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AUTHOR   Bolt, Nancy M.
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ABSTRACT
        This paper is an analysis of Intranets and Extranets at
selected state libraries in the United States. The paper does not review
World Wide Web sites designed for use by the general public; rather, it
focuses on Web sites designed and delivered by the state library to a
targeted audience, typically state government employees, state library
employees, or the library community. The author sent an electronic message to
all state libraries, providing a definition of both an Intranet and an
Extranet, and asked if any states managed or were part of an Intranet or
Extranet whose URL could be shared. Intranets and/or Extranets of the state
libraries in Alaska, Colorado, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah were
examined and analyzed in four basic areas: organizational placement of the
Web site; content of the Web site (both Intranet and Extranet); a critique of
the site design for ease of use and navigation; and observations and
recommendations for those designing Intranets and Extranets. Two tables
present comparisons of content by state for Intranets and Extranets. (MES)

IIIII IFLANET

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Intranets and Extranets at State Libraries in The United States

Nancy M. Bolt
Colorado State Library,
Colorado Department of Education
Denver, Colorado, USA

Paper

Introduction:

This paper is an analysis of Intranets and Extranets at selected State Libraries in the United States. Each of the 50 states in the United States has a State Library. Most State Libraries have public Web sites about their services. This paper does not review Web sites designed for use by the general public. Rather, this paper focuses on Web sites designed and delivered by the State Library to a targeted audience, typically state government employees, State Library employees, or the library community. Librarians designing Web sites might find these examples and analysis to be useful.

Definitions

This analysis begins by defining three types of Web sites: Internet, Extranet, and Intranet.

An Internet Web site is a site that is typically open to the general public and publicized as such. It is registered with and easy to find through standard Web search engines. The content of the Web site is designed to be useful to the general public.

An Extranet Web site is a site that is designed for a specific audience, but one outside of the State Library agency or the parent agency of the State Library . Of the State Library Extranets reviewed here, the target agency was either state government employees or the librarians throughout the state. In some cases, access to all or part of the Extranet was

password protected. In other cases, it was open to the public but not publicized, not registered with search engines, or the content not designed to be of use to the general public.

An Intranet Web site is a site that is designed for use by State Library employees or by the employees of the State Library's parent agency. Usually it is password protected and may contain proprietary information only of interest to employees, or needed to be safeguarded from non-employees.

Methodology

The author sent an electronic message to all State Libraries in the United States, providing a definition of both an Intranet and an Extranet, and asked if any states managed or were part of an Intra or Extranet whose URL could be shared. Seven State Libraries with such Web sites responded. One declined to participate because of the secure nature of the information on the Intranet. One agreed to participate by faxing upper level menus on the Intranet for analysis but not allowing full access. Two provided passwords for access to the Intranet. Three had Extranets open to the public despite the targeted nature of the information on the site.

The analysis below is in four basic areas: organizational placement of the Web site; content on the Web site (both Intranet and Extranet); and a critique of the site design for ease of use and navigation. Finally, there is a set of observations and recommendations for those designing Intra and Extranets.

Organizational Placement

Of the Intranets, one was designed completely by the State Library; one was designed completely by the parent agency with few links to library information; and one was designed primarily by the parent agency but with a significant State Library contribution.

Of the Extranets, three were designed completely by the State Library and three were designed primarily by the parent agency with a significant State Library contribution.

Table 1: Organizational Placement of Intranets and Extranets

State	State Library Development	Parent Agency Development	Parent Agency Development with Significant State Library Contribution
Intranet			
Colorado		X (password protected)	
Ohio	X (password protected)		
Utah			X (password protected)
Extranet			
Alaska	X		
Colorado			X
Oregon	X		
Rhode Island			X
Utah			X

Table 1 shows that, of the six state libraries whose Web sites were reviewed, three had Intranets and five had Extranets. All three of the Intranets were password protected in whole or part. All of the Extranets had open URLs that were not publicized to the public but rather to the targeted population. Some had specific, services that were password protected.

