Purdue Subject Guides (LibGuides) Standards  
(Alaina Morales, portions taken from WESC and ILOC report)  

See also: [http://guides.lib.purdue.edu/guidestandards](http://guides.lib.purdue.edu/guidestandards)  

*The purpose of the standards is to create guide consistency and create more user-friendly guides.*

1. Content  
   ● **LibGuides** are a tool for creating research guides for particular subjects or tailored to particular courses.  
     ○ Michael Witt’s [Zotero](http://zotero.org) is not strictly a ‘subject guide’ nor a ‘course information page’, but fits within the guides’ scope as an instructional piece which teaches users a tool to aid in research.  
   ● "Subject guides" and "course information pages" encompass the range of instructional information the Libraries might want to provide but does not extend to online vitas or facility/administrative information.  
     ○ For online vitas or facility/administrative information use your [department’s web space](http://lib.purdue.edu) on the libraries main web server  
     ○ There will soon be a faculty profile page (outside of LibGuides) for posting vitas, subject expertise, research, etc.  
   ● **Copyright:** It is preferable to link to copyrighted works. If a link is not available, then only post PDFs or video files to sites with restricted access such as Blackboard. Guides at Purdue are viewable by anyone, and considerations need to be made for copyrighted content. For questions or assistance contact Donna Ferullo, Director of the University Copyright Office ([ferullo@purdue.edu](mailto:ferullo@purdue.edu)).

2. Audience and Scope  
   ● **Scope**  
     ○ Guides tailored to support particular courses  
       ▪ Should follow course’s learning outcomes  
       ▪ Instructors: take advantage of guides to supplement instruction  
         ● Student absence: what is it they need to know  
         ● Distance learners/non-affiliates: provide context  
     ○ General subject-related guides  
       ▪ How to start research in this discipline  
       ▪ Tactics or resources for experienced researchers  
       ▪ Tutorials for new tools/resources at the library  
   ● **Audience**  
     If creating a general subject guide, these are some items *to consider* for your audience:  
     ○ **Beginning Researchers**  
       ▪ Guide should serve as a research starting point  
       ▪ Include key databases, journals, reference works, and websites  
       ▪ Link to key organizations  
     ○ **More Advanced Researchers**  
       ▪ Provide new library resources in the area, or more in-depth resources than what students use in lower level courses  
       ▪ Key search terms in the subject field  
       ▪ Provide in-depth instructions for using a database that is new or higher-level
- Researchers Pursuing Interdisciplinary/Special topics
  - Provide information/link to types of resources that student may be unfamiliar with
  - Provide citation information help, or link to OWL at Purdue

3. Customizing your Profile
- Upload a photo of librarian/library responsible for the content (head shots preferable or use the Libraries’ stock profile photo)
- Standardize title of profile box
  - “Contact,” or “Meet Your Librarian”
  - Include contact information for librarian/library responsible
  - Profile box only required on “home” tab. Remove it from other tabs to create more space
  - Limit number of author profile boxes to two; prioritize main contact/library information

4. Creating and Styling Guides
- Search for an existing guide on your subject or course topic before creating a new one.
- Use pre-created templates or “master boxes” to link to from your guide
  - Content updated in the parent box will propagate to the children boxes
- Use pre-created boxes to copy into your guide
  - You can make edits as necessary without changing the original.
- Consult MEL research guide templates if applicable; work within your department to create standard boxes to save time and improve consistency.
- Introduce scope and audience in “Description”—no more than 1-2 sentences.
  - To do this: “Guide Settings,” “Change Guide Information”
- Establish hierarchy in the guides for the user. The first tabs and boxes should be the most important
- Use statistics to assess guide and edit sources as necessary
- Naming:
  - Course guide
    - Course number: topic of course/name of course (*Many students do not know their course numbers, please include additional identifiers in the title so your guide will appear in students’ search.)
    - ex.: BADM 590: Brand Management
  - General guide
    - General subject guide example: Asian Studies
- Tabs:
  - Keep tab titles short (four words or less)
  - Capitalize tab titles
  - If applicable to guide content, limit row of tabs to one
- Boxes:
  - Choose the box type that best suits your content. Most frequently used boxes:
    - Web Links (ideal for quick links; keeps stats)
    - Links and Lists (best for annotations; allows users to rate resources; keeps stats)
      - Annotate links. Create relevancy for the user: Why is this useful? Why are you including this on your page? (1-2 sentences per annotation)
    - Rich text box (does not track link statistics, but useful for variety of content)
    - RSS feeds
    - Google search boxes
Embedded video boxes
- Books from the catalog
  - Other boxes that may be useful
    - Documents and files (add a handout)
    - User input boxes (ask for user feedback)

- Naming boxes and tabs:
  - Be consistent in naming
  - Be as specific as possible. Try to avoid tab names like “other” or “additional information.”

