Reaching out to Alumni: What Libraries are Doing

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Process

- Literature Review
- 79 Canadian and 20 selected U.S. university libraries
- Web sites: libraries and universities
- Targeted libraries based on resources/services
  - 27 Canadian, 20 U.S.
- Prepared questions for targeted libraries
- Phoned targeted libraries
- Emailed questions
Responses

• 21 of 27 Canadian libraries
• 14 of 20 American libraries
Areas of Focus

- Web sites
- Electronic Resources
- Bibliographic Software
- Interlibrary Loan
- Reference Service
- Outreach and Marketing
Web Sites: Libraries

• Canadian University Libraries (79)
  – 23 have alumni link on home page:
    • 12 link directly to library info
  – 21 have inclusive web area for alumni

• U.S. University Libraries (20)
  – 18 have home page link
    • 17 link to library info
  – 17 have inclusive web area for alumni
Web Sites: Universities

• Canadian (79)
  – All but one links from home page to Alumni page
  – 43 Alumni pages mention the library

• American (20)
  – All link from home page to Alumni page
  – 16 Alumni pages mention the library
Recommendations: Web

• Library site:
  – Link from home page
  – Inclusive web area
  – Consistent info across site
  – Highlight special status of alumni
  – Info for both on site and online visitors
  – “Keep in touch” section, including donations

• University site:
  – Let Alumni Office know what Library offers
  – Suggest direct link from University’s alumni info to Library’s alumni info
Electronic Resources

- Canadian University Libraries (79)
  - 19 list electronic resources for alumni
  - 7 buy proprietary databases
    - 2 charge alumni a fee
  - 7 offer databases licensed for alumni access (Project Muse, some CRKN)
  - 13 list freely available resources (Knowledge Ontario)
Electronic Resources, cont.

• 20 American University Libraries
  – 19 continue to buy proprietary databases (plus another 19)
  – 7 charge alumni a fee
  – 4 list “free” proprietary databases
  – 7 list free resources

• Reports of usage of proprietary databases
  – Well used (5); not well used (2)
Recommendations: Resources

• Work with Alumni Office on needs and goals
• When purchasing any database, ask about alumni access
• When promoting, be clear on coverage
• Highlight what you can (eg. open access journals)
• Refer to public libraries, professional organizations
Bibliographic Software

• 8 of 79 in Canada mention RefWorks
• 6 of 20 in U.S. offer RefWorks

• Recommendations
  – Work out authentication issues first
  – Explain RefWorks on alumni pages
  – Market availability
    • To alumni
    • To current students
Interlibrary Loan

• 17 of 79 in Canada offer ILL
  – All but 4 charge a fee
  – Fee usually minimal
• 4 of 20 in US offer
• Low use reported
Recommendations: ILL

• Offer if in demand
• Ensure Library’s alumni info is up-to-date
• Have clear policies
• “Low effort way to provide extra service”
• If not offering, refer alumni to public libraries
Reference Service

- 15 of 79 in Canada mention service on alumni pages
  - 1 charges a fee
- 9 of 20 in US mention service
  - 1 charges for in-depth service

Recommendations
- Highlight service on alumni pages
- Use a dedicated email (libalumni@) to track use
Marketing Ideas

• Partnering with Alumni Office: events, awards
• Promoting to graduating students
• Library newsletter for alumni
• Articles in university’s alumni magazine
• Lectures, discussion forums
• Invite alumni authors to speak at library
• Tours of Library
• Workshops during Homecoming:
  – RefWorks, Google, Genealogy, Alumni databases
More Ideas

• Buy books written by alumni
• “Honour with books” “Books forever”: Georgetown
• “Library History Campaign”: memories, photos: UWO
• Reunion for student library workers: Carleton
• Extend services to spouses and partners
• Extend hours during Homecoming
• Reduce fees for membership in Friends
• News blog
• YouTube video: accessing resources (Duke)
General Recommendations

• Partner with Alumni Office
• Build on faculty connections
• Set manageable goals
• Showcase resources/services
• Market your Archives
Sample Pages

- Simon Fraser: [www.lib.sfu.ca/my-library/services-for-you/alumni](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/my-library/services-for-you/alumni)
- Laurier: [library.wlu.ca/alumni/](http://library.wlu.ca/alumni/)
- Dartmouth: [www.dartmouth.edu/~library/alumni/](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/alumni/)
- Columbia: [www.alumni.libraries.columbia.edu/](http://www.alumni.libraries.columbia.edu/)
- Cornell: [alumni.library.cornell.edu/](http://alumni.library.cornell.edu/)
- Pepperdine: [library.pepperdine.edu/alumni/](http://library.pepperdine.edu/alumni/)


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