Item Linking and Reusing of Content

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After a few months of working on this (thank you to all our clients who suggested and contributed to the idea), I am very pleased to announce a major step in the evolution of LibGuides: item-level linking and reusing of content in the system.

Say what? Here’s the scoop… Previously, you were able to “link to” (i.e. reuse) the LibGuides pages and the LibGuides content boxes. For example, you’d create a page (or a box) on one guide and then simply “link” to it on any other guide/page (i.e. make it appear on another guide). The neat thing about this is that any changes to the original page/box would be instantly reflected on all “linked” pages/boxes. That saved you a lot of effort when creating new content. Well, now you can do the same with individual Links and Documents - “add once use anywhere” type of thing. This is a rather major new functionality which will make creating and maintaining your guides even easier.

When you are adding a new link (or a new document) the dialog will look something like the screenshot above. If you want to reuse an existing link (or a document) click on the “Reuse Existing” tab and just start typing the name of the item you want to reuse. The system will search for it and give you the list of all matches to pick from. Pretty cool stuff.

As part of this upgrade we also added an administrative screen to “Manage Assets”. Admins can go to My Admin -> Admin Toolbox -> Manage Assets page, and see where each Link/Rss/Podcast/Video/Document appears and on which guides it is linked to (if any). This is a welcome addition to the administrative toolbox because it enables admins to get an instant overview of what appears where in their system (and where it is linked to, i.e. reused).
We didn’t stop there, either. In addition to this major new feature of reusing links and documents, we have also added a new feature when adding a new Video/Rss Feed/Podcast item to your guide. Now, whenever you go to add a new video (or a new rss feed or a new podcast) you will be able to search the system for any existing videos/rss/podcasts to copy. For example, the new “Add Video” dialog looks like this:

You start typing the title of the video (or rss feed/podcast) and the system searches the LibGuides community to see if someone has already added it. Then, when you find what you were looking for the system automatically gives you the code to include inside your guide.

This means you can now search the LibGuides content database of web 2.0 media (videos, rss feeds, podcasts) to include inside your guides. Granted we’re not YouTube (yet ;) but the amount of content created in LibGuides is growing by leaps and bounds (for example, there are over 800,000 links in the system already) and the more content there is the more everybody can benefit from it.

One last note on this new Video/Rss/Podcast search. The searching for Links and Documents (for reuse) is limited to your own system (i.e. no content from other institutions is included when you search for other links and documents), but the Video/Rss/Podcast search is community-wide. In other words, it will search the entire LibGuides community (the content from 500+ institutions to date). We figured that most, if not all, of these videos and other web 2.0 media are already publicly available (thru YouTube and the like) so there’s no reason why you couldn’t search for them in LibGuides as well, even though they are added by another institution in many cases. Please let us know what you think of this and if there is a concern about privacy (or any other aspect that we’re missing). We can easily limit these searches to your own institution only, if there are issues involved or if the majority of people would rather have it that way.

Thank you again for using LibGuides and thanks to all who contributed to this major new milestone in the development of the system. Many new exciting possibilities for the use (and reuse) of LibGuides are now within reach with this addition of the Item Linking and Reusing of Content. As always, let us know what you think - support at springshare dot com.