- Adjusting column-width
  - Adjust column width to avoid empty space and make the most of available real estate
    - To do this: “Add/Edit pages,” “Resize columns,” choose default options or customize
  - Generally do a 3 column on page 1, and then can switch to 2 or 1 column on later pages

- Use “purl” links
  - Example: link to “My Library Account” (http://purl.lib.purdue.edu/db/mylib)
  - Use “Master Link List guide” of library databases

- Choose “Add proxy URL to the front of this link” option for database/on-campus resources in “Simple Web Links” and “Links and Lists” boxes

- **Bold or underline important text**, rather than changing the font color or font size (meets usability and accessibility standards)

- **Link to Ask a Librarian chat widget from “MEL-templates”**

### 5. Minimalist design
- Keep paragraphs short (3-5 sentences)—website users are known for scanning
- Limit lists of links (websites, databases, etc.) to no more than the 10 most important
- Merge two or more tabs that contain only one box, if it follows the organization/structure of content
- Subject guide can only be indexed under one subject, use tags to create additional findability
- The Quick Links box and Ask a Librarian chat widget are not required on every tab.
  - The Quick Links box is not necessary to include in your guides.
- Customize the guide URL with a “friendly” URL
  - To do this: “Guide Settings” in toolbar, “Change Guide Information” at bottom of window

### 6. General Subject Guides vs. Course Specific Guides
- Pull out course specific tabs from general subject guides if tabs have enough content to stand alone
  - Does the tab contain several boxes? Does the tab have a sub-tab? Does the user have to scroll more than once to see all the information presented?
  - Tag guide with general subject so users can search and find
- If applicable, link to course specific guides from general subject guides and vice versa

### 7. Accessibility
- Add a short description in the Image Description field in the “Insert/Edit Image” screen (this adds an ALT tag to your image)
- Avoid copying and pasting content from outside sources
- Check your guide against the WAVE tool if you are comfortable doing so—using the print version of the page (http://wave.webaim.org/)
• Links open in the same window (use system default)
• Font format is consistent throughout your guide (style, color, size).
• Are you linking to another guide within your guide? Include a description informing users that clicking on the tab will take them to a new guide.
  o (Example: “links to XYZ guide” or “opens XYZ guide in new tab.” Something concise so users know they will be dropped into a different guide or new tab)

8. Implementation
• Delete profile boxes, quick links box, and chat widget that appear on more than one tab
• Update profile box to new standardized name
• Merge tabs with single or few boxes
• Edit guides for conciseness
• Make course tabs under general subject guides independent course guide if it can stand alone
• Standardize font style, color and size within guide

9. Uploading Videos to YouTube & Embedding into LibGuides
• Save video in Upload Videos folder under Instructional Technologies on S: drive.
• Notify Kate Kester, Marketing Associate (kkester@purdue.edu) and she will upload it to YouTube. Provide her with a sentence description of tutorial and any “tags” or “keywords” to associate with video.
• At LibGuides, create a Multimedia box>Embedded media & widgets type.
• At the YouTube site, select the share button, and then select embed.
• Copy and paste the code into your LibGuide media box.
• You can resize the width and height depending on your column layout.

10. Creating a Widget for Blackboard Learn
• From your Dashboard menu choose the Tools drop-down (click Dashboard to get to menu).
• Select Widgets. Choose the blue link “Create Widget.” (Once you have created widgets they will live here).
• In the “Add/Edit Widget” box, choose widget size; add a catalog search bar which will display on the bottom border of the widget; include a list of the most recent/popular guides at Purdue; choose color of widget; name your widget; and enter introductory text.
• You can choose to display all of your published guides; a guide selected at random; guides with the same tag; or manually select a list of guides to share. Save
• Based on your preferences, LibGuides will generate a code which you can share with the instructor of your course (or anyone you choose).
• You or the instructor can then paste the code into the course site, which will populate the site with your widget.
• You have the option to preview, edit, or delete your widget once it’s created.
• You can create as many widgets as you want.

11. Resources and Support
• For assistance on effectively redesigning your guide contact Virtual User Experience Specialist Alaina Morales (moralea@purdue.edu) or consult the online guide (http://guides.lib.purdue.edu/guidestandards).
• For technical questions about the LibGuides software or to request instruction and training, contact ITD through a FootPrints ticket (http://www.lib.purdue.edu/cso)