Guiding Ohio Online

Level Up: Create or update a Handout

Create a guide to help users become comfortable with a library technology service (for example, downloading ebooks to a personal device, connecting to the library's wireless network, or using the catalog).

Here are some tips for good design:

1. Fonts

- Use only one or two fonts.
- Does your font choice convey the tone you'd like? What would appeal to the audience you're expecting?
- Is your font choice readable?

2. Text

- Correlate the amount of text in your handout to the complexity/length of your program.
- Chunk the text into easy-to-read, digestible bullets.
- Want to set off key text points? Add visuals – like shading, boxes or arrows.

3. White space

- Improves readability.
- Directs a viewer's eyes.
- Creates a clean and refreshing visual effect.
- White space isn't wasted space – it allows the important content to remain the focus.

Tips For Writing Great Content

- Use power words. Action verbs (like those used in a resume) add punch and interest.

- Use conversational terms, not library jargon.
- If you want to preserve the shell of the program, follow an outline format.
- Choose carefully, giving just enough detail for the handout to stand on its own.
- Include a call to action –what would you like patrons to do?
- Find a way to make the content memorable. For example, post a podcast of storytime songs for parents.
- Have at least one staff member or AmeriCorps member proofread the document for you: your eye will miss the typos.
- Before you distribute the handout, have at least three patrons use it. Ask them what was helpful and what tripped them up or confused them. Make changes based on this feedback.

How will you know the handout was effective?

- Do your patrons look at the handout? Make notes on it?

- Did you or your coworkers get verbal feedback on it?

Use an active measure of success:

- If you listed books on the handout, did circulation for those books increase?

- Was there an increase in use of the digital service?

- Were all the handouts taken?