
Simple Exhibits, Effective Learning: Presenting the United Farm Workers' Experience on the World Wide Web

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ABSTRACT

THERE IS A RELATIVE DEARTH OF INFORMATION on the World Wide Web about labor unions and labor history. One notable exception is an online exhibit, entitled "La Causa—The History of the United Farm Workers," which was created by the Walter P. Reuther Library/Archives of Labor and Urban History. This article draws upon the experience of the Reuther Library in creating the UFW exhibit and asserts that an effective learning experience can be provided if the Web design is kept relatively simple, hypertext links are used, ease of navigation is emphasized, and other factors are taken into consideration. Creating a simple site will allow simple use and more users to visit.

SIMPLE EXHIBITS, EFFECTIVE LEARNING: PRESENTING THE UNITED FARM WORKERS' EXPERIENCE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

The widespread adoption of the Internet has led to several major developments that impact libraries, labor archives, and their patrons. First, the *amount* of accessible information has increased dramatically. People throughout the world now access comprehensive databases of archives, allowing them to peruse library holdings and other information sources. Even the language of our library institutions is now utilized in everyday Web sites. For example, newspaper Web sites store old information in their "archives"; reference papers or white papers are stored in online "libraries."

Second, the growth of the Internet has altered how information resources are accessed and by whom. Bibliographic databases and multimedia presentations (including audio and video streaming) are now on the

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Web and can be viewed by anyone with the requisite bandwidth or patience. We are truly in the midst of the information revolution. It has been stated by David Bowie that “[the Internet] thrives on its own chaos—[it] combine[s] things that shouldn’t be bedfellows” (Nash, 1999, paragraph 7).

Third, the growth of the Internet is changing how we read and process information. The rapid expansion of the number of Web sites has led to information “overload” that dulls the senses. Young adults, who grew up with computers, have a different style of reading from that of older generations (who are not as conversant with computers). Younger readers tend to scan readings and to quickly locate hyperlinks, rather than to engage in more extended study. The youth of today “who would normally not read books with footnotes until secondary school, know their way around the bright blue hyperlinks. They learn early that a Web site isn’t complete without references to other sites, and that the cooler the site, the cooler its links” (Bader, 2000, p. 16). Information processing, as a whole, has thus changed: “The result is that we know countless more ‘bits’ of information, both important and trivial, than our ancestors” (Birkerts, 1994, p. 72). As the repositories of knowledge, libraries and archives need to produce information to this new generation in a navigable and easy-to-read format.

The Web has exploded since the early 1990s, drastically altering demand for information. Newspapers no longer dictate how or in what form information is now read; instead, the public does. News can come to the front door, or be on your home computer and printed out before your coffee is ready, or be delivered at work via e-mail. Personal information portals gather content from various news agencies and are customized to include specific topics such as weather and sports. We want something more out of information, something that is fast and connected. With the public demanding instantaneous, customized information, how can pedagogy about history or other topics best be presented?

The Web provides a vehicle by which libraries can address this challenge. In particular, the Web provides a means by which information about one of the greatest social movements in United States history—the formation and maturation of labor unions—can be far more widely disseminated. Greater awareness of, and education about, labor history can thus be fostered.

At the same time, libraries and labor archives need to give careful consideration to the process by which they create online exhibits on the labor movement. For example, too great a reliance on the latest and most sophisticated applications on Web sites can actually impede effective learning. This paper draws upon the experience of the Walter P. Reuther Library/Archives of Labor and Urban History in creating an online exhibit on the United Farm Workers. The primary thesis is that effective learning and more widespread access stems from keeping the Web design relatively simple. Specific guidelines for creating online exhibits, culled from the Reuther Library’s experience to date, are also provided.

BACKGROUND ON THE REUTHER LIBRARY

The Walter P. Reuther Library/Archives of Labor and Urban History is dedicated to preserving the historical record of the American labor movement in the twentieth century. It is named after the third president of the United Auto Workers (UAW), who was one of the most important figures in the twentieth-century labor movement. Reuther noted his concern for the housing and preservation of the UAW's records in a letter that he wrote to all the Local Union Presidents that stated, "it is only through careful documentation of our history that an accurate account can be given of the UAW in our nation's economic, political, and social life" (Reuther, 1962, [unpaginated]). With these words, the Walter P. Reuther Library has grown to be one of the largest repositories for the history of the American labor movement.

