

Submission ID 64
Submitter Name (required) Geoffrey Sauer
Title (required) "You Should Make It an App":
The Decline and Fall of Web Design in ENGL Courses
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Type (required) Partial Session (15-20 min)
Program Copy (required)

This paper will describe how student feedback changed the presenter's plans for an R1 research university's website redesign. Early planning had indicated to the developers that rival interests within the library for website prominence would be the primary obstacle to redesign; this had been the initial focus for the researcher, as an information architect. However, during participant research with students, informants conveyed a clear sense that young users see websites as a dated genre, which would not be bookmarked on phones or tablets, and which users would tend to procrastinate before using. Websites were "work." If we wanted to make using the library a regular task, possibly even fun and exciting, we were surprised to be told repeatedly, "You should make it an app, instead." So we did. This paper will describe: (1) the process the researcher and their team used to develop both iOS and Android app versions of a large R1 university research resource, (2) the ways in which designing a more welcoming user experience led to beneficial results for the researchers presenting this paper, and (3) the implications these findings may have for many researchers in Computers and Writing.

Proposal (required)

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As part of this paper the presenter will provide the full source code created during this project, as a free and downloadable resource for C&W attendees, to easily generate both iOS apps (using XCode and the Swift language) and Android apps (using Eclipse Kotlin). After the paper, attendees will be able to easily create mobile apps from existing websites for a wide range of

academic purposes. The presentation will describe some of the technical, institutional, and UI design considerations websites should make to accommodate being “transformed” into mobile apps (some of these were surprising to the presenters). It will conclude by discussing some implications from this experience which may apply to C&W faculty who teach web design and web development in both undergraduate and graduate courses.

Keywords (required)

app development, web design, user experience