Guide on the Side Final Report – Simon Fraser University

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May 1,2017

How often did you use the system during the pilot?

I briefly experimented with Guide on the Side (GotS) once the sandbox was set up in the fall. This spring, I also invited colleagues to test out the tool and spent a few more hours on my own experimenting with it further.

How many users did you have testing the system?

Including me, a total of five SFU Library users tested out GotS and provided feedback.

What types of activities did you try in the system?

I set up a couple of short, sample tutorials in order to assess whether this tool might facilitate a more hands-on, interactive learning experience for users and be easier to update and maintain than some of our current video tutorials embedded in Canvas (SFU's LMS).

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

To summarize the feedback from our five SFU Library users:

Likes:

- Easy to quickly create basic tutorials and good user support currently available via University of Arizona and Google group
- Facilitates hands-on, real-time engagement with library tools and concepts
- Handy user options to provide feedback and receive certificate of tutorial completion via email
- Compared to some of our current Canvas video tutorials (created with Camtasia), GotS tutorials could potentially be much easier to update and maintain in future

Dislikes/questions for further investigation:

- How compatible is this tool with mobile devices? With screen readers or other accessibility tools? With various browsers?
- How robust is ongoing support and development?
- Are there any issues regarding data security/privacy for student users?
- If BCcampus opts not to host and support GotS in the long-term, what would be involved in establishing in-house support for this tool?

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

For users, GotS facilitates a hands-on, interactive, and self-paced learning experience. We think it would be quite useful for creating short tutorials walking users through how to use specific tools and specialized databases or for quick search demos embedded in research guides and/or FAQs. GotS tutorials could also be used to cover introductory "getting started" information with our users in preparation for more specialized library instruction sessions.

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

In the sample tutorials we set up, the SFU Library website would not load in the right pane except in pop-out mode which requires users to re-size their browser. We found pop-out mode was not very user-friendly so hoping there might be a way to troubleshoot this issue.

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

For the most part we were able to find support through the University of Arizona help guides as well as through the Google group of GotS users.

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

We found GotS to be easy to use and are generally interested in using this tool further to create short tutorials here at SFU Library. We came across some excellent examples of existing library GotS tutorials created by other institutions and are interested in adopting or adapting some of these if possible as well. Our group also agreed that in the interests of providing a consistently high-quality user experience, we'd need to establish some guidelines and best practices for GotS tutorial creation and provide group and/or one-to-one training opportunities at our institution if we're planning to use this tool more widely here in future.