Presently, the Reuther Library houses the historical papers of ten national unions and over 1,700 other manuscript collections on the labor movement. The Reuther Library also preserves the historical records of Wayne State University as well as collections concerning the modern, urban history of Southeast Michigan. The library contains 300 transcribed oral histories, over 2 million photographs, and hundreds of feet of video and film.

The Reuther Library is dedicated to the belief that wide accessibility should be made available to all those interested in the collections housed at the library, whether patrons are academics or union members, high school students or graduate students. One way that the Reuther Library is making information available is by utilizing the medium of the Web in which information can be made available for everyone and can be delivered without restrictions that stem from reliance on new technology (i.e., plug-ins or heavy applications to use on the site).

As most organizations realize, it is impossible to stay on top of all of the latest technological changes on the Web. Thus, the Reuther Library decided to make a usable Web site that answers reference questions and delivers quality resource tools with simple navigation. By using the Web, the library embraces the new technology but keeps the physical aspect of human interaction and learning close at hand. The eclectic nature of the library's patrons (that is, an audience that potentially includes union members, undergraduates, graduate students, university professors, primary and secondary students, and school teachers) influenced many of the decisions regarding the design and content of information presented on the library's Web sites. As such, simplicity of presentation has been a constant theme at the Reuther Library.

The first Reuther Library Web site went up in 1996 and resembled most Web sites developed during that time period (e.g., flat, static sites that were more like electronic billboards than valuable resource tools). Collections were placed on the site in one long alphabetic list. The Society of Women Engineers had the only finding guide available to view. Information about

various departments of the Reuther Library and a short pictorial of the Flint Sit-Down strike were also available. At that time, the library thought that it initially just needed to establish a presence of labor and urban history on the Web.

Since 1996, the Reuther Library Web site has developed some wonderful resource tools that are not of the "wow-the-user" type but instead adhere to the most important principle of information service: to give patrons, in a timely and easy fashion, what they need. These resources range from a page that links to a majority of the labor archives and industrial relations schools in the U.S., to stories from the library's collections. There is also a reference area that helps users find information on large, prominent national unions such as the American Federation of Teachers and the Service Employee International Union. Recently, the library has added 300 finding aids, using basic HTML as well as Encoded Archival Description headers. The Reuther's Web site also has Web area portals dedicated to the library's major donating unions and organizations.¹

THE UNITED FARM WORKERS EXHIBIT

Exhibiting online has in recent years become a very powerful way of communicating to the user some very general principles of education and research, as demonstrated by the first major, online exhibit of the Reuther Library: "La Causa—The History of the United Farm Workers" (hereafter referred to as the UFW exhibit), which was established in conjunction with the physical exhibit by the same name.

The United Farm Workers of America (UFW) deposited their historical records with the Reuther Library in 1967. Though the union was relatively young, labor archivists at the Reuther Library realized the potential usefulness of these records. The union was viewed as a viable, strong entity that would have a major impact on agricultural business in the United States and on the lives of farm workers in America. There was a clear need to preserve the historical documentation of this union even in its infancy. Since 1967, the UFW collection has become one of the most popular collections among researchers using the Reuther Library. The immediate impetus for creating an exhibit as well as an online exhibit was a desire to commemorate the UFW's thirtieth anniversary.

The Reuther Library decided that this online exhibit (<http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/ufw.html>) would have more content and strength than previous exhibits posted on the library's Web site. The easiest way of accomplishing this was to incorporate more hyperlinks into the exhibit that would give an in-depth Web experience for the user. Hypertext is "non-sequential writing—text that branches and allows choices to the reader. As popularly conceived, this is a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways" (Landow, 1997, p. 35).² By hyperlinking, a virtual community of labor history can thus be encapsulated on the

Web. The UFW exhibit utilized what was already on the Reuther Library's Web site and also branched out to other areas of the Web in which relevant materials were available. The intent was that the library's UFW exhibit would become a focal point of research.

