

# Guide on the Side Final Report – Kwantlen Polytechnic University

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## How often did you use the system during the pilot?

I started with Guide on the Side (GoTS) as soon as the sandbox was set up and spent some time getting familiar with the interface before deciding what kind of tutorial I wanted to develop. I would say I spent part of a few days over the course of a couple of weeks. I ran into technical trouble early on, (see below) and after the first week of December, I did not access the system much.

## How many users did you have testing the system?

At KPU, I was the sole tester of the product. I am part of a teaching and learning team, but my other colleagues did not have time to test it. We have been trialling the SpringShare product LibWizard at the same time, and several librarians did have the chance to develop quizzes/tutorials with that software.

## What types of activities did you try in the system?

I was interested in creating a series of information literacy tutorials that would break the research process down into manageable units, along with quizzes. These would include the library discovery layer, catalogue, subscription databases, and websites. I was hoping that these could be accessed by students in a “flipped” situation so that in-class time be spent on more interactive, hands-on work. A key feature I was looking for was that quizzes be automatically graded, with the marks incorporated directly into the CMS grade book. This was my long range goal; in reality the first tutorial I attempted was a simple introduction to the library’s discovery layer.

## WHAT PARTS OF THE SYSTEM DID YOUR USERS LIKE? DISLIKE?

I did not get to the point of testing it with users. I liked the relatively easy interface, and it did not seem that it would be difficult to learn. Customizations would require programming skills that I don’t possess myself.

## HOW COULD THIS APPLICATION BE USED IN A TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT?

See my comments above. A major consideration would be how well it integrates with a CMS, and whether quizzes could be auto-graded. I would also want to explore whether digital badging could be applied, again within the CMS, to eliminate the need for students to print out/email results to instructions. I did not get far enough to explore these features.

I would hope tutorials could be easily shared/copied/modified etc.; I assume so, given the large number of tutorials done by institutions such as U Vermont. Making these teaching resources easily repurposed

would be a huge benefit. This is the case with LibWizard. Librarians can easily copy each other's quizzes and tutorials and adapt as needed.

Since GoTS is open source, its application would obviously extend beyond the library as a useful system for other faculty to use in their blended/online courses. In this sense, it has more far-ranging appeal than LibWizard, whose license (at least here at KPU) is limited only to library staff.

## **WERE THERE TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH THE SYSTEM DURING THE SANDBOX PROJECT?**

My limited use of GoTS was really due to a technical issue on our end, rather than the software itself. I worked with our systems librarian as well as BC Campus support to identify that the problem is the security settings on our website. We have very little control over this and would need to convince our marketing department to alter the security settings. So far, they have not been receptive. The alternative, to use a pop-up window, is less desirable from a teaching perspective.

I should say that the same issue exists for us with LibWizard. We attempted a workaround, which was to create a search widget for the discovery layer, so that students could use that for searching. This was not ideal, as the appearance is very different from the library homepage, and causes confusion. For the time being, we create tutorials that don't require embedding the library website.

## **WERE YOU ABLE TO FIND SUPPORT INDEPENDENTLY (IE FROM A USER COMMUNITY OR OTHER OPEN RESOURCES, LIKE WEBSITES AND BLOGS) WHEN YOU EXPERIENCED ISSUES?**

I knew about the Google group as well as the support at U Arizona (developers of the system). I did consult the Google group early on, and it seems that there is good information there for troubleshooting other issues.

## **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERING USING THIS SOFTWARE?**

For anyone already familiar with LibWizard, GoTS will be fairly straightforward. I would also say that users will have to have some amount of control over their site, or at least have a receptive web team/marketing department open to being a flexible.