

# Creation of a Web list for clinical disciplines

## A step-by-step account of the "Webliography" process

by Jody H. Mathias

**W**or-Wic Community College's mission is succinctly stated in our motto: "Training local people for local jobs." To this end, the college offers a variety of associate degrees and certificates, many of which reflect the needs of the local service and industrial community. The nursing program and the radiologic technologist (rad tech) degree offer the college's media center the greatest challenge in its need for accurate, technical information in electronic format.

### Some background

The media center at Wor-Wic is an entirely electronic research collection for use by enrolled students, faculty and staff, as well as students from colleges and universities with which Wor-Wic has cooperative relationships. The center is also available to the community-at-large and the facility is open seven days a week. The facility has 20 workstations, which access subscription databases and the Internet (using Netscape Navigator). Other applications, such as word processing, accounting/spreadsheets, desktop publishing and tutorials, are available in the college's Open Computer Lab.

The media center's role is as an academic research facility and its database selections reflect that mission. The staff consists of a director and two part-time librarians (all with

MLS degrees), a secretary, and student assistants. A librarian is on duty at all times and is supported by a very able staff, each of whom are trained in the functionality of the databases and Netscape Navigator. Virtually all material is available for printing at no charge (at the present time); the printouts are created via networked laser printers. The Wor-Wic students have reciprocal borrowing privileges at Salisbury State University's Blackwell Library and the Frederick Douglass Library at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore's campus.

### Identifying the need

In consultation with the nursing faculty in particular, the director of the media center has searched for a subscription database that would meet both the research needs and the technical level of the nursing students, along with the normal criteria for accessing any subscription (cost, functionality, speed, format). As of the fall 1997 semester, an appropriate database had not been identified. Though a trial subscription to a nursing database collection was scheduled for the spring 1998 semester, the staff was still confronted each day with meeting the short-term needs of the students.

After a part-time librarian attended a workshop concerning consumer health resources

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on the Internet, the professional staff saw this as a springboard for creating a Web page for use primarily by its own students, and began to cull through what was available on the Internet. Since consumer health needs are different from those of clinicians and technologists, a simple capturing of the list that was created for the workshop was not the total solution.

## Design and production

Web page design and production began in December 1997. While the college had purchased Microsoft FrontPage for use in updating the college's homepage, the media center decided to use Netscape Navigator Gold's Web Page Wizard, available at no charge on the Internet. It was easy to use, and since the Media Center's browser of choice is Netscape Navigator, it seemed a natural choice. The templates provided in their package allowed for a quick start to the production.

Identifying sites for inclusion was the most time-consuming of the tasks involved in the entire process. Cecilia Durkin, of HealthLINK Information Systems, who conducted the workshop mentioned earlier, created a bookmark disk for workshop attendees. The Media Center librarians visited each of the 130-plus sites on this list. A paper list of each of the sites included in the bookmark file was created for perusal by the nursing and rad tech faculty. However, those with value only to consumers were rejected by the librarian for inclusion in the Web page. It was necessary to keep the size of the page to a manageable level, for obvious reasons. The goal was to provide quick, accurate access to useful sites, not a comprehensive list of all that is available in the vast online world. While a formal selection criteria document for the sites to be included in this webliography was not created (primarily due to the timely nature of the need), the following criteria were informally used:

- currency of information;
- authority of authoring organization;
- availability of full-text documents;

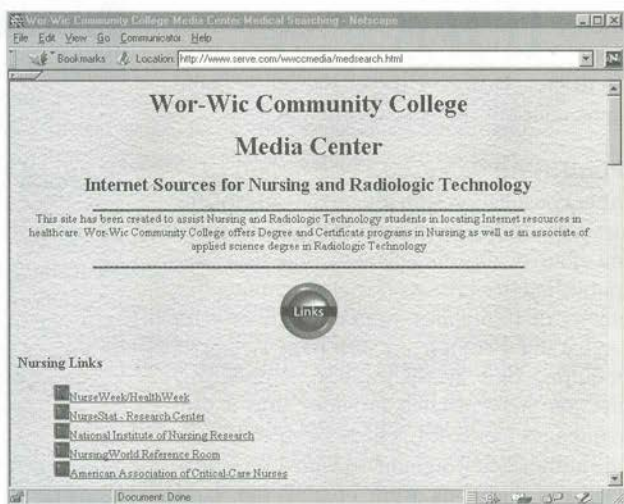
- applicability to sample assignments; and
- ease of use of site.

