database hierarchy, search query formulation, search strategy, and overall online navigation.”<sup>4</sup> Academic law librarians’ opportunities to increase students’ information literacy are limited as a result of students’ reluctance to seek out the assistance of librarians.

Recent studies of college students have shown that undergraduate students are not likely to seek help from the library with research tasks. Academic law libraries can learn from these studies because of the similarities between our user base and that of a college or university library. Most law students are of the same generation as the college students evaluated in these studies, and unless they have other graduate school experience, are not likely to have additional experience with academic libraries that would otherwise shape their opinion of scholarly research.

The nationwide Project Information Literacy (PIL) study surveyed college students about their information-seeking behaviors. Eight out of ten respondents reported rarely, if ever, seeking assistance from a librarian with course-related research assignments. Even when librarians provided initial training sessions on library resources and using scholarly databases during freshman orientation, students did not return to librarians to seek research help.<sup>5</sup> Further, students turn to instructors rather than librarians for assistance because the instructors are seen as experts in the field and grade the assignments; and therefore, instructors’ advice on which resources to consult is highly valued. Instructors were also valued for providing comprehensive assistance throughout the entire process—from developing a topic to writing drafts and editing their final papers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ian Gallacher, *Who Are Those Guys?: The Results of a Survey Studying the Information Literacy of Incoming Law Students*, 44 *California Western Law Review* 151, 178 (2007).

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Meyer, *Law Firm Legal Research Requirements of New Attorneys*, 101 *LAW LIBRARY JOURNAL* 297–330 (2009).

<sup>5</sup> ALISON HEAD & MICHAEL EISENBERG, *PROJECT INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRESS REPORT, LESSONS LEARNED: HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS SEEK INFORMATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE 3* (2009).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 30.

A positive finding from the PIL project is that while students may not consult librarians, they do use library resources. Of the students surveyed, 84% used scholarly research databases, and 78% used their library's online public access catalog. However, even though students report using library resources, they also express frustrations with their use, beginning with knowing which database or resource to select.<sup>7</sup> Other reported frustrations include a general sense of "information overload," finding too much irrelevant information, and an inability to locate needed information in an online search.<sup>8</sup>

The Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL) project investigated the research habits of university students with the goal of adjusting library services to better meet students' needs. The study found that students did not consult librarians for assistance with research projects for many reasons, including not wanting to bother library staff and being fearful of appearing ignorant or foolish for not knowing how to do research. The study also found that students did not understand what kind of help librarians can offer, and that students assumed that librarians could only help with finding known items or providing directional assistance.<sup>9</sup>

One explanation for this reluctance to seek the assistance of librarians is the self-reliant nature of the millennial generation. This generation of students is more likely to attempt to help themselves or seek advice from the Internet before consulting an expert.<sup>10</sup> If a student's self-teaching behavior proves inadequate, a student is likely to next seek help from a peer. Students turn to their peers first because they have an established relationship and they are working on similar assignments, allowing the student to compare progress on and understanding of materials.<sup>11</sup>

Identifying this need for additional research training presents an opportunity for libraries. The current national spotlight on legal education is forcing law schools to address the high cost of attendance and the lack of jobs for new graduates.<sup>12</sup> Law schools are under pressure to provide

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<sup>7</sup> LYNDA DUKE & ANDREW ASHER, EDs., *COLLEGE LIBRARIES AND STUDENT CULTURE: WHAT WE NOW KNOW* 74 (2012).

<sup>8</sup> ALISON HEAD & MICHAEL EISENBERG, *PROJECT INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRESS REPORT, FINDING CONTEXT: WHAT TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENTS SAY ABOUT CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE DIGITAL AGE* 4 (2009).

<sup>9</sup> *COLLEGE LIBRARIES*, *supra* note 7, at 51.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 63; See also Debbi Smith, *Strategic Marketing of Library Resources and Services*, 18 *COLLEGE AND UNDERGRADUATE LIBRARIES* 333 (2011).

<sup>11</sup> *COLLEGE LIBRARIES*, *supra* note 7, at 59.