Despite the relative advantages of hyperlinks, a review of thirty-two library-related labor Web sites in 1998 and again in 2000 indicated that they were infrequently used. As of 1998, only three sites utilized hypertextual content for outside sources, and only four of the thirty-two sites featured online exhibits concerning labor history. A review in 2000 of forty labor-related Web sites indicated that ten had online exhibits, but there were still only three with hypertext links.

Moreover, most of the online exhibits merely reproduced material from a book or brochure. Online labor exhibits with hypertext, or with electronic bibliographic resources, do far more to educate the public. The benefits of a virtual exhibit utilizing the Web's various tools

will enhance scholars and learners who don't have good access to libraries; it will certainly be a boon to overseas scholars; it will enhance teaching by providing greater access to materials. But beyond the basic enhancements to access, the proliferation of electronically accessible primary materials will have an impact on the fields of culture and history no less profound than other technologies of accessible information, like the paperback book. (Bass, 1996, p. 16)

Hypertextual sites can create a virtual community, intellectually as well as aesthetically: "An imaginatively hyperlinked site should ideally have the beauty of a collage, or at least a gallery exhibit. Its references should resonate the way good literary allusions do—even more so because literary references speak to an elite readership, while cyber-allusions are for everybody" (Bader, 2000, p. 16).

Hyperlinking would give the labor community a larger presence on the Web for pedagogical and other purposes. There clearly is a dearth of Web sites regarding labor history (Summers, 1999, p. 79), as well as little information on the history of the working class. By utilizing the Web to its fullest potential, and thus providing a comprehensive array of material linked together in a long string of threads, librarians and labor archivists can help rectify the appalling lack of labor history on the Web.

CREATING THE UFW ONLINE EXHIBIT

An online exhibit on the Web can be created very quickly and without knowing all the ins and outs of the latest technology. A governing principle should be that a library's online exhibit is not a public relations device but is instead an educational tool. As such, the Web site should be interactive since, by developing hypertextual exhibits, we are lending our knowledge to one another and are not standing alone on the Web: "If we fail to understand the expressive environment of our time, we will have failed in

our duty as transmitters of culture" (Lanham, 1993, p. 100). An effective, online exhibit thus "exploits the hyperreal qualities of digital media and uses them to create a more compelling experience, rather than trying to mimic the structures that have evolved for use in the physical world. An effective exhibition views the limitations of the digital domain as opportunities rather than constraints" (Tinkler and Freedman, 1998, p. 2).

The basic principles of librarianship influenced the Reuther Library's Web committee's decisions in creating online exhibits. Individuals who work in information services provide patrons with the assistance they need to get the information they want. An online exhibit is a variation of this process, because it furnishes an array of information sources.

The Web committee embraced three goals in providing information to online patrons of its Web sites. First, the Web site should direct patrons to all relevant information sources, rather than being limited to the library's archival material. Second, ease of access was of paramount importance, irrespective of whether the patron was a first-time visitor or a frequent user. Navigation between information sources should be seamless and effortless. Third, the information provided online must be credible, in part because it reflects on the usefulness of the Reuther Library as an information source for research and education.

Also considered was a series of questions that Dr. Paul M. Helfrich wrote in his paper, "Building Onramps to the Information Highway," before creating an online exhibit.³ These questions help to define the Web site before it actually goes online as well as to keep the Webmaster or the Web committee focused on what needs to be done and what the final output will say to the visitor. Here are the questions the committee considered:

- Who is the intended audience? Is it a student, a teacher, a fellow archivist or librarian, a union member, a historian, a researcher, or someone simply surfing on the Web?
- How is the content shaped to address the needs and interests of these audiences? Is the content "pitched" at the appropriate level for elementary and secondary students, undergrads, graduate students, other academic researchers, rank and file labor union members, or all of the above? If there is an international audience, what provisions are made for multiple languages?
- What new collaborative potentials are there: labor archives to labor archives, archives to public libraries, archives to schools, archives to labor unions and/or to other organizations? (paraphrase of Helfrich, 1995, p. 3)

