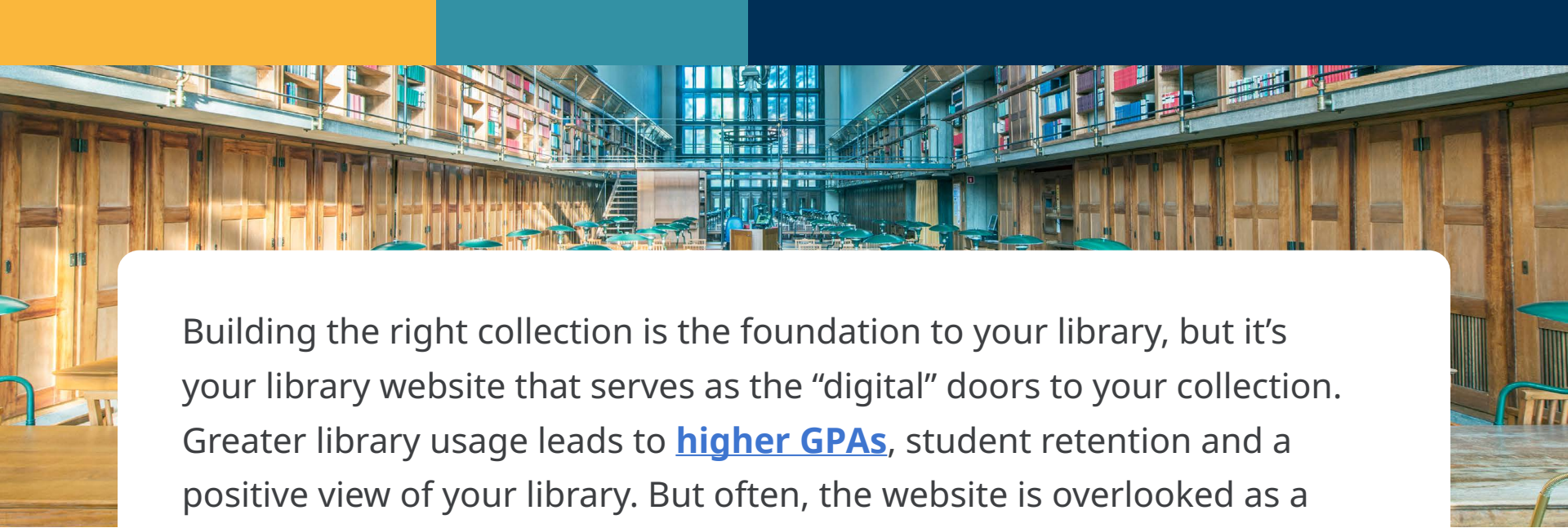


The image is a composite of two photographs. The top photograph shows a high-angle view of a modern library's upper level, featuring large glass windows and a glass railing. The bottom photograph shows a lower level with bookshelves, study tables, and chairs. A person is visible in the background, sitting at a table. The text "How to Build the Case for a New Library Website" is overlaid on the top photograph. The EBSCO Stacks logo and website URL are overlaid on the bottom photograph.

How to Build the Case for a New Library Website

EBSCO Stacks
www.stacksdiscovery.com



Building the right collection is the foundation to your library, but it's your library website that serves as the “digital” doors to your collection. Greater library usage leads to [higher GPAs](#), student retention and a positive view of your library. But often, the website is overlooked as a library-centric element, and as a result are often managed by the wrong department or hosted on an incomplete platform. This “mis-ownership” can lead to unexpected costs, technical issues and overall dissatisfaction with your library website.

As the staff of the library, you should also have **ownership over the library website**, ensuring that every integration, research guide, content zone and banner created set live can be quickly updated by you.

Building a business case for this type of ownership may seem like a difficult dance. **This guide can help.**



Why Does Your Library Website Matter?

Layers of pages and links make it difficult for students and faculty members to navigate to the resources and services they need. In order to remain relevant to library end-users, your library must be a place that they can easily connect to and find what they are looking for. Even the best libraries with the best collections and content can fall short if the user experience of the library website is sub-par.

In addition, if your library team does not have administrative access to the website and must rely on other departments to make changes, then content, integrations and timely (and needed) changes are constantly at risk.

If your library website is designed well, follows user experience (UX) best practices and is maintained by the library team, it ensures that users will know where to click, search and navigate to find exactly what they are looking for – no matter the device they are on.

BB

“We had a lot of **flexibility** to make the website our own. Stacks really took a lot of **work off my plate** and **stress out of my life**. It’s a great product.”

Stephanie Kaceli,
Assistant Director

Cairn University
Masland Library

Elements for a Successful Library Website

Aesthetics is Key

Implementing a CMS platform built on user experience best practices will incorporate the best of UX both on the front-end and on the administrator-end.

Search Front and Center

Users have been conditioned through their own personal web experiences to expect a search box, front and center. This natural expectation will also be applied to your library website.

Scannability

Users eyes tend to follow an [F-Shape](#) pattern — scanning across the top first, then down the middle and finally partially through the middle of the website. When it comes to optimizing your library website for “scannability,” think about the most important items and resources to your users and arrange in that pattern.

Simplicity

A library website with clear, simple, active language aims to help users understand what the site offers and what actions they can take on the website.