In addition, local resources (both for information and jobs) had to be identified for inclusion.

Graphics and backgrounds were retrieved at no cost through various services on the Internet. The entire production process took three months, with a holiday break of four weeks. All work was done by a part-time librarian, working 18 hours per week, maintaining reference responsibilities throughout the process.

## Choosing a Web host

Wor-Wic does not maintain its own server, so a Web host had to be chosen. The initial desire was to use a local provider, ostensibly for ease of communication. However, after doing research on how to choose a Web host, and numerous failed attempts to reach a representative from our major local Internet Ser-



vice Provider, a nonlocal host was chosen and the page was uploaded at the end of February 1998. A very valuable tool for choosing a Webhost is published by Sumo, Inc. It is *The Ultimate Web Host List*, which included both a list of the top 25 hosts (with impressive criteria), and a series of articles called "Finding an Internet Presence Provider." Some of the providers offer nonprofit rates, and others have reasonably priced commercial rates. Be aware of the total cost and take the time to read the entire set of articles before making a decision.

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Having a unique domain name was not important to the media center. This saved the obligatory \$100 InterNic fee, assessed by the government when a new domain name is registered. My main concern was that the server had a good track record of little downtime, ease and speed of publishing, and, needless to say, cost. It was also important to have the capability of updating the page as the need arose (as it did within the first two weeks!) without incurring great obstacles. Since the page is for use as an academic tool, not as a public relations tool, it was not added as an adjunct to the college's homepage, though a link from the homepage to the site could easily be accomplished if the college so desires. However, the media center maintains editorial control over the page.

### **Publishing**

After consultation with the media director, the associate dean of general education, and a member of the nursing staff, the page was published from the workroom computer in a matter of 15 minutes. Netscape's process for uploading a completed Web page is simple, requiring only an ftp location, supplied by the Internet Presence Provider, and a user name and password, which are specified by the author when signing on with a Web host. Desktop shortcuts were created the same evening on each of the 20 workstations, and students immediately had access to the information. Since the initial publication, additional sites have been identified for the rad tech students, which have been added with ease.

### **The Web's potential**

The purpose of the site was to provide the students with information necessary to complete their assignments with accurate information. It is not seen as a replacement for a commercially produced academic database, but as a resource that fills a particular need at a particular time. Its value is no less because

of this. Casting a wide net, as many commercial databases must do, can present its own set of problems. This effort had a narrow focus, but a crucial one within the institution. The media center librarians and the faculty will regularly monitor the need for this resource, amend it as necessary, and replace it with other tools if they more appropriately meet the needs of the students.

Librarians have always compiled topical lists of resources. The technology has changed, but the spirit has not. Locating and making information available, which is appropriate to the task, has always been our mission, and the staff sees this as simply another medium in which to function. The Webliography was very well received and plans are being discussed for another page for the electronic engineering technology students.

### **Useful links**

- **Wor-Wic Community College Internet Resources for Nursing and Radiologic Technology:** <http://www.serve.com/wccmedia/medsearch.html>
- **Wor-Wic Community College:** <http://www.intercom.net/local/school/worwic>
- **Netscape Page Wizard for Netscape Composer and Netscape Navigator Gold:** [http://search.netscape.com/uk/home/gold3.0\\_wizard.html](http://search.netscape.com/uk/home/gold3.0_wizard.html)
- **The Ultimate Web Host List:** <http://www.webhostlist.com/screens/toplists/main.asp>
- **Microsoft FrontPage:** <http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/>
- **Finding an Internet Presence Provider:** <http://www.webhostlist.com/screens/newsstand/findhost1.asp>
- **CyberNet Design:** <http://www.cybernet-design.com/>
- **Cool Graphics on the Web:** <http://little.fishnet.net/~gini/cool/>
- **Creating Web Pages:** <http://pw2.netcom.com/~alda/create.html>
- **Yahoo!** Use categories: Computers and Internet, Internet, World Wide Web, Page Design and Layout, Graphics—<http://www.yahoo.com/> ■

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