Integrating LibChat into Database Platforms

Adrienne Warner, Brett Nafziger
University of New Mexico
What

What *exactly* are we talking about?
Definition - "database"

- Searchable, proprietary platforms
- Accessible through library website
Definitions- "widget" & “proactive”

- Widget = a tidy package

- Types we use:
  - Embedded
  - Button

“Proactive”...
Ta-da!
Why

Why place chat help in databases?
What we noticed, pt. 1

- Teensy bit of confusion – articles & databases
  - New users
  - Refining research skills
  - Vendor platforms differ

- No easy access to help
What we noticed, pt. 2

library.unm.edu

Database

Chat
Design solution

Library.unm.edu

Database WITH chat
Predictions

• Chats would happen

• Proactive nature of widget would be helpful

• Content of in-database sessions would be more complex
How did we put it all together?
In the beginning...

- Environmental scan
- RUSA webinar (Jan Kemp & Margaret Warner)
  - Catalyst for co-workers to equally get excited about & allow us to further explore proactive chat in databases
- Reach out to vendors
  - Warmly received by two
Building the chat widget

• LibChat Widget Creator: Slide-out tab
  • Started Simple...similar to our in-page chat widget used throughout out Library webpage
  • Decided to test some new ideas alone with the proactive chat, using our UNM color of cherry red and a more casual / conversational tone in chat dialogue
  • Finally, to further differentiate vendor chat we added specifically that you would be chatting with UNM librarians
Building the chat widget, cont.

• How long to wait before chat slides out?
  • Springshare has no default time or set limit
  • Adrienne and I tested a variety of times ranging from 15 – 60 secs.
  • Ended up on 30 secs.
  • Intention to follow-up with usability testing to refine slide-out time
  • “Goldilocks Experiment”

Temporarily repurposed Springshare’s rating system to get input from our patrons on the widgets slide-out timing.
Placement of chat widget?

• Many choices for placement within the databases:

  - When patrons are viewing a single, detailed search result.
Placement of chat widget?

• How deep do we want our presence in the databases?
• We started by placing the widget anywhere we could for exposure
  • We could always pull back later
  • Or potentially have some of the deeper chat widgets not be proactive (not on a timer)
    • Since the patron should know by then that the widget is there and that they can click on it if they need assistance
Internal testing of chat widget

• Conducted various tests
  • Lengths of time
  • Widget behavior in various situations

• Small reference group reviewed widget
  • Further testing
  • Approval given
Going live / Who am I chatting with?

LibChat Dashboard  Chatting as: Brett

Don't forget to sign off of LibChat at the end of your shift/day.

Chat Activity

Chatting:

Name: 
Staff: 
Department: Reference
Question: Hi, I'm doing some research for my Public Speaking class about sleep or the lack thereof for college students. Are there any resources or books that you can refer me to?
Contact Info:
IP:
From: http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/command/detail?vid=0&sid=8909728a-a7c3-4767-9a48-f5081b12c370%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZS1zY29wZW52aXVi

Named the widget In-Database Proactive

The patron is chatting from an EBSCO database
Evaluation

How well is proactive chat working?
Lessons learned

• Repetitive sliding out even after clicking the “No Thanks”

• Time-lapse video...for demonstration purposes only:
Lessons learned, cont.

• Frustrated a certain segment of user-base
• Turned off the proactive (slide-out) nature of the widget
  • To minimize negative impact
  • Chat widget usage dropped to zero

Now a patron would need to click on the Chat – UNM Librarian to open the chat window.
Lessons learned, cont.

• Cookies are the bane of our existence!
  • After several sessions we determined it depended on if the workstation was set to accept third-party cookies or not
  • Or you could add the exceptions for EBSCO and Gale
    • http://ebscohost.com
    • http://galegroup.com
  • Created FAQ for reference librarians & patrons:
Assessment

- Prediction 1: presence of chat in-database used?
  - May 3 – Sept 8, 2017
    - N=163
    - 22% of total chat sessions
    - All the feels
• Prediction 2: Proactive nature helpful
  • Not only helpful – necessary
    • Cookies an issue with only a handful of users
Assessment, cont.

• Prediction 3: Chat content more complex
  • Preliminary stages
    • Evaluation by READ Scale designation
Future Directions

Where to go from here?
Lots to do!

• Content analysis
• More observation
• Usability Testing
• Integrate into more database platforms

• You’re invited
Thank You!

• EBSCO group
• Gale group
• eResources manager
• Web librarian
• Reference agents
• Instructional librarians
• Springshare support and tech teams
Additional Resources


Questions?

Adrienne Warner
Reference and Information Services Coordinator
adriennnew@unm.edu

Brett Nafziger
Library Info Specialist III
bnafziger@unm.edu