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That's My Bailiwick

Paul A. Soderdahl
University of Iowa

Carol Ann Hughes

Comments

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Paul Soderdahl

Carol Ann Hughes

University of Iowa Libraries
Iowa City, Iowa

The University of Iowa Libraries' Information Arcade has embarked on a new electronic publishing project. Bailiwick is a space where academic passions can be realized in digital media as highly specialized Web sites. Bailiwick web sites are experimental in nature, provide comprehensive scholarly resources, support an unique electronic tool, or explore a narrow, highly specialized topic. The success of each Bailiwick depends upon the trust that site creators have in the facilities and staff of the Information Arcade. A unique service model is employed that provides consultation with liaisons who have academic backgrounds as well as design and technical expertise.

The University Libraries' Information Arcade has embarked on a new electronic scholarly publishing project. Bailiwick is a space on the World Wide Web where academic passions can be realized in HTML and other digital media as highly specialized and creative Web sites. Bailiwick is home to academic Web sites that are experimental in nature, that provide comprehensive scholarly resources, support an unique electronic tool, or explore a narrow, highly specialized topic.

Bailiwick is not just a space for personal home pages; it serves a different purpose than course Web sites or academic departmental information servers. It provides a Web space for faculty, staff, and graduate students to experiment and focus on a particular area of scholarly interest (or, as Joseph Campbell writes, "to follow their bliss") in digital form. The success of each Bailiwick depends largely upon the trust that faculty and students have in the facilities and staff of the University of Iowa Libraries Information Arcade.

The award-winning Information Arcade opened in the fall of 1992 as a new type of computer facility. Physically located in the University of Iowa's Main Library, the Information Arcade is a place that provides access to published electronic information resources coupled with state-of-the-art multimedia development workstations that allow faculty and students to digitize and manipulate source materials that are not already in electronic form. The facility also houses an fully networked electronic classroom, with 24 student workstations, where classes from throughout the University are held — some for the whole term and others for one or two class sessions. Shortly after it opened, the Information Arcade won the American Library Association/Meckler "Library of the Future" award. And if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the Information Arcade is flattered indeed, with facilities based on the "Information

Arcade concept" continuing to be established at libraries and computing centers across the country.

But the Information Arcade is a facility with unique service mission. The Information Arcade's mission statement is "to facilitate the integration of new technologies into teaching, learning, and research." Perhaps the most critical element in achieving this mission, far beyond providing the equipment and networking, is a large and diverse public services staff that can work closely with faculty and students, often one-on-one, to help them harness the technology and integrate it effectively into their teaching and research. The Arcade is staffed with a number of graduate assistants selected from a variety of academic programs. The Arcade's staffing model is designed to achieve a balance of technologists, information specialists, graphics artists, and instructional designers. The primary benefit of this unique staffing arrangement is that the Arcade is much more than just another computer or library lab, but rather a place where faculty and students can find qualified consultants trained in a subject specialty with expertise in almost any area related to technology.

It is because of this environment that the Information Arcade is uniquely suited to be a place for innovation and risk-taking on the University of Iowa campus. It is a place where ideas can be fleshed out, a place that can respond to the real technology needs that faculty and students present. It is above all a place where one can establish a "bailiwick" in which one can harness and exploit the Web and other new technologies, permitting new models of publishing with multimedia, hyptertext, and the ability to incorporate anything already "out there" in digital form.

The Information Arcade Service Environment

When the Information Arcade first opened, it was the only fully wired electronic classroom on campus, with a workstation at every student's desk. Now, several more classrooms exist in buildings around campus. In 1992, the Information Arcade was the only publicly accessible facility on campus where any faculty member or student could create digital video on a drop-in basis. Or where anyone could anonymously access the Internet for free. These are now both mainstays in a number of computer labs on campus. Last year, we became the first to offer a MOO server to any faculty member, and this year we will become the first to offer a streaming audio and video server for use in any university course. These are the sorts of innovative uses of the technology that get "proven" first in the Information Arcade and eventually become integrated as standard services provided by academic computing services elsewhere.

Beyond simply providing access to hardware and software, the Information Arcade serves as a place that listens attentively to the needs of faculty and students. Staff listen carefully that they might identify the most appropriate technologies to help respond to those (possibly) unarticulated yet heartfelt needs. Long before the web existed, faculty would come to the Information Arcade looking for guidance on navigating the Internet, which led us to develop the "Gateway to the Internet," still a primary resource tool across campus. When faculty and students alike identified as one of their highest priorities off-campus access to IP-restricted databases, the Information Arcade not only worked with academic computing to implement a proxy server, as many other universities have done. But we went further and established a persistent URL (PURL) server. The PURL server is a tool to "self-market" the proxy server. It provides a very user-friendly,

customized "intervention" webpage that informs users about the proxy server and provides configuration instructions only at the point where users first attempt to access one of the many licensed IP-restricted databases from off-campus.

It is in this spirit that the Information Arcade staff conceived of the Bailiwick Server as a potentially invaluable resource to faculty and graduate students on the University of Iowa campus.