Content

The author analyzed the content on both the Intranets and the Extranets.

INTRANETS

Table 2 analyzes the content of the Intranets. Only three of the six libraries analyzed had Intranets, Colorado, Ohio, and Utah. Colorado and Utah were part of the Intranet for their parent agency: the Colorado Department of Education for Colorado, and the Department of Community and Economic Development for Utah. In the case where the State Library's Intranet was part of the parent agency, the analysis focused on library information, rather than information provided by the parent agency.

The Ohio State Library's Intranet was devoted entirely to information of use to State Library employees. In Colorado, the only information on the parent agency's web site was an Interlibrary Loan form. In Utah, the information was designed for parent agency employees about the services available from the State Library.

Table 2: Comparison of Intranet Content

Content Ara	Colorado	Ohio	Utah
ILL Forms	x		
Information on State Library move to a new location		An FAQ on a move to a new building, message from the State Librarian; street map; staff concerns; crime reports from new area; time line; rumors, myths, and hoaxes;	
Job openings at the State Library		professional and non-professional	
Training opportunities		x	
On-line help for computer system		including access, e-mail, and printing of the local area network	
Information on OPAC	Link to state network	Back-up, problems, patron authentication,	
Employee newsletter		x	
Planning documents		x	
Benefits and employee policies		x	
State publications	X		
Business Information and Research Services			On Intranet and available on Internet site
Utah Facts Book			On Intranet and available on Internet site
IAC Search Bank			Magazines, reference books, and newspapers available on line
Selected Internet Resources			x
State Library basic services			x
News Articles			Media articles about the parent organization

EXTRANETS

There was considerably more information available on the library Extranets. These sites were aimed at one of two audiences: the library community or state government workers.

Alaska

Alaska has two Extranets, one for state government and one for the library community. In both cases, access to the Extranet is on an Internet menu but to use the services requires registration with the State Library and a password. One menu item on the State Library's Web site is "Services to State Government." These services include:

- In-depth reference and research services
- Daily tracking of federal legislation and regulations
- Online computer searching, half of the databases with full text (including testimonials!)
- Publications , including a newsletter, current topics, resource guides, and speech preparation materials
- Current Awareness Services
- Collections, including state and federal documents, historical collections, periodicals, books
- Tours
- Electronic Interlibrary Loan (ILL)
- Electronic reference question service
- Electronic publications ordering service
- Electronic table of contents service , available for 230 periodicals

To access the services, a state employee must submit his/her password on the electronic request forms.

The Extranet for the library community is also accessible from the State Library's Web site. Most of this information is available free to the public although it is of most interest to the library community. The two password protected services are e-mail/Internet service and access to commercial databases paid for with state funds. The e-mail and First Search services include information on how librarians can set up an account. The other commercial databases included a search box. No password was required, but attempts to do a search were not successful.

A primary distinction between the two Extranets is that one offers services that the State Library will perform for government employees while the other describes services and resources that the Library community can use themselves.

One of the most unique resources available is speech preparation assistance to state government employees.

Colorado

The Colorado Extranet is aimed at the library community in Colorado. It can be accessed both through the public Web site of the Colorado Department of Education and through the public Web site of the Access Colorado Library and Information Network (ACLIN). The Resources for Librarians link leads to resources designed to be of specific help to local libraries. Because the State Library is part of the Department of Education with a strong, specific commitment to student achievement through educational standards and student assessment, a major link of Colorado's Intranet is to resources for school libraries. Colorado resources include:

- Jobline listing jobs in all types of libraries in Colorado
- E-rate link with the latest information on telecommunication discounts
- Instructions on applying for the Colorado Library Card reciprocal borrowing program
- Continuing Education calendar and form for submitting requests
- Country equalization grant program rules and regulations
- Library establishment documents to certify eligibility for grant programs

- Federal Library Service and Technology Act grant guidelines
- Library listservs in Colorado and subscription information
- Payment for Lending rules and reimbursement information
- Advisory group membership, mission, plans
- School library media services for school districts

A unique feature of this Web site is the emphasis on school library services and their contribution to student achievement and the public library establishment documents, that indicate when each public library was first established.

