Project Narrative

Innovation
Utilizing SpringShare’s LibGuides platform, the APUS CampusGuides Program Portals’ mission is to create companion websites that function as research portals for each school, program, and course offered by the university system – which consists of two fully online institutions: American Military University and American Public University.

Each portal incorporates the library’s key licensed resources, the best of the open web, and a range of multimedia content in direct and customized support of the evolving needs of program and course curriculum. When online students need to acquire supplemental readings or conduct research for a class assignment, they can access the portals through their virtual classroom, the main library page, or on an open web URL. APUS Faculty and Program Directors work with librarians to select portal content that supplements program and course learning objectives, assignments, discussion forums, and readings. They also utilize the guides as bibliographies and course reserves that incorporate multimedia curricular enhancements (video, podcasts, and interactive websites) along with more traditional scholarly texts and datasets.

Portal resources are vetted by subject-area specialist librarians for quality, copyright, and fair-use compliance, and all guides meet ADA standards for accessibility. Additionally, the APUS Program Portals have grown to include other affinity groups working alongside the Online Library - such as the ePress and University Archives – as content contributors and for further support as the research and curricular needs of APUS faculty and students evolve.

The APUS Online Library CampusGuides Program Portals initiative is innovative for librarianship and academic research in several ways:

- It makes extensive use of the tools and scalability of an open-source platform to service a wide range of research and curricular needs
- It has further ingrained the centrality of the Online Library for university learning and moved Librarians more squarely into the roles of classroom partner, research advisor, and academic program associate
- It has enabled the Online Library to become a chief facilitator of an institutional shift in thought and practice away from traditional textbook-based pedagogies toward more dynamic web-based models of instruction and research
- It has helped the Online Library more firmly define its ROI to institutional stakeholders, while opening up new areas of creative possibilities with institutional partners
Mission Statement
Acting in direct response to the mission of American Public University System, the APUS Online Library strives for academic excellence and professional leadership as part of a new wave of academic librarianship. This fully virtual facility exists to provide state-of-the-art research and educational support for the University, and to deliver services that are available at any time of the day or night and regardless of geographic location. To these ends, APUS has specially committed to professional librarians. Such staff provides personalized relationships, advanced subject expertise, and crucial Web skills. APUS librarians help ensure competency and currency in web information literacy, information-seeking behaviors, instructional tools, myriad of online resources, search engine applications, and study aids - as well as the display of the University's contributions to the world's knowledge. This complex role is intended to blend in active partnerships with the disciplinary/teaching expertise of faculty. The design is part of an interactive learning community with our students, alumni, and other staff - nothing less than a new idea of the university library for the web era.

History of the Project
The CampusGuides Initiative began in earnest in the fourth quarter of 2009 with the selection and testing of an open source platform (SpringShare), infrastructure development, and the creation of training material for library faculty and staff. Prior to this time, online librarians were creating simple Word documents for teaching faculty and listing licensed library and open access resources that could be used for course instruction. This format was severely limiting the library’s potential to support course instruction and facilitate institutional research. The first completed guides using the SpringShare platform were made available in January 2010 with initial focus on creating portals at the academic program level. This groundwork was followed by rapid adoption at the individual course level through 2011 and 2012, with an overall growth in scope of the initiative to include course e-reserves, subject area and research skills tutorials, and other specialized guide content featuring multimedia resources.

Intended Clientele
The intended clientele for the APUS Online Library Program Portals are APUS students, faculty, program directors, deans, and various other academic and curriculum personnel. Since the portals are available on the open web, there is also any number of unknown beneficiaries on the open web who might happen across the guides in their research. There are several ways the Online Library assesses the impact of the portals on clientele. Since implementation in 2010, monthly visit counts are tallied for each guide and tracked over the course of the year. In 2012 the number of guide hits surpassed 410,000 for the year, up from 214,000 the previous year. Online librarians are in frequent contact with academic faculty and program directors as the guides are created and modified. The Online Library also receives feedback from students and non-student researchers who have used the guides through their classroom or on the open web.
Principal Players
The principal players include the creators of the individual portals at the program, school, and course levels. These are the highly-credentialed subject expert librarians, most of whom work remotely across the country:

