

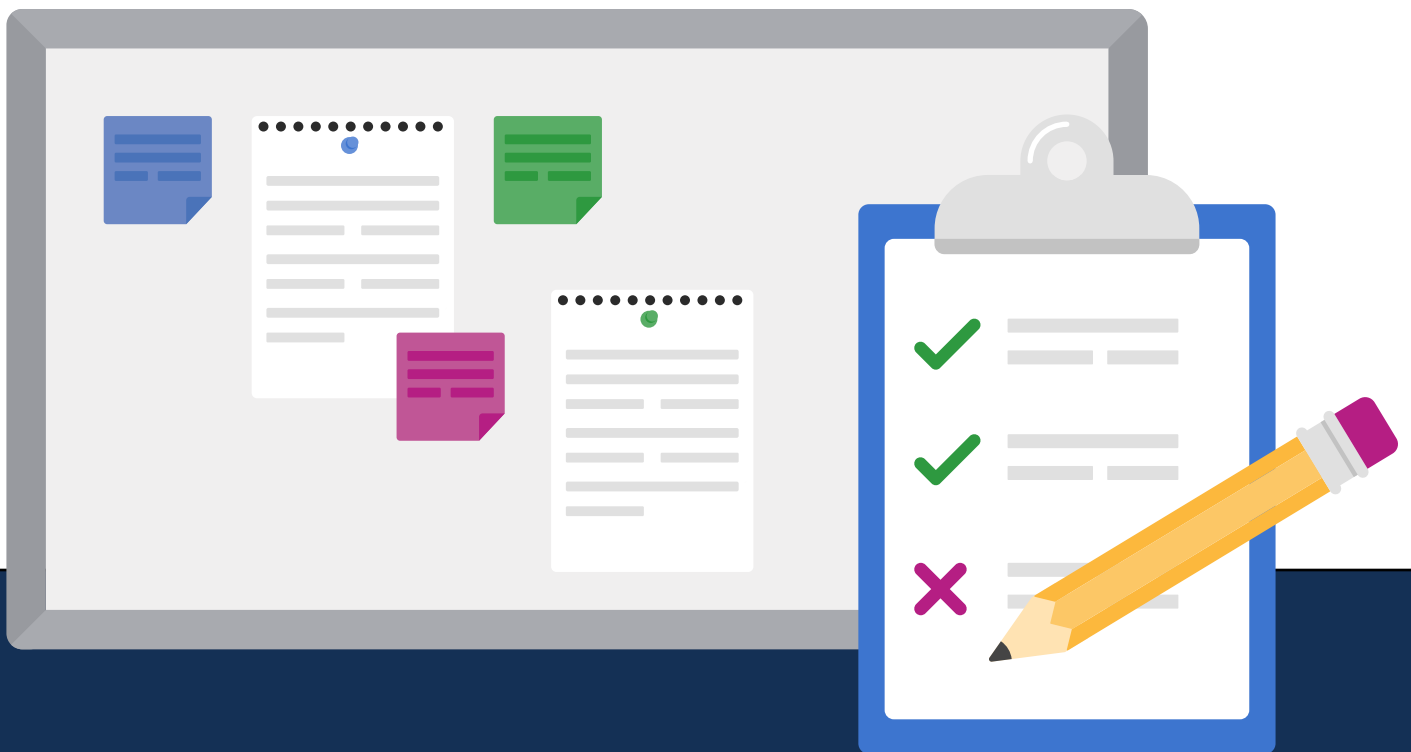
The Dos and Don'ts of Your Library Website

Your library needs a website that is fluid, intuitive and can be easily managed by your staff. Learn what are the “dos” for an effective library website and what mistakes you should avoid.



1. Don't Just “Wing” the Planning of Your Library Website

The first thing your library should do is complete a web design project plan. This ensures that there is alignment among all involved and that clear roles and timelines are established to work against. The template will serve as the project framework and ensure that your website transition and launch will be executed efficiently.