Collaboration is probably more important for online exhibits than for traditional, in-house exhibits, because the physical limitation of the latter allows one to create a niche (at least to some extent). On the Web, geography and physical limitations are nonexistent; one is catering to a much larg-

er potential audience. Collaboration, through a hypertextual relationship with another site or sites, is critical. In light of this, the Web committee did a preliminary online search to identify other historically related materials on the United Farm Workers. Keywords included "United Farm Workers," "UFW," and "Cesar Chavez." The first search (in 1997) found only a handful of sites, including one historical exhibit by the Cesar Chavez Institute of Public Policy at San Francisco State University (<http://www.sfsu.edu/~cecipp/>). The scarcity of sites suggested that the Reuther Library could thus make a substantial contribution to research by creating a Web site about the UFW.

Online information on the UFW has since expanded—a recent online search of Google, using "UFW history," produced fifty-nine citations. This shows that the labor presence, although a little late, is growing on the Web. With this growth the Reuther Library continues to update and revise the links on its UFW Web site so this site can remain an important point of research for the UFW on the Web.

After considering various initial guidelines regarding content, collaboration, and other issues, the Web committee then turned its attention to various design issues regarding its UFW Web site. A simple way to start the development of a Web site is to produce it on paper. The Web committee wrote, on index cards, topics that should be covered for the online exhibit. One card was made for the table of contents and another for the introduction; these two elements in the layout were particularly important. The table of contents should be a simple textual guide to the overall exhibit, containing the main subjects; it serves as a road map to the online UFW exhibit. This page was adapted for the textual navigation of the entire exhibit, allowing patrons to jump to the archival links wherever and whenever they liked. The UFW exhibit's main page allowed the users to get a short and precise overview of the UFW online exhibit, including primary materials and other resources. The introductory page contained no fancy graphics, and accessing it did not involve lengthy waiting for applications to download. A visit to the UFW online exhibit was viewed as analogous to an actual visit to the Reuther Library at Wayne State University; the intent was to make all visits pleasant, productive, and hassle-free.

Another design consideration regarding the UFW online exhibit was the order in which visitors viewed the information. The design was not linear, because the Web does not have the chronological order of a book. The UFW online exhibit was intended to be similar to a museum exhibit but much more. The patron was allowed to see the "next" picture but also to skip to the last picture. The UFW online exhibit also allowed patrons to skip over entire sections of the exhibit. Most importantly, the flow of the exhibit was such that, with one click of the mouse, the patron could go anywhere in the exhibit. Here is where ease of navigation comes in to play; the Web committee considered this to be the most important aspect of design of the Web site.

There are three navigation tools considered most popular for online exhibits (graphic, frame, and textual). The relative advantages and disadvantages of these approaches will be discussed in turn.

Graphic Navigation

Graphic navigation uses an image that, like a road sign, points someone in the right direction. An arrow pointing left, right, up, or down is, of course, the most commonly used graphical navigation tool and is a good way to navigate from page to page or up and down on a page. Other graphic navigation tools are graphic timetables, moving images, and icons. One consideration is the intended audience of the online exhibit: for example, icon graphics work well for children, but not for scholars.

Another consideration is that, unfortunately, a graphic is sometimes unstable in the download. If the download is not successful, the graphic will not load—thus leaving out the directions for the user. The user may refresh the page and try again but, more likely than not, the user will simply leave the Web site. Also, since an online exhibit has other pictures, the page could become very “busy-looking” to the user. If graphic navigation is used, the proper embedding of textual description should be used to ensure that, if the graphic fails, the user could still understand what must be done to move on in the exhibit. The audience of online exhibits produced by the Reuther Library is not asked to second-guess about where in the exhibit to go.

Frames

When the Reuther Library was creating the UFW exhibit in 1998, the library made a deliberate decision to avoid using frames. Aesthetically, frames were ugly and they were also causing havoc on the Web. The havoc was that browsers were not supporting frames, authoring had its problems, search engines had trouble finding frames, and users preferred to view regular versions rather than framed versions.

