To support effective library engagement and its assessment, this study sought to determine best practices for creating, managing, and marketing library resource pages embedded in Carmen, The Ohio State University’s Learning Management System (LMS). Specifically we:

1. Examined library resource pages with high usage in relation to class enrollment
2. Determined what elements, if any, these pages held in common; and
3. Investigated whether librarian behavior influenced the use of these pages.

*Carmen operates on the Desire2Learn platform.

Methodology

A mixed methods approach was utilized for this study. It consisted of an analysis of log data, a content analysis of all library resource pages created by OSU librarians, and interviews of librarians whose library resource pages received high usage in relation to class enrollment.

To identify high use library resource pages in relation to class enrollment, the total number of times a library resource page was used for a course offering was divided by course enrollment. The resulting ratio revealed that for 44 of the 178 library resource pages created and maintained during the 2010-2011 academic year, the average student enrolled in 192 of the 5,375 course offering with these pages assigned used the page at least twice.

Results

Overall:

• 178 library resource pages assigned to 5,375 course offerings.
• The majority of all pages were assigned at the course level.
• The average page consisted of 4.77 widgets and 19.60 items.
• Descriptive text explaining the content of a link, its context for the page or the course, or why the link might be useful to a student, was provided for 80.87% and 85.17% of the links on both high-use and low-use pages respectively.
• Most widgets were used on only one page.

Factors driving use of high-use library resource pages:

• Librarians were assigned a ‘librarian’ role in the course. (38.96%)
• The page was assigned to a course with a major research or writing assignment. (41.56%)
• Librarians announced the availability of the page to students in general orientation or during a faculty meeting. (46.75%)
• Librarians visited the class. (48.05%)

*For 31.17% of the high-use pages, librarians interviewed indicated they had no idea why the page received high-use.

Discussion

• Study confirmed both promotion and customization may influence page use, but are clearly not the only factor.
• Nearly half of all high-use pages were assigned at the department or college level. Interviewees indicated that for some of these pages, their strategy was to passively embed a library presence in the LMS. For some academic disciplines, this strategy is clearly working.
• Follow-up interviews with authors of low-use pages are needed to confirm if major research or writing assignments truly drive page usage.