<sup>12</sup> See David Segal, *Is Law School a Losing Game?*, *NY TIMES*, January 9, 2011, at 1; Elizabeth Lesly Stevens, *Will Law Students Have Jobs After They Graduate?*, *WASHINGTON POST*, November 4, 2012, at A41.

practical training and to lower costs, and these two goals are often at odds. This situation provides libraries with an opportunity to market their expertise and services while reinforcing their value to the law school community. Legal research courses, taught by librarians, may be one of the most cost-effective decisions that a law school could implement in their efforts to increase students' practical skills. An added benefit of building librarian-taught legal research courses into the curriculum is that students will see librarians as an integral part of their legal education and recognize them as a resource that can be consulted in the future.

### **Changing the Conversation about Library Marketing and Outreach**

Outreach has to be more than simply showing and telling. We have to cast aside the librarian-knows-best mentality... and instead treat our users as partners in the educational process. Our goal should be focused on the objective of student success.<sup>13</sup>

When trying to change how they are perceived, it is critical for libraries to focus on becoming “user-sensitive organizations.”<sup>14</sup> Reaching users in a way that demonstrates that library services are useful to them means that libraries must work to make users their “partners in the educational process” instead of merely “spectators.”<sup>15</sup> Users cannot truly be partners unless librarians understand who they are and what they need. An important first step is to begin to distinguish between the different kinds of library users; librarians must stop generally referring to all library users as “patrons.”<sup>16</sup> It is important to make these distinctions – students, professors, alumni, etc. – because we cannot market to all of our users, even all of our student users, in the same ways.<sup>17</sup>

Librarians frequently rely on anecdotal evidence, surveys, suggestion boxes, feedback forms, and focus groups when trying to determine users' needs. While valuable, these methods do not create relationships with users or make the library personal. Instead of making assumptions about what users need, librarians must engage in real conversations with users and collaborate with them to

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<sup>13</sup> BRIAN MATHEWS, *MARKETING TODAY'S ACADEMIC LIBRARY: A BOLD NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS* 8 (2009).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 12.

solve problems. By fully engaging in this process, librarians are more likely to get a fuller sense of the nuances of a user's situation and to identify gaps in users' knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

Another important step in becoming a user-sensitive library is to focus less on library processes and more on creating a library that helps users succeed.<sup>19</sup> It is important to remember that users are experiencing a constant stream of information, and are "less inclined to investigate something on the off-chance that it's useful."<sup>20</sup> As information experts, librarians can contribute to user success by showing them that we can help them do their work better – which "might mean quicker, more efficiently, more comprehensively, more cheaply," or something else.<sup>21</sup> In short, librarians must show users where value lies.

In this way, marketing and outreach are natural extensions of what we already do as librarians; it is our job to figure out what "better" means for our users, and to explain to them exactly how the library can help them. What this means is that we must market: services, not collections; benefits, not features; and results, not processes. We must also market *ourselves* as the experts who help users find the right information.<sup>22</sup>

## **I. Marketing and Outreach Solutions**

Now that we have identified why academic law libraries need to market to their users and the challenges inherent in such a process, we will describe best practices for marketing and outreach. Though on the surface marketing and outreach may seem to be the same concept, they are quite different. The primary difference rests solely within the purpose or intent behind using these methods.

The goal of outreach is to connect with users in a meaningful manner that encourages future interactions with the library. Outreach is generally done with a specific cause in mind, such as meeting instructional goals structured within the legal academy. Outreach efforts typically elicit personal responses in people. An example of outreach efforts would be to create personal or embedded librarian programs to meet individual student needs.

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<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>20</sup> POTTER, *supra* note 1, at 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 2-3.

Marketing is defined more generally as promoting library resources and services. Marketing can be more difficult because it is critical that the right message is created for each user group. It is highly unlikely that one message will be effective for all types of users. If a group of people is already interested in your library and its services, it is more effective for your marketing efforts for that group to focus on specific services or benefits that will keep them coming back. But how do you get your marketing message across to those who are not yet interested in your library? Marketing strategies and messages must be unique and present something to that uninterested group that they would individually benefit from or share with others.

