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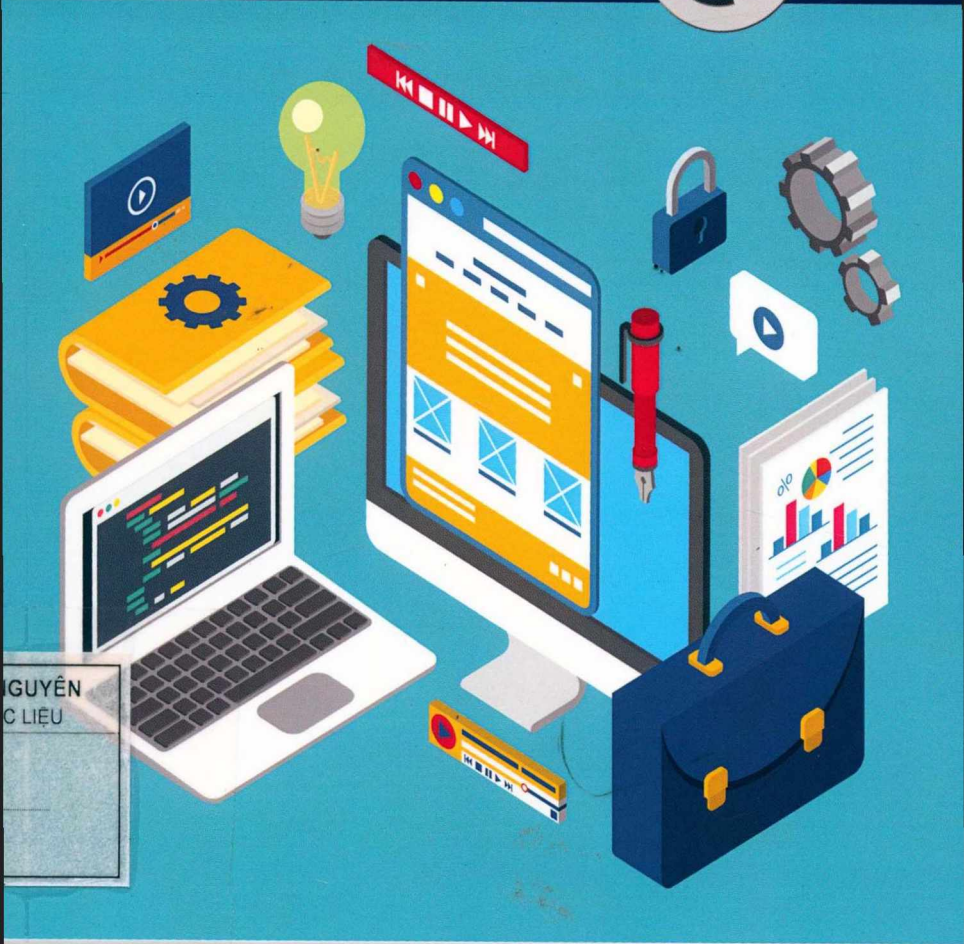
REDESIGN Your Library Website



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Stacy Ann Wittmann and Julianne T. Stam

REDESIGN YOUR LIBRARY WEBSITE

Stacy Ann Wittmann
and Julianne T. Stam

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Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado

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Stacy:

To Martha and Robert Wittmann, who reared me to believe that there is great empathy in the act of listening, and great wisdom to be found in the act of reading.

To Nora, I'm so glad you're my person.

To Julie, my partner in crime, marketing marvel, and dear friend, who encourages me to not be afraid to ask the tough questions and to expect an answer.

Julie:

To my husband Joe, who has been telling me for years that I should write a book, and who ended up having to put up with me doing only that for weeks on end. Thank you for always taking up the slack and for encouraging me in everything that I do.

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Preface

In October 2013, we gave a presentation at the Internet Librarian Conference in Monterey, California, on the redesign of our library website. Shortly after arriving back home, we received an e-mail from our editor, Barbara Ittner, suggesting that we write a proposal for a book based on our presentation and our website redesign experience.

We had decided to propose a presentation for the conference on the entire design process of a library website because that had been the presentation we were looking for when we attended the conference the previous year. When we were looking for information, we would have been very happy to have found a book that detailed the entire process of redesigning a library's website and all that it entailed. Barbara convinced us that others could benefit from our experience, and we submitted our proposal. It was accepted, and the result is this book that you hold in your hands.

We hope that you find this book to be a valuable resource as you embark on your website redesign. We would love to hear how you used what you learned here. Please feel free to contact us and let us know.

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Acknowledgments

While the two of us were the webmasters for Eisenhower Public Library District's website during the 2012–2013 redesign process, there are many Eisenhower staff members who participated in the process of designing and creating our website. When we say "we" did something in this book, we are most often speaking of our website committee and/or the staff members who worked on and continue to work on the library's website, not just the two of us. We wish to acknowledge all of their hard work and dedication to the project.

Special thanks go to Dan McPhillips, the current head of the reference department, who became one of the webmasters when Stacy became the library director, and Christopher Clark, web and graphic designer for the library. We appreciate their continued efforts to ensure that our virtual presence is an accurate representation of our organization.

Thank you.

Stacy Wittmann and Julie Stam

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Introduction

When we set out to manage the redesign of our library's website, we did what most information professionals do—we started doing research. We searched for articles, books, and people who could help us determine where to begin, what sort of timeline to establish, what sort of budget to establish, and how to determine content and design. While we found a couple of extremely valuable resources, there were not a lot of guides out there for people like us, librarians who were put in charge of redesigning a public library website who had very little experience with the process. This book is intended to serve as at least a starting point for the process, a map that lays out your options and points out the potential pitfalls and landmarks along the way.

One of the things we hear all the time from people who have no idea what it means to work in a library is, "you must get to read all the time." The likelihood is that if you are reading this book, you are a librarian and you know the sad truth. Librarians don't actually get a lot of time to read, at least not to read library-related materials.

One of our jobs in writing this introduction is to tell you why you should take precious time out of your day to actually read this book. Allow us to make the following case:

1. It's short. We know this is not a fascinating topic for most people, especially those people who are not web designers or architects by trade (which is why we assume you picked this book up in the first place). Therefore, we have done our best to make it as succinct and as helpful as possible. You are our people, we understand the limitations on your time, and we would rather you spend your non-work time relaxing with a beverage of your choice.
2. It not only lays out your options but also explains the time and budget commitments you will be making by deciding to redesign your website, as well as why you should do it. Again, we know your time is short and the