Integrating Internet-Based Distance Guidance with Services Provided in Career Centers

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Influences on Career Services

- Increasing demand

- Continuing evolution in technology

Increasing Demand

- Changes in the nature of work and in the labor market

- Life long career guidance - educational & employment choices

- Shift from youth focus to lifespan guidance increases demand

Evolution in Technology

- The Internet

- World wide web

- Internet web sites

Potential Internet Benefits

- Better access to self-help resources

- Serve geographically remote, currently underserved populations

- Resources and services delivered by a wider range of specialists

- Easier access to resources and services for individuals with physical disabilities

- Anonymity may encourage some individuals to seek services

Distance Guidance

- Delivery of self-assessment, information, and instruction in remote locations

- With or without practitioner assistance

- To aid individuals in making informed career, educational, training, and employment decisions

Distance Guidance

- Serves both traditional and distance learning

- Critical when guidance services are unavailable (e.g., the home)

- Distance guidance essential for distance learning

Resulting Problems

- How do we integrating distance guidance with existing services?

- How do we fit the old with the new?

Integrating Distance Guidance

- The need for career centers

- Types of Internet web sites

- Functions of integrated web sites

- Matching user needs with web sites

- Instructional design of web sites

Integrating Distance Guidance

- Staff collaboration in web sites

- Web master responsibilities

- Web site implementation

- Staff training

- Ethical Issues

The Need for Career Centers in an Information Age

- The nature of the learning event

- Variation in readiness for choice

- Variation in personality, learning styles, and experience

Nature of the Learning Event

1. **Recognize** information is needed to solve a problem
2. **Select** information to meet needs
3. **Decide** how to use information
4. **Use** the information resources
5. **Evaluate** if needs have been met
6. **Seek** help or other resources as needed

Internet Use Ineffective for Some

- Aware of problem, unaware of needs

- Unrealistic expectations of the Internet

- Overwhelmed with information from sites

- Difficulty in selecting the right information

Internet Use Ineffective for Some

- Uncertain of how to use information

- Uncertain of help options

- Difficulty with reading level of some sites

- Difficulty in accessing public Internet sites

Variation in Individual Readiness

- High readiness for decision making -
  - Little or no need for Internet assistance
- Moderate readiness -
  - Likely need minimal Internet assistance
- Low Readiness -
  - Likely need individualized services Supervised Internet use likely required

Variation in Personality, Learning Style, and Experience

- Personality influences learning style

- Holland typology

  - Investigative Vs. Social types

- Influence of modeling and verbal reinforcement on social individuals

- Conclusion - Career centers needed

Types of Internet Web Sites

- Integrated web site

- Independent web site

Integrated Web Site

- Distance guidance component of a career center

- Provide information and advertise resources and services

- Functions expand as capacity improves

- Budgeted resources - password protected

- Links provided to pay sites charging users

Independent Web Sites

- Advertisements with limited free information

- Access to information (employers by industry) and services (job matching) for a fee

- Access to information (employment outlook) and services (resume posting) for free

Integrated Web Site Functions

1) Download information

2) Deliver services

3) Market career center services

4) Provide links

1) Download Information

- Career

- Educational

- Training

- Employment

2) Deliver Services

- Self-assessment
- Institutional job listing and interview scheduling
- Videoconferencing
  - the "teachable moment"
  - counseling
  - academic advising
  - job placement interviews

3) Market Career Center Services

- Link needs to resources and services

- Schedule of services (e.g., workshops)

4) Provide Links

- Extend available resources and services

- Problem - becoming overwhelmed - random linking or quitting

- Solution - selective links based on staff judgment

Web Site Designs to Avoid

- Lists of resources and services
  - This assumes users can link needs to options
- A long single list of links
  - Overwhelming to use & hard to remember
  - Links should be need-based, e.g., avoid showing users links that are not relevant
- Home pages with organizational information & slow-loading graphics
  - Good information - bad timing

Organizational Issues

- Web site politics
  - Control the site - control the service
  - Narrow design - expertise of one individual
  - Limited collaboration - limited integration
  - Web site reflects the organization instead of the individuals served -
    "My work and my office are important and should be shown on the web site."

Need-Based Approach

- User identifies need - for example
  - beginning student selects a program of study related to interests
  - graduating student identifies employers recruiting for specific occupations

- Resources, services, and links are then related to needs

Need-Based Approach

- Home page categorizes needs
  - need categories or subcategories link to resources, services, and links
  - staff expertise used to state needs and establish appropriate links

Web Site Instructional Design

- Matching categories of user needs helps with selecting resources

- Links make locating information easy

- Recommendations needed for sequencing and using resources

Web Site Instructional Design

- Select - Need-based descriptive links and learning outcomes described below each link

- Locate - Internal and external links

- Sequence and Use - Text presented in pop-up window from link
  - Includes circumstances where staff assistance may be needed

Web Site Instructional Design

- Make your web site an "intelligent" site by incorporating the expertise of your staff as well as delivering information

Web Site Instructional Design

- Use your experience to visualize what individuals say (or could say) when they enter your center, and then
  - respond with additional statements to clarify user needs, or
  - link to resources and services that relate to the user needs you have identified.

Web Site Instructional Design

- Limit the number of links on any page to seven--less overwhelming for the user

- Design web pages with as much open space as possible to make it easy to read

Web Site Instructional Design

- Match the reading difficulty of the web site to the typical reading ability of users

- Use graphics sparingly until the Internet improves in performance
  - Have an instructional reason for graphics, such as modeling behavior using a picture or showing steps and options with a flowchart

Web Site Instructional Design

- Start web site design by focusing on <u>content</u>, then design web site functioning based on available technical options
- Begin by asking the following questions:
  - Who does (or should) the web site serve?
  - What are the needs of users?
  - What resources are available (or should be available) to meet user needs?
- Then link the needs of various types of users to specific resources

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Web Site Instructional Design

- Use a <u>collaborative</u> approach to design rather than delegate it to one staff member, such as a web master -
  - Groups tend to make better decisions, which can result in a more complete and better functioning web site
  - Also, remember the old adage - "people support what they help create."