2. Don't Clutter

Your library has a lot of information and resources to offer. The challenge is getting researchers to that information quickly. It can be tempting to try to put lots of information and resources on the homepage of your library website. But too much can feel overwhelming and unnavigable. Information Architecture is the way that you organize the information on your website so that it can be easily found and accessed by your users. Information Architecture includes your menu items, categories of information, where you place your content on your website, and the words you use to define the content (vocabulary). These simple steps can help your team to organize information in an effective way.

1. Think about the mission and goals of your organization. Review your strategic plan or plan of service.
2. Make an inventory of the content that is currently on your site.
3. Define your user groups -- who uses your site and what tasks do they do on the site?
4. What would you like to add to your website? Do you have any new services or resources that you would like to promote?
5. Review any analytics that you can access. Which features of your current website get the most use?



3. Don't Use Technical Language

People tend to scan rather than read on the web. Make sure that you are matching this intent with the copy on your library website. Using clear, concise, action-oriented language will connect researchers to the right areas on your medical library website and will also ensure that any users on mobile devices will have a consistent experience as those on a desktop.



4. Do Start With a Visually Appealing Library Website

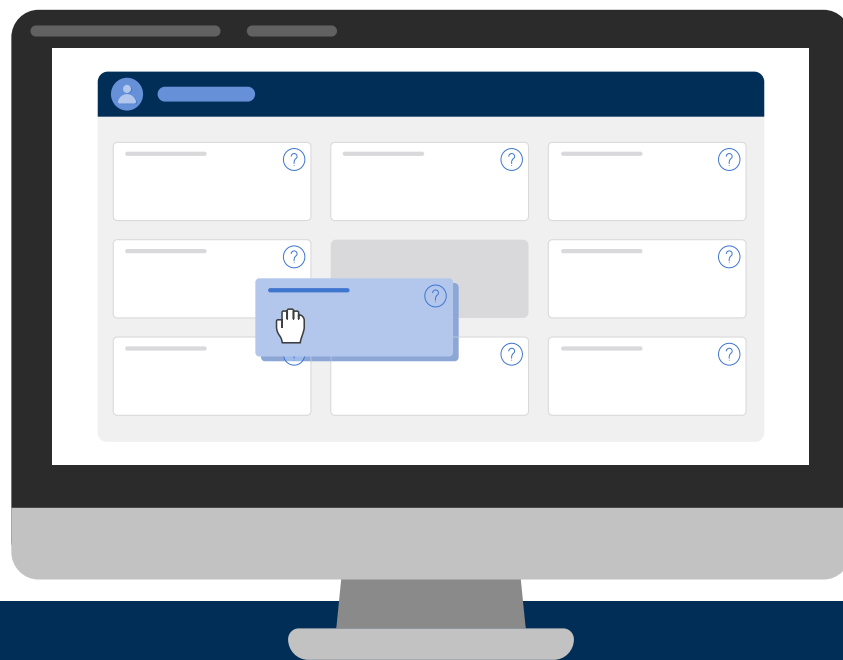
Choose visual elements for your library website that relate to your academic institution's brand and/or logo. Colors, fonts and images should match or complement your brand style. Limit the number of colors to create visual consistency. The strategic use of white space on your site ensures that your library website is readable and quickly scannable. White space creates balance on the page and allows users to concentrate on the content. The hierarchy of content on the page shows the importance of information. Hierarchy is shown by font size, colors and placement on the page. The most important content is generally at the top of the page.