While strategies used in outreach and marketing often overlap, the goals or purpose behind those messages are often completely different. To determine the best methods to meet your specific goals, your library should go through the process of developing a marketing and outreach plan. A marketing and outreach plan is essentially a blueprint of a library's marketing objectives and strategies for its brand, services, and resources. There are numerous benefits to creating a well-defined marketing and outreach plan. The plan helps to: identify the targeted audience(s); assess and identify effective strategies to be implemented by all library staff; develop metrics for evaluating the success of your marketing campaigns; and save time and money for targeted projects. Having a strong marketing and outreach plan can be the difference between successful and unsuccessful marketing and outreach initiatives.

### **Define your marketing and outreach objective(s)**

Your library mission statement should be the basis for developing your marketing and outreach objectives because it describes: who you are; why your library exists; your library's primary functions and activities; who your stakeholders are; and what your library uniquely does to address the needs of your users. Reviewing and refining your mission statement will help you determine what you want your library to be known for. Your marketing and outreach objectives operationalize your mission. Sample marketing and outreach objectives might include: increasing the number of patron visits to the library, the reference desk, or the circulation desk; encouraging repeat visitors to the library; promoting resources or services; and developing or improving your website.

When identifying objectives, make sure that they are “SMART.”<sup>23</sup>

- *Specific*: Your objectives need to be specific. Each objective should address the 5 W’s (What, Why, Who, Where, and Which): What do we want to accomplish at the end of the project? Why are we trying to set this objective and why does it benefit the library? Who is going to be involved? Where is it going to take place? Which constraints might we face in trying to achieve this objective?
- *Measurable*: Your objective needs to be measurable. That is, it should answer questions such as how much, how many, and how will we know if the objective is accomplished? In the era of library justification, it is extremely important to be able to show growth in concrete terms.
- *Attainable*: An attainable objective will be able to answer the following questions: how will the objective be accomplished, and are we able to accomplish it given our circumstances? Your objectives must be realistic and attainable. You want to set your library up for success. To reach your objectives, it may be required to develop new attitudes, abilities, and skills. You do not want your objectives to be impossible or extreme. Determine whether the skills are in-house or can be developed through professional development first.
- *Relevant*: SMART objectives must be relevant. This means that the objectives your team creates matter. Objectives that are relevant to your boss, your library as a whole, and your law school take priority. Under this category, your goals should be able to answer these questions: Does this objective seem worthwhile given the full scope of the project? Is this the right time? Does it match our strategic plan or goals of the bigger organization?
- *Time-bound*: Finally, you need to make sure that your objectives are placed within a specific time period. A strong commitment to a deadline will help a team maintain focus and ultimately lead to completion. Your objectives should answer the following question: What can we do today versus six months from now?

Below we have detailed how to achieve SMART goals as you think about creating a marketing and outreach plan in your library.

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on SMART goals, see: MindTools, *Locke’s Goal Setting Theory: Understanding SMART Goal Setting*, (last accessed Feb. 1, 2013), [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE\\_87.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_87.htm); Office of Multicultural Affairs, University of Kansas, *Creating SMART Goals*, (last accessed Feb. 1, 2013), <http://www.oma.ku.edu/soar/smartgoals.pdf>; and University Human Resources, University of Virginia, *Writing SMART Goals*, (last accessed Feb. 1, 2013), [http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing\\_SMART\\_Goals.pdf](http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf)

### *Gather research and background information*

As you are creating SMART goals, you may want to start by listing and evaluating your current marketing strategies. Are your new goals attainable using your current strategies? What are the pros and cons of the current strategies your library has in place? Decide whether your current marketing tactics are furthering your marketing objectives; do not be afraid to discontinue practices that have been successful in the past but have outlived their usefulness. Identify your target audience and describe their demographics. Make use of surveys, focus groups, and even circulation records to gather descriptors. Engage in real conversations with your users. Also, determine whether you can tweak your current goals to make them better and SMART-er rather than starting from scratch.

