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**Between the Stacks, 09-2023**

Anna Swearengen

Michelle Dry

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Accessibility Committee

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Between the Stacks: September 2023

The University Libraries Internal Monthly Newsletter

September 2023

Events & More

Upcoming Events in September
• **University Libraries Colloquium** – September 15, 10-11:30AM, McWherter 2nd Floor Commons. Shelia Gaines will present “Always Writing: The Joys and Challenges of Being A Creative Writer.” *More details and a calendar invite coming soon!*

• **Tigers Speak (CWC & RIS Workshop Series)** – September 18, 11AM-2PM, Theater Building Lobby. [Learn more>](#)

• **Local Elections Matter: How the Race to Lead Memphis Will Shape Our Lives** (Government Publications Event) – September 19, 1:30-2:30PM, McWherter 2nd Floor Commons. Join us for an engaging conversation with a panel of experts to discuss the importance of local Memphis elections how to learn more about this year’s candidates before casting your ballot. Pizza will be available to attendees. *A flyer with more details coming soon!*

• **No Stress Success Series: Stress Management 101** (SHCS Workshop Series hosted by the Libraries) – September 20, 3-4PM, McWherter 2nd Floor Commons. *This event is free & open to all.*

• **An Evening with Christopher Priest** (Honors College Event hosted by the Libraries) – September 22, 4-5:50PM, McWherter 2nd Floor Commons. *This event is free & open to all.* [Learn more>](#)

• **Graduate Fall Exploration Night** (Campus-Wide Event) – September 25, 4-6:30PM, Rose Theatre. *The Libraries will have a table.*
Announcements
• Make sure to check out the **Memphis State University Campus Life Gallery**, the new Special Collections exhibit of MSU images from the 60s, 70s, and 80s, now on display on McWherter’s 2nd, 3rd & 4th floors by the restrooms.

• You can also enjoy viewing a series of **UofM pride-themed images** of Pouncer, Tom the Tiger, and more from Special Collections which will be displayed regularly on the digital signage TV in the McWherter rotunda.

• **The Libraries & CWC won the campus-wide Career Closet Donation Drive contest** for most donations! More details will be shared soon about the upcoming Sapphire Award event where the Libraries will formally receive the award. Thank you to everyone who contributed items and helped make a difference in the future success of our students!

• **The Music Library** officially reopened as of August 7 after its summer renovations.

• McWherter Library returned to **regular hours** for the Fall term as of August 28. [View all Libraries hours](#)

**Employee Spotlights**

• **Ryan Franklin** is now the Mail Clerk in Libraries Administration. Welcome, Ryan!

• **Robert Watson** is now the Digital Content Specialist in Libraries Administration. Welcome, Robert!

• **Marie Peeples** will be the new Electronic Resources Librarian beginning September 1. Congrats!

• **Casey Parkman** will be the new Digital Initiatives Librarian beginning September 1. Congrats!

• **Olivia Chin** will be the new Lambuth Campus Librarian beginning September 1. Congrats!

• Our Executive Director, **Dr. John Evans**, announced that he will retire on April 30, 2024.

• **Roderick Burns** received the Harriet R. Montgomery Service Excellence Award for Academic Affairs. Congrats, Roderick!

Using Plain Language

By Carl Hess

It is frustrating to read a paragraph and realize you did not understand what it said. Confusing writing is a problem for everyone, but it can be more of a problem for people with cognitive or memory disabilities. Writing in plain language helps solve the problem. PlainLanguage.gov defines plain language as “communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it.” Avoiding complex language such as jargon is important when writing in plain language, and clear document structure is also essential. Use plain language to help people with cognitive, intellectual, mental health, and learning disabilities as well as people with print disabilities, language learners, and people unfamiliar with the topic written about.

So, how do we write more plainly? The Center for Plain Language suggests five steps for plain language:

1. Name your audience and identify what they need from the communication.

2. Structure your writing to guide the reader to what they need. Make sure things flow logically, keep sections short, and use descriptive headings.

3. Write in clear language, which includes using short sentences, putting valuable information first, focusing on details the reader needs, and using familiar words. The University of Michigan also suggests defining any jargon, abbreviations, or acronyms that cannot be avoided.
4. Design the page with headings, fonts, whitespace, and supplemental images.
5. Test to make sure the language is clear to your reader.

Resources on Plain Language
- **Plain Language For Everyone, Even Experts [video]**: overview of the value of using plain language from the user experience experts at the Nielsen Norman Group.
- **PlainLanguage.gov**: supplies plain language guidelines, checklists, examples, and training. The resources are useful for anyone but are designed for federal agencies following the Plain Writing Act of 2010.
- **Writing in Plain Language | University of Michigan**: quick introduction to plain language, when to use it, and how to use it.
- **Hemingway App**: checks your writing for readability, passive voice, complicated words, and unnecessary adverbs.
- **Readability Analyzer**: gives multiple readability scores for your writing.

Upcoming Accessibility Trainings
- **Webinar: Transforming Libraries Through Trauma-Informed Services**
  - Shows how trauma affects individuals and how to design services to work with patrons with trauma.
  - Wednesday, September 20 at 1:00 PM Central
  - Niche Academy
- **Webinar: 5 Steps to an Accessible Document**
  - Introduction to basic accessibility improvements in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.
  - Thursday, September 21 at 1:00 PM Central
  - Network of the National Library of Medicine
- **Webinar: Accessibility Bites: Assistive Technology**
  - Demonstration of common assistive technologies and their settings.
  - Thursday, September 28 from 2:00-2:30 PM Central
  - BCcampus

Contact & Follow Us
- Planning events for the fall semester? Plan at least a month ahead! We have a new **Marketing Resources page** on the Libraries intranet site. Be sure to review this page for your event and marketing requests. It contains many FAQs.
• Want something included in the weekly email, monthly newsletter, or on social media? Email the Libraries marketing team at lib_marketing@memphis.edu.

• Don't forget to follow @UofMLibraries on Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram or YouTube to learn about upcoming events, interesting resources & more! Highlighted events can also be found on the Libraries homepage.