Organization

Content hierarchy as well as options for search configurations allow your library to tailor the website to users based on their interactions and present resources in an easily digestible way.

Be Where Your Users Are

Mobile and tablet usage has continued to climb, with [reports](#) citing that Internet usage by these devices has finally exceeded that of desktops. Pew Research Center noted in their [Libraries 2016 report](#) which focused on American libraries, that half of those who visited a library website did so on a hand-held device. These kinds of statistics are showing loud and clear that mobile access is not just a trend, but here to stay.

Building a mobile-friendly library website means that you are remaining relevant in the community and responding to your user needs.

What is a Mobile-First Strategy?

A mobile-first strategy means a few things:

First, that your library website is designed first for a smaller screen and features and content are then added for larger screens. Second, displayed elements should respond to the user's behavior based on their screen size as well as the platform they are using (think Android vs. iOS). A mobile-first strategy also takes into consideration how a user is accessing a website. For example, "heavy" design elements like sliders, videos, will slow down the load time of your library website and will become more bothersome. Google has begun to penalize non-responsive websites, ultimately affecting page ranking.

Improving the ROI

A library-centric CMS platform which builds your library website will raise usage of your collection through key integrations but taking this platform a step further to have a user-friendly administrator dashboard gives time and effort back to your staff (think, no more IT requests). Let's explore more in detail.

Integrations

Core library integrations such as ILS, book jackets, discovery or LibGuides should fall under a plug-and-play approach within your CMS platform. This helps to avoid unexpected costs, risks and custom development work saving your department time and money development.

Self-Service

A dashboard-driven interface empowers staff to create brilliant and engaging content with ease. The content management system should allow for you to promote programs and manage registrations in the same place people search, place holds, or access content.

Sustainable

A product that is part of a subscription service means an annual license fee guaranteeing all your integrations will be maintained, software and hardware updates are taken care of and security remains at an industry best. This means platform maintenance is taken care of behind the scenes so you can focus without any surprise costs.

BB

“The Stacks content management system avoids the need for expensive customized custom development by incorporating tools that can be configured and populated by libraries themselves to produce a customized website.”

Marshall Breeding,
*Founder, Editor at
Library Technology
Guides*

Let's Get Down to Business

This section will take you through the key stages and areas you need to consider as you prepare your business case.

Before you start, are there any previous web projects you need to be aware of? If they have not been successful, then make sure you factor in any lessons learned into your own business case and project plans. And look for any internal expertise that you can make use of.



Objectives

By the time you start writing your business case, your high-level objectives – **the goals you want to meet and the problems you need to solve** – should be clear. Failure to define your objectives will mean problems later, especially when working out costs. That said, as you engage stakeholders and maybe potential suppliers, for example, you might revisit and refine your objectives.

Stakeholder Engagement

With any business case, identifying the key decision-maker and budget-holder is crucial. You will need to compose your central arguments and shape your proposal around those individual people, their capabilities and their responsibilities. The key stakeholder you identify will have a direct bearing on the form that your business case document eventually takes, in terms of format, structure, tone and level of detail. Stakeholder engagement isn't just something you do in the background to help your business case succeed. It should also be a section in your business case document, outlining the key areas of need and how your proposal meets them.

Identifying the primary stakeholders requires you to ask this question: "why is a separate library web strategy important?" And then you should consider to whom it matters most.

Stakeholder Examples:

- Users (students and faculty)
- Operational Staff
- IT
- Senior Management or Business Case Sponsor

Outline for a Successful Business Case

Once you're ready to produce your business case, you need to decide on the best format for the specifics of your organization and project. The likelihood is that you will have to write a formal proposal of some type. To structure your proposal, follow this checklist to make sure you have included sections that your stakeholders expect to see:

- Executive summary – Including a high-level summary of recommendations
- Introduction – Background information, objectives and problem statement
- Business drivers and anticipated benefits – Targeting the appropriate stakeholder type
- Fully quantified cost-benefit analysis
- Project overview
- Solution description, with options if applicable
- Timeline
- Budget
- Success criteria
- Recommendations

Start with Stacks

Stacks is the first turnkey, responsive web platform with plug and play integrations and mobile apps connected in real time.

Empowering librarians to create world-class library experiences by bringing local content, catalogs, and electronic resources together. Stacks creates a seamless user experience on any device, anywhere.

A Seamless and Integrated Experience – On Any Device

Stacks creates a modern “one stop shop” for library users. The platform brings the discovery experience into your library website with library collections, local content and services together in one place. Manage events, room bookings, locations, users, content creation and more through a single responsive interface.

Enhanced Search

With several configurable search options and exclusive *EBSCO Discovery Service™* Integrations, the right resources and content will always be surfaced, helping to improve usage.

Sustainable Integrations

All Stacks integrations are plug and play meaning there are no risks or costs associated with custom development. Stacks ensures industry leading maintenance and support when compared to any other unique implementations available.

Seamless Subscription

One affordable annual license fee guarantees all your integrations will be maintained, software and hardware updates are taken care of and security remains at an industry best.

Are you ready to build the case?

Your library is unique, which should be reflecting by your library website experience. Stacks empowers you to create a world-class library experience – **all on your own.**

[Learn More](#)

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www.stacksdiscovery.com