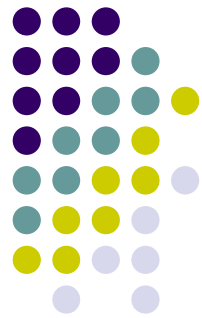# Targeting Library Websites to Specific User Groups

David King
Web Project Manager
Kansas City Public Library

daweed.blogspot.com

## Today's Session…

- What is Web Targeting
- Finding an Audience
- How to introduce targeted groups to a focused website
- What to put on a targeted website
- Examples

Today, I'm talking about **Targeting Library Websites to Specific User Groups**.

- I will define **Web Targeting**
- Discuss ways of **finding an audience** to target with your website
- **How to introduce targeted groups to a focused website** or focused pages on a website
- **What to place on a targeted webpage** or website
- And we'll look at some **examples** of targeted library website pages.

## What is Web Targeting?

- aka **marketing**
- Or **"niche marketing"** = marketing and promoting a product to a **specific audience**
- **Web Targeting:** providing information that specific audiences want to find
- … or that **You** want to provide, and hope that someone is interested in it…

For starters, let's first **define Web Targeting**

- In the corporate world, it might be known as **marketing**
- Or **Niche Marketing**… which would be…

So, if you take our definition of niche marketing and use it for a website, you get:

- **Web Targeting**…  which is **Providing information**, on your website, **that specific audiences are interested in**
- **… or that You want to provide, and hope they're interested in…**
- **Example being** – new science database to science majors, new genealogy information aimed at seniors.

**What's on a Targeted site? Answer #1**

- Your stuff
- Topic-specific books (new book lists)
- Databases on topic
- Or, how to use a database to find appropriate information
- New and focused videos/DVDs
- Events – yours and other local but related events

Now that we know **WHAT web targeting is, what do we put on a targeted page?**

**I have 4 answers – Answer #1 is:**

**Your Stuff** – targeted to a specific audience. Here are some examples of "Your Stuff":

- **topic-specific books** (new book lists)
- **Databases** that are **focused** on a **narrow topic**, or can be used for that topic
- **Tipsheet on how to use a database** to find topic-specific information
- New and focused **videos/DVDs**
- **Events** – yours and other **local but related** events
- Etc…

**Answer #2:**

I can also say **It Depends** – it depends on who your **targeted groups** are.

For example:

- **Seniors** - genealogy, PC basics, health issues, etc.

- **Twenty-something singles** - current events, social stuff

- **Another one – faculty focused on a specific field of study**

But all of these targeted pages or sites will be:

- made up of information found in your collection,

- or information you have created, using material in your collection,

- that you can push to a niche audience

## What's on a targeted site? Answer #3

- Communication
- Find out how your targeted audience communicates, and do that
  - Comments area
  - Chat/im services
  - Email
  - Blogs and RSS
  - Phone Number, snail mail address – don't forget those!

**Answer #3:**

**Communication**:

- this is **you**, communicating with **library customers**, about **what you can offer them.**
- It's you saying "hey, look what we have"
- It's also you, **Connecting with library customers**… in many different ways.

In order for you to connect with your library customers using the web (since this presentation is about web targeting):

- you need to find out how your targeted audience communicates
- and then **do that!**

## What's on a targeted site? Answer #4

- Update content often
- Make sure staff are assigned to do this (or it won't happen)
- Get staff who are excited about the project
- Get staff who understand the subject

**Answer #4? New, fresh information!** Why would you revisit a page if the information never changes? If the same 20 books are listed, and you've read all those, why would you want to revisit the page?

If you create targeted information, please, please, please…

- **Update it often**
- **This is extremely important if you want to have a dynamic, and ReVisited, website.**

**Also make sure you have staff buy-in –** otherwise nothing will ever be updated. So get staff who are

- excited about the project
- and who understand how to make the project successful

**Finding an Audience**

- Might have built in targets -
  - Look in your mission statement
  - Collection Development Policy
- What physical departments exist?
- Focus groups & surveys:
  - Find out if a potential group wants a focus
  - What they want the focus to be

**OK, now we know:**

- What targeting a website is

- What to put on a targeted website

So let's move on to **finding an audience** for our targeted website.

