

University of Tennessee College of Law

Legal Scholarship Repository: A Service of the Joel A. Katz Law Library

UTK Law Faculty Publications

9-2014

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW Two perspectives on implementing LibGuides at an academic and a public law library

Shamika Dalton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.law.utk.edu/utklaw_facpubs



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Law Commons](#)



DATE DOWNLOADED: Fri Mar 25 15:02:08 2022

SOURCE: Content Downloaded from [HeinOnline](https://heinonline.org)

Citations:

Bluebook 21st ed.

Danielle A. Becker & Shamika D. Dalton, *Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library*, 19 *AALL Spectrum* 30 (2014).

ALWD 7th ed.

Danielle A. Becker & Shamika D. Dalton, *Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library*, 19 *AALL Spectrum* 30 (2014).

APA 7th ed.

Becker, D. A., & Dalton, S. D. (2014). *Out with the old, in with the new: two perspectives on implementing libguides at an academic and public law library*. *AALL Spectrum*, 19(1), 30-31.

Chicago 17th ed.

Danielle A. Becker; Shamika D. Dalton, "Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library," *AALL Spectrum* 19, no. 1 (September/October 2014): 30-31

McGill Guide 9th ed.

Danielle A. Becker & Shamika D. Dalton, "Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library" (2014) 19:1 *AALL Spectrum* 30.

AGLC 4th ed.

Danielle A. Becker and Shamika D. Dalton, 'Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library' (2014) 19(1) *AALL Spectrum* 30

MLA 9th ed.

Becker, Danielle A., and Shamika D. Dalton. "Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library." *AALL Spectrum*, vol. 19, no. 1, September/October 2014, pp. 30-31. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.

Danielle A. Becker & Shamika D. Dalton, 'Out with the Old, in with the New: Two Perspectives on Implementing LibGuides at an Academic and a Public Law Library' (2014) 19 *AALL Spectrum* 30

Provided by:

University of Tennessee College of Law Joel A. Katz Law Library

-- Your use of this HeinOnline PDF indicates your acceptance of HeinOnline's Terms and Conditions of the license agreement available at <https://heinonline.org/HOL/License>

-- The search text of this PDF is generated from uncorrected OCR text.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

Two perspectives on implementing LibGuides at an academic and a public law library

By Danielle A. Becker and Shamika D. Dalton

LibGuides can be a great tool, as many librarians in various types of institutions will testify. But there are some considerations for their use. Following, Danielle A. Becker, electronic services librarian at Minnesota State Law Library, and Shamika D. Dalton, assistant university librarian at University of Florida Levin College of Law, provide their insights on working with the tool in their respective institutions.



Before (left) and after University of Florida Levin College of Law's LibGuides makeover

Creating Your New Look is Easy!

Becker: The look of Minnesota State Law Library's website was stuck in the late '90s, and something had to be done to make an immediate change. As the electronic services librarian, it was my charge to tame the matted mess that the Legal Topics Guides had become. Our Legal Topics pages get a lot of use by the public and our reference librarians, so untangling the mess was critical. Having worked with LibGuides in my previous position at an academic library, I knew it was the perfect tool for the job.

Dalton: While LibGuides are a great tool to disseminate information globally, it takes a lot of time to create and maintain them. With the many hats that we wear on a daily basis, it is easy to "set it and forget it." Here at the Legal Information Center, we were guilty of just that. In December 2012, I volunteered to lead a project to revamp our LibGuides. Our goal was to make our LibGuides more accessible. To do so, we set out to determine which guides could be deleted or consolidated, organize the information to make it more user-friendly, and find ways to market our LibGuides.

Starting the Makeover

Becker: I contacted Springshare and got a free trial to show my colleagues how simple LibGuides is to use and how professional the results are. Some of the features of LibGuides that helped make our decision to begin a subscription were:

- No downloads. LibGuides is a CMS, so all the user has to do is sign in with a username and password, from any computer or mobile device, and he or she can use it anywhere. Content creators are assigned usernames and passwords so that multiple people can contribute to the site simultaneously.

- WYSIWYC (what you see is what you get) menus. Customizing the look and feel of the pages is user friendly. Users can upload multimedia content like chat widgets, videos, audio, and more. It also integrates with social media by enabling you to make your guide available on Facebook, post guide updates on Twitter, and link right back in the guide using the appropriate icons (provided).
- Mobile friendly. It uses responsive design so it looks good on desktops, laptops, and all mobile devices.
- User statistics. The basic subscription runs reports using date parameters providing results on how many visits each guide and each page within a guide gets.

After a month trial we were convinced and began our basic subscription. The next phase of the project was moving our current Legal Topics pages into LibGuides.

Dalton: My first line of business was to advocate for our library to purchase our own LibGuide platform to increase accessibility for our users. Until now, our LibGuides were a part of the University of Florida's LibGuide platform. Our guides were hidden among hundreds of research guides from numerous disciplines, making it hard for our users to find them. I met with UF's LibGuide administrator to find out how we could purchase our own platform and the amount of work required to set everything up. I presented the information to the law librarians and they were on board, so we purchased our own platform in June 2013. Springshare was able to transfer our guides from the old platform to the new platform with little effort on our part. Now, with our own platform, our research guides will be easily accessible to our users.

Ditch the Old Pages

Becker: When I began the migration, I went through the directory page of the Legal Topics and decided which guides to combine and which to delete. Then, as I created the new

LibGuides, I weeded the information from the Legal Topics pages as I went.