Today frames are completely integrated with the Web. They are one of the main navigation styles. Web designers are now creating seamless frames that do not break up Web pages into three or four different pages, and browsers are now supporting frames (somewhat). However, the Reuther Library still does not use frames for a navigation tool feeling that they are still too aesthetically unpleasing, and they can still be absolute nightmares if not done right.

One such nightmare occurs when a user bookmarks a Web site and the browser only bookmarks the parent frameset. The user might not want this frameset and is now stuck with useless information. Security can be an issue with frame-spoofing, which happens when a Web site inserts content into a frame that appears to be from another site. This can be hazardous especially if a Web site is handling e-commerce. One key reason for not using frames is that search engines still have problems with spiders finding the framesets, which causes search engines to rank the site poorly. Other

defects of frames to consider are that the interface design is very poor, accessibility is limited for users who are blind, and browsers, although supporting frames, do not support them in the same way. Those who consider using frames should understand that “while frames are not evil by default, there are many issues that must be considered before they are implemented on a site” (Roselli, 1999, pg. 1), and one of them is that frame design should be left to highly skilled Web designers.⁴

Textual Navigation

The Web committee decided that textual navigation was the best system for users, particularly in the environment of an online exhibit such as that on the UFW. Textual navigation is very easy to understand, relatively simple, and it does not force the user to guess or search in smaller screens. Some textual navigation guides can consist merely of simple messages, such as “Go Up” and “Next Page,” throughout the exhibit.

Another very useful textual navigation device is a table of contents. Users still understand the look of a traditional table of contents. The table of contents can be placed in different areas (on the left- or right-hand margin of the screen or on the bottom or top); the UFW exhibit has the table of contents on the bottom of the page, stretching horizontally across. The rationale behind this design is that, after viewing the Web page, the user has already scrolled down and he or she can continue on without scrolling back up the site.

Another type of textual navigation consists of textual “breadcrumbs,” which are increasingly popular on a majority of Web pages. Jakob Nielsen (1999) describes a breadcrumb as a “rail across the top of the page to situate the current page relative to its parent nodes and to allow users to jump up several levels in a single click” (p. 4). The UFW online exhibit uses the greater-than symbol (>) to indicate progression. Other Web sites use a colon or a slash to show the levels of hierarchy in the breadcrumb trail.

Consistency was another design issue considered by the Web committee when it prepared its UFW online exhibit. The Web is characterized by a lack of standards regarding uniformity in Web-page designs. The Reuther Library used the international standard for underlining links in blue. In fact, the UFW exhibit adhered to an explicit standard with respect to fonts, background color, navigation devices, color, text, and the types of graphics used. By maintaining a consistent look and feel in the entire Web site there is less possibility of an orphan site (a Web page that a Web browser finds after uplinking from a search engine, bypassing the homepage). Keeping some standard uniformity within a Web site allows the user to be able to readily identify the author of each page. The Reuther Library’s reliance on uniform standards does not preclude the UFW Web site from being distinctive, if not unique—even if the site is not distinctive with respect to Web design (as many less-user friendly sites are), it is distinctive with respect to its substantive content.

After considering design issues, the Web committee addressed several other technical matters in creating the UFW exhibit. Before incorporating the graphics and the accompanying text in the Web site, the Web committee initially created an HTML, text-based document. This consisted of the overall framework of each page (e.g., navigation tools, page ownership signatures, and section titles). The Web committee also checked the links and navigation devices to ensure that they worked and that the flow was seamless. Library staff who had not been involved with the UFW project were asked to test the Web site for ease of use. The Web committee felt that eyes virginal to the project were needed to find defects in navigation and style that those who had been working on the site day and night might not notice.

In considering the amount of text to use for the UFW online exhibit, the Web committee concluded that "less" is definitely "more." The computer screen is markedly different from printed text, and the human eye is still getting used to viewing computer screens: "The printed page sits fixed and still; electronic text is always in flux, flickering on and off of our computer screen" (Fowler, 1994, p. 2). A patron of an exhibit in a museum or library only wants to read, on average, about 100 words of text at one time; for an online exhibit, the Web committee felt that an average of about fifty words per page would be sufficient for Web readers, who still scan and search for information at a quick rate of speed.