### *Brainstorm new marketing tactics*

As part of assessing your current goals and strategies, you should consider who your target audience is and what motivates them. Collect and use personal anecdotes from your patrons. Sample tactics might include: offering virtual library tours to reach new target audiences such as users who are not local or do not use the physical library; linking instructional programs to law school events for better inclusion into the legal academy; providing welcome kits for incoming students so they experience the friendly nature of the library on their first day; or creating a YouTube video or channel that is solely used to educate and promote library services.

### *Establish a timeline and budget; assign responsibility*

As you are making SMART goals, make sure to set a completion date (Time) and assign a staff member to be responsible for each marketing strategy that you adopt (Specific). Create an itemized budget for marketing items such as promotion, giveaways, printing, and design.

### *Create a marketing checklist*

It is helpful to create a checklist of tasks that should be completed for every new marketing initiative. Following a checklist ensures that new programs or resources are promoted in a consistent manner, via every available avenue. Sample tasks might include: designating a person to email a broad target audience about special events; clearly identifying who will post events to all social media forums, and when they will do so; designating a creative minds taskforce for creating and posting new library signage; or committing to adding all library events to an openly accessible library or law school calendar.

### *Develop measures for success*

Is your goal measurable (M)? As you are creating new objectives, make sure that you are establishing metrics to evaluate whether your tactics are working. Sample measurements might include: improving awareness of the library's website by increasing traffic by 5% in six months; gathering and analyzing survey feedback from instructional sessions from the students or faculty who attended (either virtually or by paper); or comparing database usage statistics at six month intervals to track those usage numbers as you are promoting them through web and in-person strategies.

After reviewing your library mission statement and creating marketing and outreach objectives that are Specific (S), Measureable (M), Attainable (A) Relevant (R), and Timely (T), you are now ready to develop specific strategies to achieve these objectives. To do that, consider the examples of both marketing and outreach strategies that we have compiled below.

### **Ideas for Successful Outreach**

Over the course of the development of our profession, librarians have discovered ways to reach out to the community. Some of those include new technologies such as social media. Others include integrating librarians into the legal academy within classrooms and within the culture as it changes. Over time, the profession has evolved to create librarians as networkers and collaborators of information, and the strategies that have been found to be most successful capitalize upon those expert skills. Examples of outreach ideas can be found in the ALL-SIS Marketing and Outreach Toolkit.

### *Social Media*

Because almost everyone uses at least one form of social media, it is a logical place to promote library services to patrons. However, libraries should not just use Facebook and Twitter as a place to post announcements regarding programs or new resources. Social media is meant to be a forum for communication, so it is most effectively used when there is more than one person taking part in the conversation. Libraries should strive to use social media as a tool to engage their patrons. For example, in addition to asking trivia questions for prizes or soliciting suggestions from students, libraries should also "listen" to what is being said about the library and the law school. Free programs such as HootSuite or Buffer allow you to create alerts for when a name or phrase is mentioned in a post. An added benefit of a service like HootSuite or Buffer is that it allows you to schedule posts in advance and post to multiple social media forums (Twitter, Facebook, Google+,

Foursquare) at the same time. A library presence on LinkedIn may also be a good idea, since it is a more professional source. Many career services departments use this as a means of connecting alumni with potential employers and building the department's professional relationships. See, for example, the University of Texas School of Law Alumni-Student Connections LinkedIn page as a guide.<sup>24</sup> Social media accounts are easy to set up, and staff can be responsible for adding new content periodically.

A library might also consider in engaging in more directed forms of social media. Library educational and promotional videos can be uploaded to a special YouTube channel. Library photos can be hosted on Flickr. All of these things can be linked to the library Facebook page so that you only have to post your event or service in one location and it automatically posts across your accounts. Promote a giveaway from your social media to gauge for usage. For example, post a message about free prizes at reference. If no one shows, then no one saw it, and you might want to reevaluate your marketing techniques.

#### *Hosting Celebrations, Annual Events, Open Houses, or Receptions*

Libraries often have large physical spaces. If that is the case, consider hosting an event in your space that highlights the collection. If another department is hosting the reception, this would not cost the library anything other than the time it would take to help set up or clean up. In addition to being a place of learning and providing educational services, libraries also serve as the social nexus for a school. Libraries seek to create spaces that are conducive to learning and that foster creativity and collaboration. Organizing social activities such as orientation festivals, coffee happy hours, ice cream socials, snacks during finals, movie screenings, yoga classes, and even stress relief "puppy hours" are all ways that libraries can help provide a more humane and healthy law school experience.