Dalton: With a fresh start on a new platform, it was the perfect time to weed through our guides and determine if some could be deleted or consolidated. We had approximately 50 guides, which may not seem like a lot, but the maintenance can be time consuming. After meeting with each librarian, we chose to delete guides such as Using Shepard's Citators because no one updates case law in print anymore. We chose to consolidate guides that were about similar subjects. For example, we created one comprehensive guide for federal legislative history instead of having separate guides for committee briefs, committee resolutions, and committee debates.

Designing Your New Look

Becker: I used information architecture as my guide through the entire migration. If each guide used the same structure, it eliminated the need to rethink my design each time I migrated a guide. I created a basic template that all of the guides were going to follow using these tabs: Home, Basics, Forms, Publications, and Legal Help. Each page has a set of boxes that will be consistent throughout all of the LibGuides. For example, the Home page will always have a box that links back to the Legal Topics Directory, a Contact Us box, Minnesota State Law Services, and a Disclaimer box at the bottom. I also created a style sheet that established the fonts, color schemas, terminology, line spacing, and box ordering. Whenever possible I tried to reuse boxes by using the "Reuse Existing Box" feature, which gives the designer the option to link to boxes that exist on other LibGuides. This feature is also useful when making universal changes as edits that happen in the parent box flow to all the children boxes throughout the site. We reuse our Disclaimer box, as that language changes from time to time.



Before (above) and after Minnesota State Law Library's LibGuides makeover

Dalton: There is no *best* way to organize information on a LibGuide, but we focused on three issues to start:

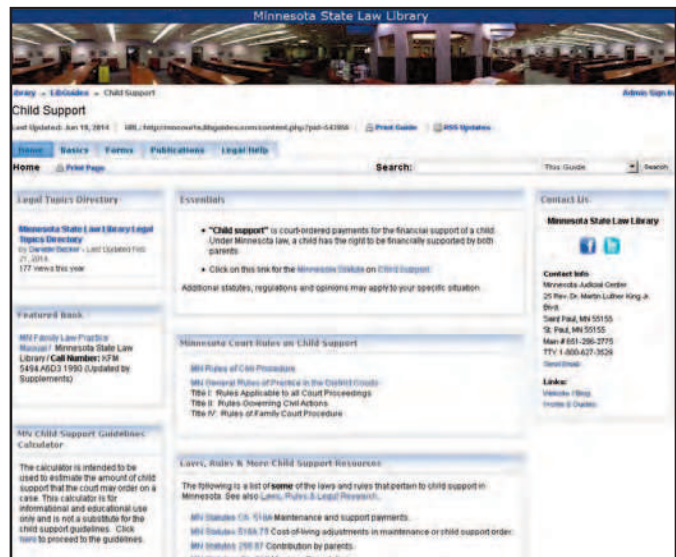
- **Simplicity.** One of the main issues with our guides was the overwhelming amount of information we put on each guide. Our guides were organized in paragraph format with several tabs per guide making the information overwhelming to our users. So we cut down on the text and included more direct links to resources. This also cuts down on the amount of scrolling users will have to do.
- **Consistency.** As a team, we agreed on Arial 12-point font, an orange background, and dark blue tab colors for all of our guides. We also agreed that each guide would consist of print resources and online sources, Lexis, Westlaw, Bloomberg Law, and free or low-cost databases, if applicable.
- **Ease.** We created five different ways for users to find the guide they are looking for on the homepage. We have a table of contents with all of our guides listed, a general keyword search box, and a LibGuides CMS Browse Box, a three-column box that allows users to find our guides by group, librarian, or subject.

Springy News, an online newsletter published by Springshare, provides tips and best practices to help you create an effective LibGuide.

Show Off Your New Style!

Becker: The Minnesota State Law Library reports to the Minnesota Supreme Court, so when the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court specifically requested we put more appellate resources online, we jumped at the directive. Unfortunately, our current website didn't support that effort, so we had to come up with another way to make appellate resources available. The goal was to cull all relevant court resources into one place, creating a "one-stop shop." Using the LibGuides platform, we accomplished that goal. Since then, the Appellate LibGuide has been included in the appellate court presentation at the statewide bar association meeting. Every judicial district in the state was given a demonstration on it, and the feedback has been fantastic. The exposure has since grown; with other websites linking to this LibGuide (among others we've created since this first one) our usage statistics are steadily growing.

Dalton: We try to introduce our new platform at every chance we get. During the 1L library orientation, we show students where they can find LibGuides that we think will be useful to them in their first year, in particular, our Student Printing LibGuide and 1L Survival Guide. In our 1L Legal Research course, some librarians assign students to review a particular LibGuide as a part of class preparation. To reach 2Ls, 3Ls, and undergrads, we create LibGuides to help them with their research papers and introduce them during our guest lectures. We also use LibGuides to archive programs we present at conferences. This gives attendees and people who are unable to attend an opportunity to access the material we discussed and links to the resources we used during the program. Hopefully,



when users visit our platform, they will browse through and see all of the guides we have to offer. ■

Danielle A. Becker
(Danielle.Becker@courts.state.mn.us), Electronic Services Librarian, Minnesota State Law Library, St. Paul

Shamika D. Dalton
(sdalton@law.ufl.edu), Assistant University Librarian, University of Florida Levin College of Law, Gainesville