

Library 2.0: Inexpensive Web Site Redesign



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If your library, organization, or group is considering a Web site redesign, or if you are creating a new site, there are several free and useful Web-based tools to assist in this process. One such product is iPlotz, www.iplotz.com.

The iplotz software allows users to create clickable, navigable mockups, and wireframes for prototyping a Web site. By using a *wireframe*, the user is able to see an illustration that provides a visual representation of the Web page's layout, the relationships between a site's pages, and the overall structure of the Web site. The iPlotz software allows anyone to create a basic site wireframe that can be browsed and commented on in the collaborative world of Web 2.0 applications.

To get started, simply set up a free, basic account at the iPlotz home page. This allows a user to create one project consisting of up to five pages. Because it is Web-based, it is compatible with multiple computing platforms (Mac, Windows, Linux, etc.) that can utilize the Adobe Flash Player.

To create a wireframe, begin by creating a new page, choosing a size and background color for it. Then drag-and-drop items from the menu on the left to add buttons, image placeholders, and video – any typical content on a standard or iPhone-style Web page. Save your design as a page, or make it a "master" page and build others based on it. Add links to buttons and images to allow for navigation through the site. Then preview your site to test it.

Once your wireframe is arranged and working satisfactorily, it can be shared with others by sending a link to the site via e-mail. Your contributors can place comments directly on the site, much like comments attached to cells in Microsoft Excel. Or you can share editing rights, allowing colleagues to refine and improve your design. Once completed, you can print a Web site page, or export it in one of several graphic formats, and send it on to your Web designer for implementation.

For larger projects, iPlotz offers monthly and annual subscriptions, or you can purchase and download the software directly. The site offers a couple of demonstration videos and online support via a users' forum, a feedback form or instant messaging. The application is quite new (now at version 1.5), having been first published in January 2009, and is updated regularly.

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Illustrating the Relationship between the University Libraries' Annual Turnstile Counts and the Addition of Public Access Computers

Evaluation is an important aspect of offering any program or service. Analyzing data helps to inform decisions about the allocation of financial and human resources.

For example, in fiscal year 2004-2005, we added more public computer workstations for use by students and faculty. We tied all of the computers together through a key server to allow the Libraries to offer all of the common software used on campus through all of our workstations.

The chart shows fiscal year turnstile counts (2003-2009), with an estimate for FY 2008-2009, and the number of computers in service for these same periods.

It turns out that the mathematical correlation between the number of computer workstations and our turnstile counts is $r = 0.92$, a strong correlation coefficient. Although not shown on the graph, there is also a strong correlation with the University Libraries' expanding open hours for the same six-year period, {95.5, 105.5, 120.5, 120.5, 120.5, 120.5}. ■