#### *Embedded Librarians*

This is a new hot topic of discussion within the profession. Think about your outreach goals; perhaps starting a new program where your librarians are a vital part of the clinical experience at your law school can be included? Embedding a librarian into a classroom or clinical experience includes in-class presentations on research issues, incorporating research assignments that correspond with curricular and clinical structures, and individual student research consultations.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/University-Texas-School-Law-AlumniStudent-3102354/about>

Within this model, librarians are supplementing the instructional experience in multiple mediums and formats, such as group presentations, group work, and individualized attention.<sup>25</sup>

### *Personal Librarians*

Providing an individual service to students and faculty is a specialized and targeted way to increase the visibility of your library. This idea moves away from the traditional reference desk interaction and pushes the patrons into one-on-one conversations with information experts. Under this program, every incoming student is assigned a librarian with whom they will hopefully develop a professional relationship. Librarians make the initial contact with the students they are assigned at the beginning of their law school career, as well as at strategic points of their academic experience. Implementing a personal librarian program can have huge positive effects on the reputation of your library with its law school community.<sup>26</sup>

### *Classroom Sessions and Targeted Training Sessions*

Providing a guest lecture in a substantive law course is a very useful way to inform students of the research resources that are available to them. Students will be more receptive to learning if the research instruction is relevant to what they are learning about in the class. It is even more beneficial if you can tie your instruction to a specific assignment in the class. Do not assume that if professors want you to speak to their class, they will ask. Effective outreach involves being proactive and informing faculty about what you can offer. One suggestion is to start by targeting professors teaching seminar or paper courses because the kind of scholarly research and writing required in those classes is not typically covered in a traditional first year research and writing program. Offering these instruction sessions is important for teaching students tricks and techniques for doing their own research, and also provides an opportunity for students and faculty to get to know the librarians. People will be more likely to seek out help from the library in the future if they have already developed a relationship with the library staff.

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<sup>25</sup> Brittany Kolonay and Gail Mathapo detailed their experience in embedding librarians in clinics and seminar courses at the University of the District of Columbia in their article, *Experimenting with Embedding: a Law School Library Embeds Librarians in Clinics and Seminars*, 16 AALL SPECTRUM 18 (June 2012). For additional information, see Karen Westwood, *Deals and Dispute Resolution: Teaching Research Skills in a Short-Term Simulation Class*, 16 AALL SPECTRUM 12 (July 2012).

<sup>26</sup> For more information on personal librarians, see John B. Nann, *Personal Librarians - The Answer to Increasing Patron Contact May be Simpler Than We Think*, 14 AALL SPECTRUM 20 (2009-2010).

In addition to reaching out to faculty to offer research instruction lectures in a for-credit class, librarians can reach out to specific populations of students for research training. Groups of students for whom specialized training sessions may be appropriate include faculty research assistants, candidates for law review and journals, students working in a clinic, and persons competing in a moot court or trial advocacy competition.

Some academic libraries currently offer research certificate programs to supplement the instruction provided in legal research courses or in guest lectures in substantive law courses. These certificate programs can be short classes or exercises for which people are awarded a certificate of completion. The library should also consider partnering with other departments in the law school to provide informal instruction sessions. For example, the library can work with career services to show students which resources are available to help them in their job search and interview preparation. Another suggestion is to partner with the IT department to demonstrate new technologies or software that students can use in their classes or in law practice.

### **Ideas for Successful Marketing**

Marketing in libraries has changed drastically as technologies have invaded the information community. Good marketing strategies include both web-based and in-person approaches. Using a combination of these approaches may help you reach your marketing goals for the library. Examples of marketing ideas can be found in the ALL-SIS Marketing and Outreach Toolkit.