Oregon

Oregon's Intranet is aimed primarily at state government employees. Basic access is open, but the information is designed to be of interest to government employees. Some parts of the Web site are password protected and require that state government employees register with the State Library first. The Web site is called "State Library Work Smart: the information connection." It includes these resources:

- Commercial databases (password protected)
- Electronic tracking service for periodicals, Federal Register, and federal legislation (password protected)
- Dictionaries, including sign language, acronyms, foreign languages
- Encyclopedias
- Quick Reference, including associations, biographies, flags, world leaders, history, Oregon Blue Book, publications, grammar, maps, calendars, metric conversation, quotations, telephone books, state government travel information, currency, weather and road conditions
- Magazine and newspaper indexes, including Oregon, national, and international
- Article retriever (password protected) provides access to periodical articles
- Online library catalogs, links to library catalogs in Oregon and the nation
- Oregon Government Web Sites
- Subject list of Web resources, including links to Web sites in 26 subject areas
- Search engines and directories, including "how-to-use" directions for all search engines
  Other key links lead to "Ask a Librarian for Assistance" , "Register for a Password", and "Information Services for the State Government." These include:
- Reference service
- Books and magazine articles
- ILL forms
- TRAKsmart, the tracking service
- LISTsmart, listing all electronic mailing lists for the state
- Purchase materials, ways to suggest items for the library to buy
- Oregon Document Deposit Program, access to state government publications.

The Oregon site was one of the most comprehensive, easy to navigate sites reviewed. The information provided was extensive, thorough, and useful . While designed for government employees, the information would be useful to anyone. Detailed directions on search engines were particularly unique.

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island State Library is part of the Office of Library and Information Services. There is a general Web site for the office with a link to two Extranets. The first is to LoriPro, services for library staff. Much of this information is password protected. LoriPro is listed as "for the RHILINET library community." The other link is to Information and Research Services for Rhode Island State Government.

Information for the library profession includes:

- ILL and FirstSearch
- E-rate discounts
- Discussion group listings, moderated discussion groups on a variety of library topics, archived for easy access of past messages
- Calendar of library events including a form for submitting events for inclusion in the database and a form for registering for selected workshops
- Jobs available in Rhode Island libraries
- How to use LoriPro including user profiles, using an e-mail program, tips for navigating
- Connections to Rhode Island libraries, other bibliographic resources, and educational on-line resources
- Connections to government information
- Connections to the State Library's main Web page

Information for state government employees includes a listing of services with very brief descriptions and a link back to the home page. This is followed by a search request form that allows state employees to indicate which service is requested. While not password protected, the form does ask for the state agency identification, allowing state library staff to limit service to eligible users. There is also a link to four major Internet resources:

- Bibliographic resources including Amazon.com, Library of Congress and Massachusetts libraries (but not a link at this point to Rhode Island libraries)
- Dictionaries
- Search engine directory (but not instructions on use as in Oregon)
- Legal and other government resources, including links to Rhode Island library catalogs and state and local government information and associations
- Planning resources on the Web with links to planning Web sites for a variety of state agencies
- Rhode Island Government Information (also linked to in two areas above)

The most interesting and unique Web sites in Rhode Island were the Special Interest Discussion Groups and the Planning Resources on the Web

Utah

The Utah State Library is a part of the Utah Department of Community and Economic Development. It has an Extranet for the library community. It has been password protected in the past and is currently under redesign.

