LibGuides cheat sheet

Plan

- Who is your target audience? How do you know that they need the guide you’re thinking of creating? Find a user who belongs to your target audience and talk to them about where they’re getting stuck with their research.
- Is LibGuides the right platform for your content? This flowchart and this table can help you decide.

Propose

You must propose guides that are not related to a course before you create them. This process helps you clarify your communication goals, plan your guide’s content, and coordinate with other authors. The reviewers will get back to you with comments and suggestions. Course guides skip this step.

Create

Once you have the all clear from the reviewers, you can start creating your guide.

- Make your guide’s title as succinct as possible. If possible, name it after an academic program or department. Use title case. Avoid subtitles.
  - Course guide titles should have the course code in capitals (without semester codes), a colon, and then the title of the course in title case. (e.g. ANTC31: Ritual and Religious Action)
- Set the guide type to either course, subject, internal, or template. We are not using topic or general purpose guide types.
- Associate non-course guides with only the most relevant subject headings. Maximum 3 subjects. Course guides should not be associated with a subject.
- Give your guide a friendly URL. (e.g. http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/bio120 instead of http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?g=250471)

Add content

Usable content is accessible content. The recommendations below are drawn from evidence in the web usability and accessibility literature:

- Jump right into the content. You don’t need a landing page with a pretty, but uninformative images or text.
- Arrange your content using the journalistic triangle: most important content on the top.
- “If in doubt, leave it out”. “Just in case” isn’t a good reason to include content on the web.
- Use headings, lists, and short paragraphs to make your content easy to scan. LibGuides box headings are headings level 2, so start at heading level 3 so as not to confuse screen readers.
- Write to showcase the benefit to the reader. (e.g. "Saves frustration" instead of "Database with many advanced search features")
- Make sure your hyperlinks make sense out of content. (i.e. Don’t hyperlink “click here” or “more information”)
- Keep the navigation as simple as possible. Bonus points for keeping your guide to a single page. Enable the “Show box-level navigation for selected page” option in the guide navigation layout menu. Don’t use sub pages if you use this feature, though.
- Use standard boxes as much as possible. LibGuides tabbed and gallery boxes look fancy, but they present usability and accessibility challenges.
- Link to existing assets (databases, widgets, and link assets) wherever possible. This will make your guide easier to maintain in the long run.
- Once you’ve got a draft, test it on a few representative users. ITS has templates to help you do simple usability tests. Revise your guide based on what your testers say; they know best.

Publish

When you’re ready to publish your guide click “submit for review” in the publication menu. This sends your guide to the authorized reviewers. Course guides will be published immediately. Non-course guides will be reviewed. The reviewers will send comments and suggestions for your guide or a notification that your guide has been published.

Maintain

- Check your guide for broken images and links at least once each academic year.
- Check the LibGuides statistics to see which pages and assets are most used. Revise your content accordingly.
- Make course guides private or unpublish them when the course is over.

Support

- LibGuides Guide for Authors
- SpringShare support
- UTL LibGuides and LibGuides group admins