#### *Blogs*

Blogs are practically ubiquitous these days. A great many of them languish without readership, but if blog editors spend the time and energy necessary to make a blog really good, it can be an effective marketing tool. Before starting a blog, the first step you should take is to determine what you hope to accomplish with your blog. Will it be a source for posting library news and information, or will the content be more in-depth? Once this determination is made, the next step is to make sure that the library staff really does have the time and energy to devote to the blog. Make a plan with staff that includes commitments for updating the blog and standards for entries. After those commitments have been made by library staff, the next step is to choose the blogging platform that best suits the library. It is entirely possible that the larger entity of which the library is a part, particularly in academia, will already have a platform that it favors, or even hosts its own platform. If such a template is already in place, staff can get training and learn the ins and outs from in-house computer services staff. If not, there are still many choices of platform. A few of the major blog

hosting services are WordPress, Blogger, BlogSpot, and TypePad. Some platforms offer more customization options, making it easier to match the blog to the library website. Other blogging platforms will be easier to just fire up and hit the ground running.

It is also important to consider which widgets to feature on the blog. Widgets are applications, or parts of a website, that enable a user to perform a specific function, such as looking at archives on a blog or reviewing a twitter feed from a newspaper website. Some examples include inserting a banner with local news or scrolling job postings along the bottom of the blog. Different blogging platforms will provide different widgets, and it is good to review the widgets that each blogging platform provides before deciding where to host your blog. Take a look at other institutional blogs as well as personal favorites to see what kinds of widgets are most used and most useful.

### *Annual reports*

An annual report is a comprehensive report on a library's activities throughout the preceding year. Annual reports are intended to share information with interested parties about the library's activities. Library annual reports are similar to those of public companies, which provide information to shareholders on significant activities throughout the year. An annual report is an opportunity to show all the wonderful things that your library staff has accomplished in a mere twelve months. Many libraries already have internal annual reports, but they may not cover certain marketing aspects of the library. Adding statistics about library marketing events, giveaways, and patron responses can help libraries keep on top of marketing by figuring out what events or promotional products are popular and which are less successful.

Additionally, annual reports themselves can be an excellent way to communicate with library users. Library users might be interested in the library budget or statistics, and an annual report would be a good place to have a recap of important library events. Including photos is a good idea, particularly of events in which patrons took part, so people can look for themselves. Annual reports are also an excellent way to recognize staff achievements, or even to just introduce staff members to library users.

### *Newsletters*

Newsletters can have some of the same effects that a good annual report does. They keep patrons up to date on library events and programs; are a good way to make contact directly with library patrons; they offer reminders about library services; and they let people know when events of interest are happening. There has been a trend away from library users actually wanting to speak

with librarians and library staff. Offering personalizing information such as short bios and photos in newsletters can make librarians more approachable. There are also less serious options, such as including bios and photos of the pets of library staff, favorite movies or books, baby photos, etc. Newsletters can also be a good tool for write ups about library participation in student, attorney, or local groups and events.

Many newsletters have been moving online recently, and there is an argument for replacing them with a library blog. But something that comes directly to the user on a recurring basis, either electronically or in hard copy, can be valuable because it serves as a reminder to those who might not otherwise remember to check a blog.

It is a good idea to have a standard template for a newsletter. This can be a heading and layout for a print newsletter, or a style sheet that should be used for an e-mail newsletter. There are many resources for librarians who wish to design a personalized style sheet, but chances are that some basic HTML coding skills will be required. Remember too that a newsletter should be designed to display properly in different formats, and it is possible that the library will need a second style sheet for newsletters displayed on smart phones or tablet computers.

### *Displays & Exhibits*

Libraries are often famous for their displays. In addition to being educational, displays are also an excellent way to promote library resources and programs. Library users can be shown interesting and unusual library books, or reminded of library services. Displays can be used to promote a special collection of the library, or advertise a new database or newly arrived bookshelf. Displays can also be an opportunity to work collaboratively with other groups. The library can create a display of recent faculty publications, host an exhibit of photos of a recent student organization trip, or put together a showcase of materials relevant to the subject matter of a famous or important case. Think about incorporating QR codes directing users to your research guides in your displays to make them multidimensional as well. Offering to create a display promoting a program sponsored by a department or student organization can be an initial outreach effort that may lead to more meaningful interactions in the future.

