

QUICK TIPS

Remember, don't attach documents in Microsoft Word format.

Many of your patrons can't open proprietary document formats like this (they don't own Word, Publisher, etc.), so be sure to convert *all* of your attached fliers or documents to PDF.

Want to have your contact form emailed to more than one person?

The contact form in your Web Kit can be sent to multiple recipients. Just email the addresses you want it to go to Laura Solomon at laura@oplin.org.



Stop putting out the “welcome mat”

The temptation is overwhelming. After all, libraries are friendly places, right? We wouldn't want our patrons to think they weren't welcome. It's so nice and friendly to put a big “Welcome to our library website!” heading at the top of the front page, right?

Sorry....no.

Remember, every square inch of your library's website is extremely valuable. Your library uses tax dollars to pay for it. It costs staff time (still resulting in spent tax dollars) to maintain it. In many cases, a patron will see your website before they ever see (and sometimes, instead of seeing) your building. Because that front page area is so critical, it's essential that your library use it wisely.

That space on the front page, above the fold,

is your library's equivalent to “Boardwalk” in the game of Monopoly. It's the single most valuable space on your website. This is where the most important announcements made by your library should go.

Typically, when we see “Welcome to our library's website,” we know we're looking at a library that doesn't know how to best utilize their front space. We recommend using that space for promoting library programs that you really want to rustle up an audience for. Levy information. Weather closings. Etcetera. That space is intended for things the library wants to promote that are truly noteworthy.

Here's the thing: if people *weren't* welcome on your library's website, you would have password-protected it, right? People are inherently welcome to your library's site. They don't need a literal, text-based welcome mat.

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Featured Module

Each issue we'll highlight a Drupal module (add-on) that you can add to your existing OPLIN Web Kit.

Site Map

This module provides a site map that gives visitors an overview of your site. It can also display the RSS feeds for all blogs and categories.

This module has been added by the following libraries:

- Cuyahoga Falls Library (forthcoming)
- Puskarich Public Library System

Interested in adding this module to your Website Kit? Contact OPLIN Support at support@oplin.org.

Need help?

You can reach OPLIN Support (and usually Laura, too) via our chat room (<http://support.oplin.org>)

Website Kit Documentation

Get the most recent documentation for your OPLIN Web Kit here.

(<http://www.oplin.org/content/website-kit-documentation>)



When you look at this library's website, the first thing that will likely catch your attention is the color; purple is considered somewhat unusual by many for a website. Yet Tuscarawas County Public Library's branding is definitely purple.

It was important to both TCPL and to OPLIN that the site reflect the library's branding, not only in color, but that it play off of the library's very powerful tagline, "Live. Learn. Grow." The resulting design plays off the "Grow" piece, placing sunbeams behind the people, showing that the library helps people grow much in the same way that the sun helps plants to grow.

It's not just the color and header graphic, however, that make this site stand out. TCPL also made the decision to limit, somewhat, what went on the sidebars. This keeps

the site from being too cluttered. TCPL also decided to include direct links to their branches in the footer of the site, helping to promote their other locations.

Tuscarawas also did some creative labeling of its events. It codes each event with the abbreviation for the branch the event is located at. This simplifies getting the information for their online visitors.

FOCUS ON Tuscarawas County Public Library

This county library system's site gets lots of compliments, and for good reason.

TCPL also uses some good practices when creating content for their site. These include the use of real photos and book covers, rather than using clipart. It also includes comprehensive descriptions of the various research databases available through the library.

You can see the TCPL Dynamic Website Kit at: <http://www.tusclibrary.org>



MAKE one thing BETTER

Do one thing to make your library site better: ALT tags

One of the simplest things you can do to increase the accessibility of your library's website is to remember to fill in the ALT tag.

When you first got your shiny new Web Kit from OPLIN, you might recall that some of the documents that came with it were printouts of Section 508 and WAI validations: tests that were run against your library's site to ensure that it met the basic requirements to be accessible to those visitors using voice-reading software to access your site.

You may also remember that one of the things you learned to do during training was to upload an image directly into your stories and posts. At the time, mention was likely made of the "Alternative text" field, and how it wasn't mandatory, but should be. We'd still like you to think of it that way.

Without some kind of specified alternative text for your images, voice readers are at a loss to give any information to blind or visually impaired visitors. They are left to guess what that image might be or be saying; the voice reader will

only tell them it's an image. They'll get no other information to help them understand the context of what they are viewing.

Keep your site accessible—make it a habit to always put something in the "Alternative text" field when you upload or use a picture of any kind.

For more info and tips about writing good ALT tags, try

[Alt Text: Describing Your Images for Better Web Accessibility \(http://bit.ly/DhIsf\)](http://bit.ly/DhIsf)

Which libraries have a Webkit underway?

- Bexley Public Library
- Brown County Public Library
- Clark County Public Library
- Conneaut Public Library
- Cuyahoga Falls Public Library
- Homer Public Library
- Ida Rupp Public Library
- Loudonville Public Library
- Monroe County Public Library
- Williams County Public Library
- Wood County Public Library

Q&A : Can calendars be color-coded?

Q: Is it possible to color-code calendars so that certain locations/ages/categories each have a specified colored stripe at the top?

A: Actually, yes! This is a new kind of customization that we will be introducing in January 2011. You'll be able to specify color-coding for up to ten (10) different taxonomy terms. If you'd like to get on the waiting list for this customization and/or get a quote, contact Laura Solomon at (614) 728-5252 or email her at laura@oplin.org.

Interested or want to learn more? Or, have an entirely different question about your Webkit? Email laura@oplin.org.

