

Creating Inclusive Information Services: Librarians' Design-Thinking Approach to Helping Students Succeed in the Digital Age

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Abstract : With the rapid development of educational technologies, higher education institutions are facing the challenge of creating an inclusive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds. Academic libraries, the hubs of research, instruction, and innovation at higher educational institutions, are facing the same challenge. While academic librarians worldwide have been working hard to provide services for emerging information technology such as information literacy education, online learning support, and scholarly communication advocacy, the problem of digital exclusion remains a difficult one at higher education institutions. Information services provided by academic libraries can result in the digital exclusion of students from diverse backgrounds, such as students with various digital readiness levels, students with disabilities, as well as English-as-a-Second-Language learners. This research study shows how academic librarians can design digital learning objects that are cognizant of differences in learner traits and student profiles through the lens of design thinking. By demonstrating how the design process of digital learning objects can take into consideration users' needs, experiences, and engagement with different technologies, this research study explains design principles of accessibility, connectivity, and scalability in creating inclusive digital learning objects as shown in various case studies. Equipped with the mindset and techniques to be mindful of diverse student learning traits and profiles when designing information services, academic libraries can improve the digital inclusion and ultimately student success at higher education institutions.

Keywords : academic librarians, digital inclusion, information services, digital learning objects, student success

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