Library Service Manager's Report

Accessibility Audits and #a11y Module Implementation

Much of this fall was devoted to making accessibility-related changes and fixes to over 85 OPLIN Website Kits. While Drupal (the development framework on which the Website Kits are built) was created with accessibility as part of its foundation, the implementation of some third-party modules and customized OPLIN-created features have sometimes required tweaks to better meet the criteria needed to allow assistive technology to access a site's contents more effectively.

Each site was audited using WebAIM's WAVE tool a minimum of three (3) times, resulting in three rounds of changes for each site. Rounds were prioritized from most urgent fixes (errors that would likely prevent information access) to those that would not impede access but could be improved for better accessibility.

Once these rounds of changes were completed, OPLIN was able to begin the process of implementing the #a11y module. This Drupal contributed module allows content editors to check their input for potential problems that might impair access for those with disabilities. Site administrators at each library can see if their entered content might have common problems, such as generic link text, problematic alternative text for images, poorly constructed content outlines and more.

Those libraries interested in using the #a11y module were asked to attend a brief (30 minute) live training, to better understand what the tool evaluates and some of the quirks involved in what it might report. Three separate trainings were offered in November, which staff from 23 different client libraries attended. At least 50% of these libraries are now using the #a11y module. Beginning in 2022, OPLIN will likely offer the training once a month, to encourage more clients to begin using the module.

New Sitewide Alert Feature

The old "Emergency Message" feature on the Website Kits only allowed for one style of alert and had a limit of 60 characters. This was very limiting for libraries that needed more flexibility in presenting alert messages for the public on their websites. I replaced this with a new alert system called "Sitewide Alerts." The new version allows for two different larger, visual alerts and these appear at the top of the site, not in the header. They also can be set to appear on specific pages and/or at specific dates/times. Multiple alerts can be used at a time. Reaction by client libraries to the new feature has been very positive.

DPLA export feeds from OPLIN Website Kits

OPLIN had an inquiry from a library about creating a DPLA-compatible export feed of their custom content. After working with Jennifer Johnson and Peter Kukla at the State Library, we came up with a manageable solution that would allow Drupal to provide what was needed. To create an export feed that can be harvested by DPLA, two modules are required and each content type has to be configured and mapped individually to the DPLA schema. After some discussion, we've come up with a price point for this functionality package. OPLIN will charge $600 for the modules and the mapping of one content type. After that, each content type mapping will be billed at the OPLIN custom work rate of $150/hour. We are still waiting to hear if the library would like to implement this; if they decide to go forward, we'll use them as our test case and see if this is something we can offer to other libraries as well.

Creation of Northstar Promotional Assets

Beginning in October, OPLIN began planning the rollout of the new Northstar Digital Literacy product to Ohio public libraries. We began with our booth at the 2021 Ohio Library Council Convention and Expo. I created specific booth décor geared to attract attention to the launch, as well as a flyer to explain to library staff what Northstar is and can do for patrons.

Since OPLIN's new Digital Resources Manager, Christine Morris, has come on board, progress towards launch has accelerated and I created a series of posters and social media assets that libraries can use to promote Northstar directly to patrons.

New Website Kit launches

Several new libraries launched OPLIN Website Kits since August 2021:

- Hurt/Battelle Memorial Library
- Morley Public Library
- Kaubisch Memorial Public Library

Twig templating

Since the update from Drupal 8 to Drupal 9 this spring, there has been more opportunity to start delving into the theming system. Since future updates will not

require full migrations (such as the move from Drupal 7 to 8 did), that means that more work can be done on the theme templates (the "look" of sites) without as much concern that future updates will potentially cause them to have functionality issues.

Drupal previously used the PHPTemplate engine, which allowed for PHP to be directly embedded in template files. Drupal 9 uses Twig, a newer system that uses proprietary variables instead. Although this is requiring me to learn a new system, it is inherently more secure since scripting is not being used openly in the files associated with a theme.

I've been working on developing several new options using the new system. These include a cleaner display of event information on individual event pages, rather than the default display with is not as organized as it could be (the default simply shows information as it occurs in the data, rather than in an organized table). I've also been working on a variety of new components and display options that clients could implement when creating new content. For example, being able to easily add an image with text wrapping right or left, embedding an image gallery, and more. I am hoping to roll out these options in Spring 2022.