The Motivation for Bailiwick

The Information Arcade's primary clientele matches that of the Main Library at large--faculty and students in the humanities and social sciences. In many ways, these disciplines have been traditionally underfunded with respect to technology. Yet they tend to use some of the most creative applications of the technology in their everyday teaching and research.

For a number of years, academic departments in the humanities and social sciences have been able to mount departmental information on the University's central web server that is maintained by academic computing. More recently, two centrally administered course web servers have been made available to any faculty member or teaching assistant offering a credit course. Based on feedback from faculty and graduate students, however, we learned that there was no place for a research idea or other academically oriented pet project to be published on the web. Instead, faculty and students needed to bury these somewhere on a personal home page, often with a commercial Internet service provider and at their own expense. We felt there was a need to provide a well-respected, institutionally supported web server for just this sort of electronic publishing endeavor. What originally started as simply a "projects" directory on the library's general web server has now grown into the Bailiwick project.

Officially launched in March of 1998, Bailiwick provides a space on the World Wide Web where academic passions can be realized as highly specialized and creative web sites. It is not simply a place for personal home pages, nor is it intended for course web sites or academic departmental information. It is not designed to serve as the new model for scholarly publishing in peer-reviewed journals. Rather, Bailiwick was designed to provide faculty, staff, and graduate students with web space where they can focus on a particular area of scholarly interest, where they can "follow their bliss" in digital form.

Most electronic publishing initiatives arise from an attempt to transfer existing models of print publishing to the digital environment. A small number of electronic scholarly journals are currently published on the University of Iowa campus. The Libraries already provides a number of ways to support this medium, from archiving to cataloging to hosting journal sites, all as one element of the University Libraries' new Scholarly Digital Resources Center.

Bailiwick, instead, provides a web space that allows creators to harness and exploit this electronic medium, permitting new models of publishing with multimedia, hypertext, and the ability to incorporate anything in digital form. It is not intended to substitute or even compete with traditional scholarly publishing or ejournal publishing. It provides an opportunity to engage in an entirely new mode of scholarly communication.

An individual bailiwick might:

* serve as a home page for artistic expression and collaboration between artists working in Iowa and other countries

* be a showcase for digitally produced art that incorporates interactivity meant to be viewed on a computer screen

* provide a natural home for hypertext experiments that explore new forms of multilinear argument or open-system documents that welcome, even depend on, links to other web sites to expand or counter those arguments

* host a site not full of bells and whistles but simply a collection of narrowly focused pages of links to resources on a given topic

* offer an electronic publishing medium for delivery of specialized bibliographies or digital reproductions of rare documents

Open by simple proposal to faculty, staff, and graduate students, Bailiwick runs on a dedicated web server within the library and is supported by the University Libraries' web server infrastructure. Content providers retain editorial control and freedom, and have the ability to define their topic of interest, identify the target audience, and design a customized web site. Each bailiwick is initially limited to 5 MB of space, with the ability to petition for more based on specific needs for a given project. In addition to the disk space, authors can tap into the staffing resources and expertise at the Information Arcade for consultation on site design, graphics and layout, technical support, and training.

Types of Bailiwicks

There are currently 11 Bailiwicks in production, with another eight more being developed. The authors of Bailiwicks represent 13 different academic departments, including Communications Studies, Political Sciences, Athletics Administration, and Theatre Arts, and they range from teaching and research assistants to full professors. In general, the Bailiwicks developed to date fall into one of four categories: (1) a collection of Internet links on a specialized topic of study, which could range from a small set of links on a particular page to an annotated Internet bibliography of thousands of links; (2) a hypertextual or multimedia essay or thesis that necessitates publishing in this medium; (3) a scholarly research project that is dynamic or updated with such frequency that print publishing would be ineffective, including, for example, findings from a research project; or (4) a collaborative project that makes use of a shared electronically accessible work space.

The Internet Bibliography

Karla Tonella, a graduate student in Mass Communication, has authored three different Bailiwick sites that loosely fall into the category of Internet bibliography. As a former graduate assistant on the Information Arcade staff, Ms. Tonella was the one who first identified the need

for this sort of publishing medium on campus and articulated the concept of the Bailiwick project. She was very much instrumental in bringing the server to fruition and quickly adopted it as a home for two comprehensive and award-winning sites of Internet resources in her areas of expertise — Journalism and Mass Media <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/journalism>, and Women's Studies Online <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/wstudies>. Both of these sites have been given widespread praise in those subject areas and have helped bring attention to the Bailiwick project, both on campus and around the country.

In addition, her Border Crossings site relies on Internet links as its core <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/bordercrossings> content . However it is experimental in its design and published in a way that is intended to "encourage the browsing reader to consider the areas of their postmodern world where traditional boundaries are being renegotiated and blurred." The site explores the notion of "border crossings" from a number of different perspectives and has received numerous citations in the mainstream press, including a sidebar in the Chronicle of Higher Education, inclusion in Britannica Online's catalog of recommended sites, and a feature article in Search, a monthly newsletter for advanced graduate students published out of Northeastern University in Boston.