The Extranet includes the following links/services:

- Public library statistics
- Calendar of events, both when reports are due to the State Library and when meetings and training opportunities are scheduled
- Interlibrary loan request form and status reporting forms
- Utah State Library's catalog
- Books on tape, videos, Spanish language information
- Reference service request form for a search
- Youth services, summer reading program
- E-rate telecommunication discounts
- Grant information, both state and federal grants
- Professional development opportunities including library school programs and professional reading

- E-mail discussion listserv
- Publications
- Links to state and federal government publications
- Commercial databases (password protected)

Utah had several unique databases: the annotated list of professional resources; the list of Spanish language materials; and a children's book review database.

Comparison of Information Available on Extranets

Table 3 provides a comparison of the content of the state Web sites analyzed showing what is common and what is unique about the resources made available.

In general, on each Web site, there is a mix of state library developed materials and links to other Web sites.

Table 3: Comparison of Content on Extranets

Element	Alaska	Colorado	Oregon	Rhode Island	Utah
Target Audience	State Government (Gov) Lib. Community (Lib)	Library Community	Government Employees	State Government Library community (password protected)	Library community
Reference and research services	Description of service and form to request assistance (Gov)		Provided to government employees, (password protected)	For state government, request form available	Request form available
Tracking of federal legislation	Description of service; how to register Gov)		Password protected access		
Online computer searching	Description of service and form to request assistance (Gov)		Access to indexes for direct searching Password protected access	For state government	Request form available
Publications	Publications available (Gov)	Description of publications available			Description of publications available
Material for speeches	Description of service (Gov)				
Current Awareness service	Including Table of Contents		Password protected access		

	service for 230 periodicals (Gov)				
Collections	Catalog, databases, magazines, photographs (Gov)	Access to online library catalogs of other libraries	Access to online library catalogs of other libraries	Access to online library catalogs of other states	Access to the online library catalogs of other libraries
E-mail	Description of service and how to register for an e-mail account (lib)		E-mail lists for state employees to subscribe to	Available for the library community (password protected) with extensive information on how to use	E-mail list serve available for subscription
Commercial databases	Description of service and form for searching, includes FirstSearch		Description of 9 databases. Password protected,	Only First Search, available by password	
Specific resources for school libraries		Information literacy guidelines, impact of school libraries on student achievement.			Description of graduate media programs
Element	**Alaska**	**Colorado**	**Oregon**	**Rhode Island**	**Utah**
Advisory groups		Membership, mission, and activities of 3 main advisory groups			
Dictionaries			Sign language, foreign language, acronyms, searchable on-line	For state government under general reference	
Quick Reference			Biographies, encyclopedias, associations, world leaders, historic events, grammar, maps, currency exchange,		

			quotations, telephone books, state government travel information, weather		
Government Web sites		Links to State Government, state publications	Links to state government, state publications	Links to national, state, and local for both librarians and government workers	Links to state and federal resources
Subject access to the Web			List of 26 topics and links to Web sites in these topics		
Search engines and directories			Lists all the major search engines with instructions on how to search them	Lists major search engines with links to them	
ILL		Rules for reimbursement for net lenders	Form for submitting reque4sts	For librarians	Both request from and status reporting form
Purchase materials			Form to suggest materials for purchase		
E-rate information		Colorado information links to federal site		Rhode Island land and links to federal information	Information about Utah and links to federal information
Calendar of events, Con't Education		CE calendar with form for submission		CE calendar with form for submission and registration	When reports are due as well ac CE opportunities
Job line		Information about Colorado jobs for librarians		Information about Rhode Island jobs for librarians	
Special interest discussion				Archived by topic and date, for	

groups				librarians	
Element	**Alaska**	**Colorado**	**Oregon**	**Rhode Island**	**Utah**
Resources for planning				For government staff	
Library statistics		Both Colorado and other states statistics plus reports of research, all types of libraries			Both Utah and other states statistics for public libraries
Collections					Books on tape, Spanish materials, videos
Reciprocal Borrowing		Instructions for applying for the Colorado Library Card program and current participants			
Grant program		Rules and instructions for state equalization program,federal program guidelines			Information about federal grant programs
Youth services					Children's book review database

Design

In reviewing the design of the Web sites, I looked for several elements:

- did it have a "text only" option for visually handicapped
- were the design elements consistent throughout the Web site so that it was easy to follow
- were headings and graphics on introductory Web sites carried over on related pages
- amount of jargon and acronyms used
- did I get lost!