**Built-in targets:**

- Mission statement, other policies – might have **targets built in** that you've never really focused on

- Obvious ones are kids, teens, academic subjects

- Others are less obvious (some examples):

  - o Freshman experience programs – is there a campus push?

  - o Do you have a push for getting 20-somethings into the library?

**Physical departments:** youth services… outreach… business reference…. Local history… etc.

Or simply **Go Ask** with a **focus group or surveys**

**Finding an Audience**

- Ask Patrons
  - When they check out books
  - When they attend an event
- Local competitors - what do other local library websites focus on?

## Ask patrons:

- asking can be an informal way of doing a survey

- Ask what customers want when they come to you.

## Check out other area library websites:

- what are they focusing on?

- Sort of the same idea as when Lowe's builds right by a Home Depot, or when Burger King builds next door to McDonald's...

## Use Web Statistics

- Hunt for trends
- Entry and exit pages - pages they've bookmarked or found through search engines
- Browsers and platforms
  - If they read blogs, if they use a mobile/handheld browser
  - How techie & mobile they are
  - Possible audience right there…

You can also use your website statistics software to help hunt for a group to focus on.

Basically, when doing this, you're **hunting for trends**….

## Use Web Statistics

- Search phrases and keywords
- Shows what customers are searching for
- Example
- Other stats
  - We track popular URLs
  - We track popular Subject Guides
  - Popular subjects from your ILS?

**Search phrases and keywords**

- **shows what stuff people are looking for** on your website

- you can get some good ideas from these searches, especially if there's an ongoing trend

**Here's an example of statistics** from a post on my blog…. You might find it useful…

**Other Stats:**

If you're building a new website or new parts to your site, also build simple counting tools – something that keeps track of the number of times someone has hit a certain database entry for a weblink.

**Introduce the Audience to a Targeted Website**

- Normal Advertising
- Interactive Marketing

**Last part - we now understand:**

- What targeting a website is

- What to put on a targeted website

- How to find an audience

So what's left?

**Introducing the audience to the targeted information!**

Two ways to do this (probably more, but these are the ones I thought of)

**"Normal" Advertising**

- Flyers and bookmarks
- Direct mailings to local groups
- Cooperative linking on a focused website
- Community connections - schools, businesses, non-profits, coffee shop

**Flyers and bookmarks**

- **Bookmarks** with **focused lists** of books and videos that **also mention the page's URL**, with a "find out more here" tagline

- **Relevant flyers** that **advertise** the targeted pages

- Put them by the **circ desk**, and **pass them out** at programs

**Do some direct mailings to local groups**

- **Pass them out** to all freshmen (that freshman experience thing)

- **Mail** genealogy groups your genealogy info – even offer to speak at one of their events, and heavily mention your targeted site

**Cooperative linking on a focused website**

**Community connections - schools, businesses, non-profits, coffee shop**

Basically, **use every way you can think of** to push your info out to your targeted audience

## Interactive Advertising

- Email and RSS
- Listservs/chatrooms for book clubs
- Customer comments and suggestions
- Give them a reason to come back

**Email and RSS:**

- **Great ways to push info out** once the audience is established.

- Plus, RSS feeds can be found in search engines and have been known to circulate amongst people who share common interests – "hey Joe, I found this great feed from the library, of all places…"

- Also great for **announcing new resources or services**, as well as **reminders of upcoming events**

**With email** – remember to ask for customer's email when they sign up for library cards or attend events – if they give it to you, you can use it!

## Examples

- Kansas City Public Library subject guides
- Phoenix Public Library's Senior Living site
- academic topic guides