- Dr. Fred Stielow, PhD (History), MLS: Vice-President and Dean of Libraries, Electronic Course Materials and the ePress
- Dr. Ray Uzwyshyn, PhD (Media Studies), MLIS: Director of Libraries
- Susan Hyland, MLS: Assistant Vice-President and Associate Director of Libraries - National Security and Intelligence Studies Liaison
- Mustafa Abdelwahid, PhD (Public Policy and Administration), MLIS, LLM, MA (Political Science and International Development): Online Librarian - Political Science and International Affairs Liaison
- Kimberly Adams, MLS, MA (History), MA (TESL): Online Librarian - History and Military History Liaison
- Christy Cechman, MLIS, DC: Online Librarian - General Studies, Fire Science Management, and Space Studies Liaison
- Linda Cranston, MSLS, MA (Geography): Senior Online Librarian - Criminal Justice Liaison
- Priscilla Coulter, MLS, MS (Biology): Senior Online Librarian - Math and Sciences Liaison
- Susan Fingerman, MLIS: Online Librarian - Information Technology Liaison
- Maryelizabeth Gano, MLS, MBA: Online Librarian - Logistics and Hospitality Program Liaison
- Susan Gilroy, MLS, MEd, MPA: Online Librarian - Education Liaison
- Neville Grow, MSLS, MBA: Online Librarian - Business and Legal Studies Liaison
- Emily Harrel, RN, MLIS: Online Librarian - Information Technology and Nursing Liaison
- Judith Jablonski, PhD (Library and Information Science), MA (English and American Literature): Online Librarian - Humanities and Social Sciences Liaison
- Jeanette Moyer, MLIS: Online Librarian - Homeland Security Liaison
- Carole Nowicke, PhD (Library and Information Science): Online Librarian - Public Health and Sports Management Liaison
- Susan Sartory, MLS: Online Librarian - Education Liaison
- Marissa Smith, MLS: Senior Online Librarian - CampusGuides Manager and Social Science Liaison
- Christy Stevens, MLS, MA (English), MA (Women's Studies): Online Librarian - Information Literacy Coordinator and Humanities Liaison
- Wendy Veney, MLIS: Academic Services Librarian - Circulation and Interlibrary Loan
- Bradley J. Wiles, MLIS, MA (History): University Archivist and Special Collections Manager - Military Studies, Military Management, and Public History Liaison

Functional Specifications and Requirements
Allowing different levels of access to resources was the primary functional requirement in determining the appropriate platform for the portals – more specifically, allowing resources that require authentication credentials to reside alongside open resources to give students and faculty options in research and instruction materials, and librarians flexibility in type, format, and delivery. The SpringShare platform performs this function admirably, and in a way that does not require advanced programming or web design skills.
Portal Examples

College 100 Foundations of Online Learning Course Guide – http://apus.campusguides.com/COLL100

Press Coverage

- SpringShare Customer Spotlight: American Public University System
  http://springshare.com/spotlight/apus.html

User Documentation

Below is a chart showing recent data reflecting the growing use of the individual guides over the last three years. This growth corresponds to the rise in the number of guides created (approximately 800 as of January 2013), and, by extension, greater buy-in from institutional stakeholders.

![CampusGuides 3Q 2012 Hit Comparisons](chart.png)
**Nominator’s Statement**

In a time when traditional physical library reference and other services are declining, the American Public University System Online Library CampusGuides Program Portals are a thriving and vital component of the university’s globally-distributed instructional and research network. It is worthy of consideration for the Stanford Prize for Innovation in Research Libraries because it presents a model of collaboration where librarians play an essential role in the continuing development of online, asynchronous education. The Program Portals initiative also works as a case study in testing the functional capabilities and practical applications of particular web-based platform. There is a great deal to be learned from this experience, and the APUS Online Library hopes to share this with others as it move forward.

**Supporting Publications**


**Third Party Support**

In 2012 the APUS Online Library was recognized for their use of CampusGuides in support of research and instruction. In May, it competed in the international category of the IMS Global 2012 Learning Consortium’s Learning Impact competition held during their annual conference in Toronto and won the Gold Medal ([http://www.imsglobal.org/learningimpact2012/lia2012winners.html](http://www.imsglobal.org/learningimpact2012/lia2012winners.html)). In September, the Online Library also received Honorable Mention at the National University Technology Network (NUTN) Distance Education Innovation Awards in Kansas City ([http://www.nutn.org/network2012/default.htm](http://www.nutn.org/network2012/default.htm)).