An online exhibit can be created in many forms, from the very dynamic to the simplest. Sites on the Web can be multisensory opportunities for Web surfers, or they can merely provide a story that needs to be told. Most Web development tools with fancy applications that were available when the UFW exhibit was first put on the Web required hours of hands-on learning and/or large expenditures on training. If the Web committee had adopted these tools to enhance the users' experience, a majority of the time they would not have worked with older operating systems and/or certain browsers. Much time would have been required for the Reuther's Webmaster to learn these applications, and the Web committee honestly felt that visitors to the site would not be able to fully appreciate a visit to the UFW exhibit if they were forced to wait for downloads and to download plug-ins.

Currently, these plug-in applications are either standard in bundled software or can be easily downloaded for free with less frustration than was the case when the UFW online exhibit was created four years ago. The trouble is that there is still a need for training in order for Web developers to implement these applications appropriately. Fancy applications, such as Flash from Macromedia, seem to encourage needless animation, which "makes bad design more likely, it breaks with the Web's fundamental interaction style, and it consumes resources that would be better spent enhancing a site's core value" (Nielsen, 2000, p. 1). By sticking to simple design and a simple HTML code, and by utilizing hypertext, an online exhibit can

be sufficiently hassle-free so as to encourage the user to come back to the original site without waiting for downloads. By keeping things simple, more online exhibits can be produced—and can be produced relatively quickly—for the Web. An increase in the number of online exhibits will, in turn, increase labor unions' (and labor history's) presence on the Web.

As with a physical exhibit in a library or museum, the rule of "quality over quantity" applies to the Web as well. A few images and text conveying a powerful and succinct message are more effective than throwing up on the Web everything available from labor archives. The Web also relies on speed, which is expedited by less code, graphics, and animation. The faster a page downloads, the more hits are likely to occur on a Web site: "Efficient communication relies not on how much can be said, but on how much can be left unsaid—and even unread—in the background. And a certain amount of fixity, both in material documents and in social conventions of interpretation, contributes a great deal to this sort of efficiency" (Brown and Duguid, 2000, p. 205). One must decide which photos best convey information. For the UFW exhibit, a maximum of only five to six graphics were used for each subject area.

The rule regarding the display of photographs on the Web is very simple: they should be no larger than seventy-two dots per inch. Graphics should be saved in a ".gif" or ".jpeg" format, which still remains the basic standard even after many years. Graphics can be displayed in numerous fashions. For the UFW online exhibit, the Web committee decided to utilize two styles that convey messages but that also allow for exploration. One style is a basic scan with full display; a click of the mouse produces a larger graphic in another window. The second style is a small section from the photograph (for example, just a face, or a handshake). Once the user clicks on the photo, a larger picture in another window opens, exposing a larger, uncropped photo. In the UFW exhibit, a mouse click of the "arms embraced" at <http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/exhibits/fw/gains.html> produces a larger, more comprehensive photo of Cesar Chavez and Candido Taclioben embracing. A mouse click on the photograph of a woman's face results in a photo of a mother looking at her child who is dying of cancer due to agricultural pesticides (<http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/exhibits/fw/pesticide.html>).

The purpose of an online exhibit is to extend the reach of collections housed in fixed locations to geographically distant areas of the world. Incorporating in an online exhibit the most memorable holdings of libraries and labor archives can only "provide exciting and enriching contextual perspectives that appeal to all levels of researcher" (Phelan and Beaulieu, 1999, p. 5). For example, the Reuther Library's physical exhibit on the UFW's historic boycott of grapes included, as a display, the cover of a cookbook published by the UFW. By way of contrast, the comparable online exhibit allowed the patron to actually peruse recipes in the cookbook (<http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/exhibits/fw/grape.html>). This approach

provides for interaction, just by using a simple link to another graphic rather than by using plug-ins.