ALASKA

Services to State Government

The Alaska State Library is a statewide research library for Alaska State Government. State employees needing information for their work have access to a variety of library services including:

What Works

The Alaska State Library's Web site for state government employees could be entered either through the Web site the Department of Education and Early Development or through the State Library's public Internet Web page. When entering from the Alaska State Library's public Web site, (which has a "text only" option at the very top) the heading reads:

> Services to State Government
> (Around the Clock Reference)

This was a highly inviting introduction to the Web site. The Alaska State Library's Extranet Web site for state government employees was easy to use and follow. Graphics were clear and consistent throughout the Web site. Top menus were usually followed by a repeat of the headings with textual information scrolled below it. Information in the top menus could be accessed by selecting and clicking or by scrolling. This saved the time of user because the user did not have to click back to a top menu after reading just one paragraph of description. I always knew exactly where I was in the Web site. The information was complete and seemed to be have information that would be very useful to state government officials. There were no frames disturbing the presentation of the information.

The Extranet for the library community used the same primary graphic as that for state government employees. The State Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) does have a different logo, but connecting to it was relatively easy. Other special programs had clear names rather than logos (except for SLED, below). "Muskox, the Internet Server for Libraries in Alaska" and "Databases for Alaskans" are examples. The lettering is big but the meaning is clear.

What Needs Improvement

I made the incorrect assumption that "Around the Clock Reference" meant staff available to help around the clock. Not so, and probably not really expected. The phrase really meant around the clock resources available electronically.

When entering the Services to State Government section from the Department's Web site, the selections under the main title read:

> SLED
> Electronic Periodical Indexes
> Electronic Reference Question Service
> Electronic Interlibrary Loan (ILL) Services

When clicking on the main Services to State Government title, or when entering Services to State Government from the Alaska State Library public Web site, the selections are different. SLED is not an immediate selection. Electronic Periodical Indexes isn't listed but two new selections are: Electronic Publications On-going Service and Electronic Table of Contents Service. SLED is at the very bottom of the page as a selection.

These are really minor concerns in a very good, clear Web site.

COLORADO

Welcome to the Colorado State Library, an Office of the Colorado Department of Education. The State Library is committed to advancing the philosophy and practice of lifelong learning, which it does by enhancing the ability of local libraries and adult education programs to provide the best possible service to their clients. Follow the links

below for more information.

What Works

Colorado's Web site is currently being redesigned to create an Extranet for the library community imbedded in the Colorado Department of Education's public Web site. The State Library's information is easy to find. It is listed as a primary button on the Department of Education's main menu. The link is to the State Library Office where information for both the general public and the library community is included. Previous to this revision, information for the library community was partly housed on the State Library's Web page and partly housed on the state network ACLIN. This revision focus ACLIN only on links to library resources and information databases designed for the general public. All information and resources specifically for the library community will now be on the State Library's Web site. The ultimate usefulness of this arrangement is unknown at this time but the concept will be tested in the coming months.

What Needs Improvement

Currently the primary design on the State Library's Web site is a set of colorful crayons. This may be appropriate for the Colorado Department of Education of which the State Library is a part, but it is not relevant to the State Library's work. Also, in the transition of information and design from the state network ACLIN to the State Library's Web site, librarians may get confused and be unable to find information they need.

OREGON

What Works

The Oregon State Library's Intranet for state government was the best Web site I reviewed. There was no "text only" selection but there were no graphics or icons used that would have been difficult for visually handicapped to read. The main selections were in a frame down the left side of the page and were clear and explanatory about the content included with scroll down access to items in the main menu.