When creating a display, do not just throw together a bunch of books on a theme. Creating displays and exhibits are just like designing a “store window” or “merchandising.” After a display is finished, observe the response to it and make notes. Remember that location can be critical. Think about where you get good foot traffic, and what the display may be near. Repurpose book jackets and,

most importantly, apply principles of design such as balance and simplicity. Readability is important. Draw a plan or layout for your display in advance. Grab attention by adding lighting, objects, or color if possible.

#### *Flyers, Banners, Posters, Signs, Brochures, and Pamphlets*

Brochures and pamphlets are an excellent way to introduce the library and some of its most important services to users, and as such can be a simple way to get started in your marketing. While they may seem to have been somewhat overshadowed by the digital marketing options these days, it is important that you not underestimate the usefulness of a good brochure. They add color and appeal to a library desk, are relatively easy to make, and are easy to travel with and give out. Potential library users may forget what they read about online or have heard of by word of mouth, but can be reminded by a physical item like a brochure. It is wonderful if there is a library staff member with any expertise in designing brochures and, but there are also plenty of free or low-cost alternatives available online for designing a personalized pamphlet, including several templates from Microsoft. Remember that brochures and pamphlets should not be too text-heavy.

#### *Promotional Prizes and Giveaways*

Giveaways are always popular. Anyone is happy to have a free pen, and if the pen reminds them of your library it is a win-win situation. It is hard to go wrong with the standard giveaway options -- pens, pencils, post-it notes, water bottles, and similar items. When selecting promotional giveaways, choose functional items that fill a need or serve a purpose and make sure it is something that will be of use. Items to consider include highlighters, coffee mugs, ear plugs, coasters, USB drives, mouse pads, and screen cleaners. These items are often cheaper in bulk. Ideally you should select something unique that gets patrons talking. Edible items are also encouraged. A chocolate with the library logo will almost always be welcome. A high quality print of the library logo onto a standard label can be easily applied to chocolate wrappers, and can look surprisingly professional.

In addition to smaller giveaway items that library users can simply take, it is also a good idea to have larger items that can be won or earned (e.g., gift cards, study guides). For example, students could receive prizes for answering a reference questions, finding a hidden clue in the stacks or tracking down a particular resource. Such a competition could be advertised on the law library blog, Twitter feed, Facebook page, or in the newsletter. The cost of numerous giveaways can be hard to justify with tight library budgets, so consider soliciting coupons or vouchers from local businesses to use as prizes.

### *Word of Mouth and Reputation*

One of the strongest marketing strategies available is your library's reputation as it is spread by word of mouth.<sup>27</sup> Word of mouth, at its core, means that your services are giving people a reason to talk about you and recommend your products and services. Word of mouth and reputation is built on strong relationships with your users and with your internal team. Develop a strong team message that you want to guide your audience in spreading. You may have a mission statement that you can prominently display in your library; you can also think about creating a customer service statement to be posted throughout your library. Talk up your library to your constituencies and tell them about your success stories. Try adding a wall of fame in your library where users can tell their own story to others by posting their successful encounters with library staff prominently for others to see. The key is to make the conversation easy so that the positives of your library flow from one mouth to another without interruption.

## **V. Conclusion**

This Task Force and White Paper were created due to a call from academic law librarians for a comprehensive discussion of marketing and outreach. We hope that we have contributed meaningfully to this discussion while providing librarians with ideas and strategies to use in marketing their libraries. Our primary goals were to identify the challenges that academic law libraries currently face; to dive deep into the literature and anecdotal conversations to find out why libraries need to develop marketing and outreach plans; and to compile and offer up examples of marketing and outreach successes to allow other librarians to learn from each other. We have attempted to blend a theoretical approach to marketing and outreach with practical examples provided in the toolkit. Though this white paper is in no way comprehensive, we believe that this provides a solid foundation for a dynamic conversation that begins now and adapts with our profession.

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<sup>27</sup> For more on this topic, see Cindy Spohr, *Let's Give Them Something To Talk About – Word of Mouth is an Important Campaign to Add to Your Marketing Mix*, 12 AALL SPECTRUM 10 (2007-2008).