Web Site Instructional Design

"Shallow" design versus "Deep" design
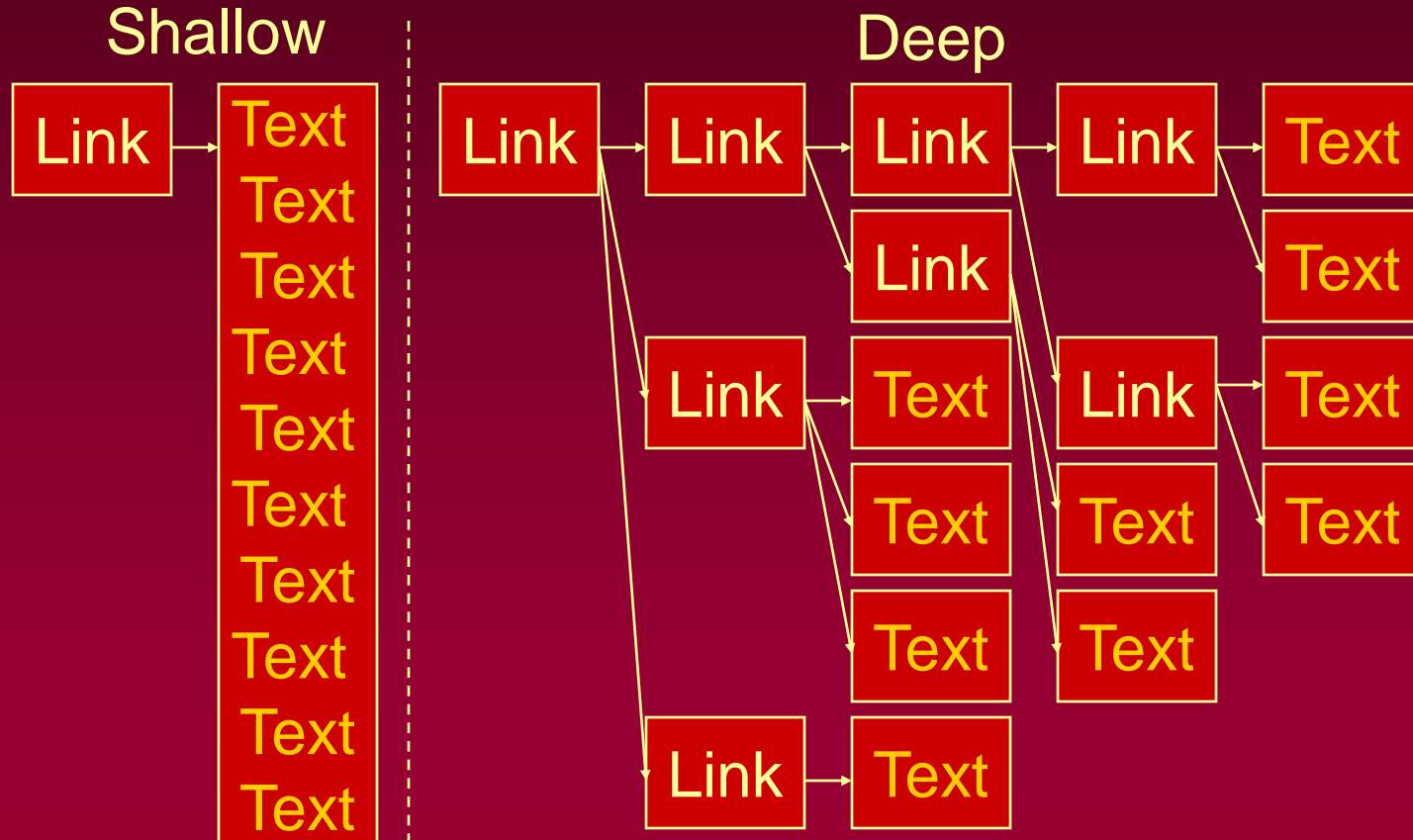
Staff Collaboration

- Contribute expertise to content, functionality, and links

- Maintenance of links

Web Master Responsibilities

- Remain current with technology

- Add content, functionality, and links based on staff input

- Maintain links

- Keep site compliant with standards

- Evaluate and recommend changes

Web Site Implementation

1. Evaluation of current resources & services
2. Selection of resources, services, & links
3. Integration of the web site career center
4. Staff training on web site & integration
5. Trial use before advertising the web site
6. Operation of the web site
7. Evaluation of effectiveness & modification

Staff Training Needs

- Content and functioning of the site

- Links available to and from the web site

- Career center PC-based software that links to the web

- Strategies for helping clients
  - Screening, Orientation, and Follow-up

Potential Ethical Issues

- Violation of confidentiality

- Lack of counseling support

- Lack of Internet access by less affluent individuals

- Delivery of invalid information

- Provision of services by unqualified practitioners

Conclusion

- Internet web sites may

  - improve access to self-help resources

  - improve career center cost effectiveness via remote resource and service delivery

Conclusion

- Resources & services should match needs

- Level of help provided should match readiness

- Use instructional design to aid in selecting, locating, sequencing, & using resources

- All staff contribute to web site development and maintaining links

For Additional Information

- Sampson, J. P., Jr. (1999). Integrating Internet-based distance guidance with services provided in career centers. <u>The Career Development Quarterly, 47,</u> 243-254.

For Additional Information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/