> Dictionaries
> Encyclopedias
> Quick Reference
> Magazines/Newspapers
> Article Retriever
> Library Catalogs
> Oregon Government
> Subject Lists
> Search Engines

Two other logos were used. The TrackSmart logo was very similar in design to WorkSmart and clearly gave the impression that it was for tracking information on behalf of state employees.

Article Retriever was a different s its meaning. The other logo is for a service called Article Retriever. Again the meaning of the logo, combined with the explanatory words was very clear.

Oregon State Library Article Retriever

What Needs Improvement

I felt the need for an introductory screen that explained something about WorkSmart. Instead, the first screen launches immediately into databases. It is relatively clear that the buttons on the top and along the left side lead to other information resources, but some explanation of the State Library's role, the target audience, etc. on the first screen would have been helpful.

There was no "home" button that took you back to the beginning. The frame along the left side was stationary and most of the choices a state employee might want were there. However, when I was looked for TrackSmart, it was not immediately apparent where to find it. It was not in the left side frame, rather under "services" in the top buttons which are not visible on all the screens. Presumably, frequent users would know where items were. Still, a home button taking one back to the opening page would have been useful.

RHODE ISLAND

What Works

The Rhode Island State Library's main Web page is part of the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) state agency (where the State Librarian is also the Department Director). The first words on this page are for "text version of this page", although there is only one icon so the page would be easily accessible for the visually handicapped even without this notice. Other pages do not have this message at the top, but again, there are few icons and none that contain critical information, thus the site is easy to use for the visually handicapped.

From the OLIS home page there are links to LoriPro for library staff (which is password protected) and to State Government Information as well as to public Internet sites describing OLIS library resources, the Library of Rhode Island (state and national library catalogs). These sites are rich in information.

The primary LoriPro menu includes QUICK links to key information, subject groupings of the same information, and a "what's new" section. It includes a "Search THIS Site: Keyword searching of the LoriPro site" to further assist users in finding information they need. Navigation was straightforward and usually successful.

The primary menu for "Information Research Services for State Government" was also informative. It outlines the scope of the services and the library's service commitment: "Experienced information specialists are available to help locate information and provide resources on a wide variety of subjects that are of concern to state government." It also outlines the primary services provided and then links to brief descriptions of the various services. A "Search Request Form" is the primary mechanism for state government employees to request services, materials, or information. Again, the information provided is rich and uniquely helpful to state government workers.

What Needs Improvement

The primary problem with this collection of Web sites was the extensive use of unexplained acronyms. LORI, used extensively, was not explained although I soon deduced it stood for Library Of Rhode Island. The "PRO" in LORI PRO is never explained but presumably is stands for "professional" for library staff. RHILINET is also used in several places and never spelled out. Rhode Island Information LIbrary Network? It is not clear. The SIGS (Special Interest GroupS) discussion groups include acronyms for the groups that are not immediately clear without reading the descriptions. In same cases not even then, i.e.: "LTA Discussion, Use this area for discussion and information for LTAs."

The word "LORI" is used to designated different pieces of information. It is used as a

heading to group numerous kinds of information. At one point it is also used with the subheading "connections & directions to RI's libraries." There is also a link to CLAN in several places that I eventually discovered meant "Cooperating Libraries Automated Network" but this is not explained in the menu structure.

On the State Government Information Web site, the main menu clearly explains the services available, however, links to explanations are treated as individual Web pages. Clicking through provides only a few sentences each on: introduction, interlibrary loan services, location and staff, online access to R. I. libraries, online databases services, reference and referral services, and research assistance. In each case, a user must click on the heading, read the short paragraph (in one case only two sentences) and then there is a link to the request form. With the brief amount of information on each topic, it would be more user friendly to have the list of headings and then scroll through the various brief descriptions, ending with the search form.

UTAH

Site Search

Online Catalog
    http://168.178.63.140/webpac/wgbroker?new+-access+top.usl

Library Directories

PIONEER
    http://pioneer.lib.ut.us/

About Us

What's New

DCED
    http://www.dced.state.ut.us/

What Works

When entering this web site through the Utah State Library Division, the graphics are clear and clean and load quickly. The primary graphic is carried over from page to page with the links shown above on the left carried over from page to page, as are the links at the top. The site is relatively easy to navigate with easy return to the main menu page. The State Library is currently revising the site to improve it.