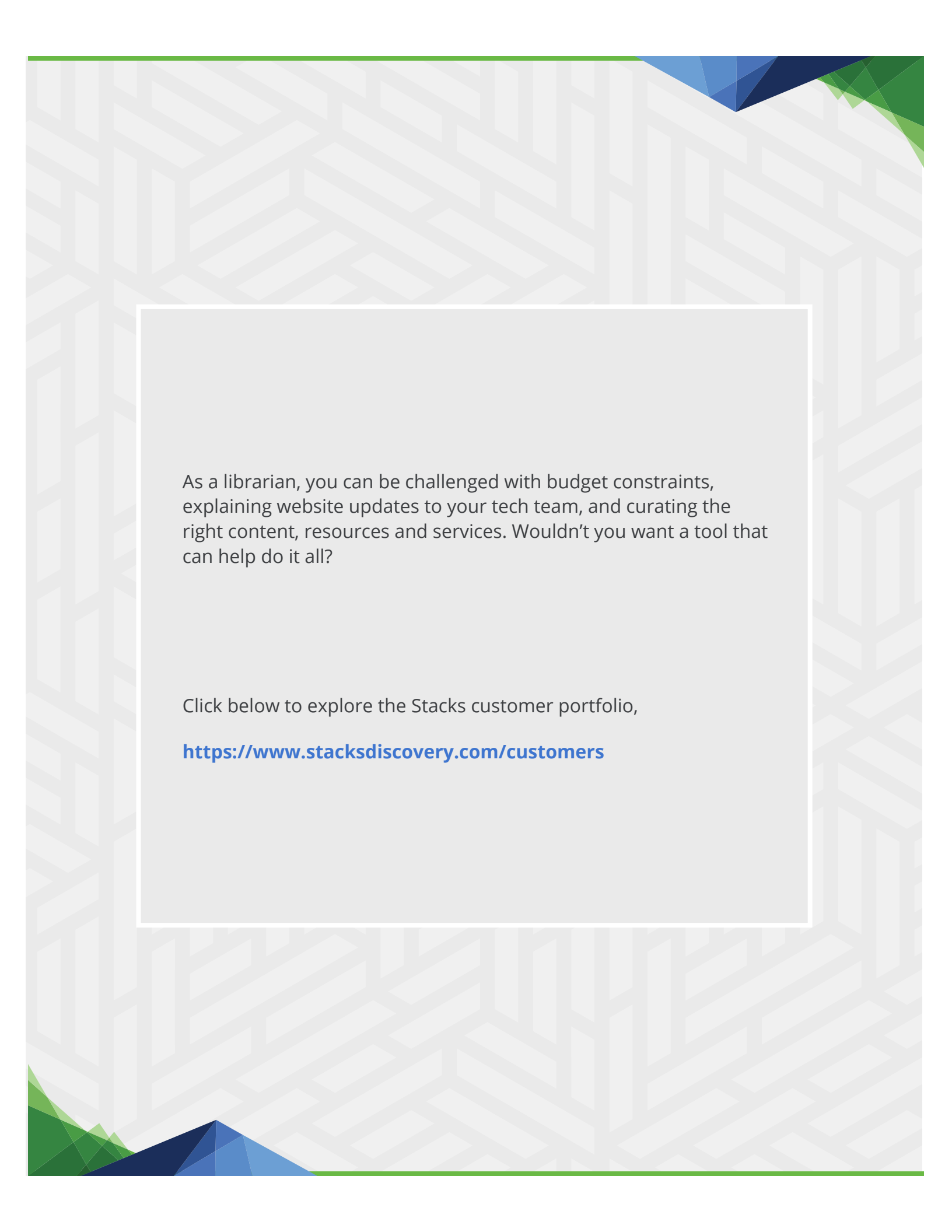
5. Do Ensure That Content, Discovery and Authentication Can Be Easily Integrated

Your library website should be able to easily integrate all content and technology to assist in the search of content. Content including your subscription services, open-access content, content you create, proprietary collections and institutional repositories should all be easily integrated into your medical library website. If you utilize a discovery platform, that should also be an element which can easily be integrated into your library website. Because your library website serves researchers, a clear starting point with a search box will ensure usage and match their UX expectations.

6. Do Have an Easy-to-Use Administrator Dashboard

Making an easy front-end experience should not require a laborious “administrator” experience. Look for a web-based library platform that offers an intuitive administrative dashboard. For example, drag-and-drop elements allow for quick changes that require no coding (on your end) to your website. In addition, all main elements of your library website should be clearly displayed for anyone on your team to access. The fluidity of the administrator dashboard is key to ensuring that your library website runs like a well-oiled machine.





As a librarian, you can be challenged with budget constraints, explaining website updates to your tech team, and curating the right content, resources and services. Wouldn't you want a tool that can help do it all?

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