The Reuther Library has adopted this stratagem for other online exhibits. For example, an exhibit on the Industrial Workers of the World (www.reuther.wayne.edu/exhibits/iww.html) mentions "Solidarity Forever," "Casey Jones," and "I Thought I Saw Joe Hill," with hyperlinks to a scanned image of the song sheets. An exhibit should have a hypertextual historical piece incorporated in the narrative of a story with the primary resource in a collection. By using what is available in the stacks and collections of libraries and labor archives, an online exhibit thus provides an in-depth, educational tool that also captures the patrons' attention.

As a final check, the Reuther Library typically has a group of coworkers go through the online Web site another time. Ease of navigation, the existence of dead links, the reproduction quality of images on the site, and download speed are some of the factors examined. Also, compatibility between Netscape, Explorer, and Opera Web browsers is examined. There are many subtle differences with each application, and the resultant impact can be quite large.

After the exhibit is up and running on the Web, the Web committee registers the main page of the exhibit with the providers of search engines, and otherwise attempts to encourage patron use of the site. Registering a site is like placing information in OCLC or MARC. All search engines have a small link somewhere on their front page that allows additions of new URLs, though repeated registrations (called "spamming the engine") are ill-advised, in part because they may result in search engines banning subsequent Web site placement.

Simple site names that accurately but succinctly describe the site's subject matter lead to an increased number of hits from casual users. The URL should include the title of each subject. In the Reuther Library's URLs for UFW online exhibits of pesticides contain pages concerning pesticide-induced cancer, the grape boycott, and child labor, respectively, that end with */pesticide.html*, */grape.html*, and */child.html*. The use of "meta tags" in Web sites also increases the probability of hits from search engines. Reliance on four or five subject headings in the meta tags, as well as variations on a word, is also recommended. For example, the Reuther Library's homepage uses "labor" and "labour"; the UFW exhibit includes meta tags in both Spanish and English. Simple site names and other design considerations discussed in this paper can help to attract patrons, but the substantive content of the online exhibit must also be sufficiently compelling to generate repeated viewings by students, academics, union members, and others.

CONCLUSION

The World Wide Web has changed dramatically since the UFW exhibit was placed online four years ago. Certain applications have become very

easy; new Web software is so easy that everyone can be a Web designer. Certainly the Reuther's Web committee never envisioned what the Web would look like today and possibly that is for the better. By keeping it simple and straightforward, there has been no reason to go back and change various plug-in applications or drastically change the design of the site. Any Web page is easy to use as long as there is straightforward navigation and clear-cut Web design. The trouble begins when fancy applications are used haphazardly or without proper thought as to the purpose and potential users of the site. By keeping a site very basic, one of the most important aspects of librarianship is accomplished: getting the information to the public in a sufficient and easy manner.

By creating simple online exhibits, libraries and labor archives can greatly expand knowledge and awareness regarding labor unions and labor history. The experience of the Walter P. Reuther Library in creating online exhibits about the United Farm Workers and other aspects of working-class history suggests that effective learning and increased patron usage can be enhanced most effectively by drawing upon the best internal and external sources of information. By linking to other institutions, a hub of information can be made available in a relatively simple way.

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NOTES

1. Ten American unions have deposit agreements that state that the Walter P. Reuther Library is the official depository for their historical papers. Some of the unions financially support an archivist to care for their papers only. These unions are the Air Line Pilots, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Teachers, Association of Flight Attendants, Industrial Workers of the World, Service Employees International Union, The Newspaper Guild, United Automobile Workers, United Farm Workers Union, and the National Association of Letter Carriers. The Reuther Library also has deposit agreements with the Society of Women Engineers, Focus-Hope, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan.
2. Jerome McGann also writes about the glories of hypertext in "The Rationale of Hypertext," retrieved January 24, 2002, from <http://www.village.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/rationale.html>.
3. In addition to Helfrich's essay, another resource on museums and the Web that the committee used was Michael Douma, (2000), "Lessons learned from WebExhibits.org: Practical suggestions for good design," retrieved January 24, 2002, from <http://www.archimuse.com/mw2000/papers/douma/douma.html>.
4. For more information on frame issues, please refer to <http://www.webstandards.org>; Jakob Nielsen, (1996), <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9612.html>; and the Web Design Group, <http://www.htmlhelp.com/design/frames/whatswrong.html>.

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