What Needs Improvement

When entering the State Library's Web site from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the State Library's information is all contained in a frame. Most of the screen real estate is taken up by DCED information surrounding the State Library's information and almost one/fourth of the screen on the left has only one word on it, "home". This is obviously not the fault of the Utah State Library but the Utah Department would be well to consider a redesign of this feature. The frames are better designed on the State Library's site and move with the information. However, not all of the words on the left are true links, particularly "Site Search" and What's New". It's not clear why these are not activated.

Some of the titles on the main menu are also somewhat misleading. For example, on the main menu there is a link to "Interlibrary Loan". When clicked through, however, the title reads "Material Requests (Interlibrary Loan) and includes links to well-developed

resources lists of books on tape, Spanish language information, and videos. One would never know this from the title on the main menu. In another example, the title on the main page is "Annual Report" but the title on the page linked to is "Public Library Statistics". This may be part of what the State Library intends to revise.

Finally, some of the links lead to a totally different graphic:

This seems to be used primarily with links to publications but not all publications have this graphic. It includes most of the same words that are links down the left hand side of the page on the main graphic but these circles are not interactive. It is only a graphic. Attempting to click on a circle leads nowhere.

Observations

This paper did not investigate any relationship between the budgets of the state library agencies and the extent of resources or customized services offered to the government employees or the library community. Only Oregon has a specific assessment (by law) of government agencies to support the services provided. All of the other states except Colorado have functioning library operations with professional library staff who presumably can help assemble resources. Colorado does not operate a library and has the least links to other resources.

Ease of navigation is critical in the ultimate use of any site. I got lost in the Web sites of two of the states. Despite the wealth of information available, I could not find my way back to some of these resources once I left them. The main menus were not always clear as to what resources lie beneath them and in some cases the sub-menus were totally different, including the title, from what was indicated on the main menu. State libraries would be well advised to test new Web site designs with novices in the library or public community and redesign based on their use of (or inability to use) the site.

A confusing aspect of several of the sites were different names, and sometimes logos, for different aspects of the library information. For example, some state libraries had one name for their State Library Web site, another for a network of library resources, yet another for an Extranet for the library community or for government workers. The links between these were not always clear. Presumably with use, it becomes clear, but the new user could easily get confused. Consistency of names, graphics, and linkages of major programs needs to be considered. Utah did this well with its consistent links to major sites along the left side of the page (except for the links that should have been but were not activated.)

None of the sites presented any problems to the visually impaired. There was minimal use of icons and even when there were icons, clear wording was included. There was also a minimal use of frames that took screen real estate from content. The major problem was the link from the Department's Web page in Utah to the State Library's information. That was an excellent example of what NOT to design.

Different methods were also used to distinguish between what was clickable and what was not. It was not always clear what led to additional information and what did not. This sometimes resulted in confusion about how to reach resources. In some cases the non-clickable heading had subheadings shown that could be accessed. In other cases, for example Utah's "What's New" clearly should have led somewhere. If the link is not activated, it ought not to be shown.

One clear opening screen that gives the scope of services would also be helpful, with clear links between major information Web sites maintained by the State Library. Rhode Island's opening menu for government employees is a good example of this. Oregon, otherwise an excellent site, needed this introduction.
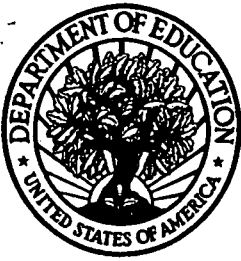
Conclusion

Librarians at State Library Agencies are compiling an incredible array of resources to be used by the library community, state government employees, and the public at large. A review of just these six libraries provides excellent examples of the kinds of resources and services that United States State Libraries provide.

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