The Multimedia Essay

The most popular use for Bailiwick thus far has been for publishing multimedia essays. The Information Arcade itself has been a proponent of the multimedia essay since it first opened, and most semester-long courses now held in the Information Arcade's Electronic Classroom incorporate some sort of multimedia term paper as part of the course requirements. We have also worked closely with a number of graduate students who have tried to forge new ground in their own academic department by submitting a multimedia thesis or dissertation in their graduate work. It is not surprising, then, that faculty and graduate students are turning to the Bailiwick server as a mechanism for publishing these sorts of materials.

Michael McGee, a professor in Communication Studies, has published his essay, "Suffix it to Say that Reality is at Issue," as a Bailiwick <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/suffix>. Jennifer Lawrence, a Ph.D. candidate also in Communication Studies, created a site on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin as part of a class project. She then developed it into a more comprehensive Bailiwick site <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/MBakhtin> which is now seen as one of the most complete online resources on Bakhtin. Patrick Muller, a teaching assistant in Preventive and Community Dentistry, developed a Bailiwick essay site entitled, "Complexity Studies: The Fluid Multifaceted Nature of Knowledge" <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/complexity-studies>. He describes the site as one that uses art and literature "to focus this sophisticated understanding of truth through the lens of human relationships and their possibilities."

The sites are all very different in their design, in their target audience, and perhaps even in their scholarly value. Nonetheless, Bailiwick provides an ideal way for the University of Iowa to support this sort of experimental multimedia publishing outside the rubric of a class assignment for a multimedia term paper or a more traditional electronic scholarly publishing environment.

The Scholarly Research Project

Aside from the hypertextual and multimedia aspects of publishing on the web, the most unique advantage to the web for publishing scholarly research is the ability to maintain currency on a published project. The most well developed example of this is a Bailiwick on Gender Equity in Sports <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/gender-equity> sponsored by the Women's Intercollegiate Athletics department. The site monitors the current state of affairs of gender equity in intercollegiate or interscholastic sport, and tracks Title IX compliance and pending Title IX litigation at colleges and universities. This resource has received significant national attention and acts as a research tool in and of itself that is published out of the University of Iowa Libraries and now available for students and scholars across the country.

Another example is Chris Culy's dictionary of the Dogon language <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/dogon/ > , The dictionary was compiled by Marcel Kervran, a member of the Pères Blancs, who lived in the town of Bandiagara, Mali for about 30 years. This dictionary has over 7000 head words. A second expanded edition was published in 1993. The dictionary (partially) represents the varieties of Donno SO spoken in and around Bandiagara. The dictionary is being expanded from its earlier hypercard format and it may be ported into an SGML environment. It is an excellent example of an academic tool that would be difficult to create and deliver in paper form.

The Collaborative Work Space

Finally, the Bailiwick server provides a way for researchers at the University of Iowa to work collaboratively and in a public forum with colleagues at other institutions. This collaborative space could also be used as a way to gather research data, or to allow others to comment on or contribute to the development of a site. Barbara Bianchi, a graduate student in Counselor Education and an art therapist, has established a Bailiwick site for Global Connections <http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/global_connections>, a site of online art and notes from travel journals. One component of the Global Connections site, called "Russia Revisited," includes materials from a number of contributing artists and students in Russia, who are jointly working together to create a collaborative artistic travel journal.

Policies Regarding Bailiwick Sites

Bailiwick sites run the gamut in subject area, nature, and scope. No attempt is made to centrally control the content of someone's site. After all, it is their bailiwick and they have complete editorial freedom. On the other hand, there are certain guidelines in place for establishing a Bailiwick in order to maintain the focus as an innovative research web server.

First, the site is not intended to be a space for student class assignments. Short-term projects intended to meet course requirements can already be accommodated on one of the University's centrally administered course web servers. In addition, the site is not meant to be a place for a personal home page, or even a student's portfolio. This type of activity can be better accommodated on a student's personal account through academic computing or through a commercial Internet service provider. Sites that are commercial in nature are refused, as are sites that are completely divorced from the University's mission.

Content providers need to abide by the University's Acceptable Use Policy <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/19.htm > which identifies inappropriate uses of information technology resources on campus, such as hacking, forgery, inserting viruses, violating intellectual property rights and software licenses, interfering with others' access to information technology resources, or personal campaigning, lobbying, or commercial activities.

These modest restrictions notwithstanding, most proposals for Bailiwick sites have been approved. Inappropriate use of existing Bailiwick web space has not yet been an issue.

Related Support Services

One of the components of the Bailiwick project most essential for its success, beyond web space on a reliable server, is user support in terms of hardware, software, and staff resources provided to Bailiwick creators for development of the sites. Staff support includes consultation in any aspect of the Bailiwick, including design issues, interface development, and training in software. Staff do not provide programming nor do they do any of the work in researching or assembling the sites. But consultation on a wide range of technical topics coupled with a robust infrastructure has always been sufficient to unleash the personal creativity and innovation resident in those who seek out the Arcade's services. Enabling support has been a distinguishing feature of the Information Arcade when compared to any other public computer facility on campus. This unique service philosophy is continued in the Bailiwick project.

The Information Arcade provides public access to a host of multimedia development workstations for scanning images, slides, and text, and for digitizing video and audio. We have a large suite of multimedia integration software and web publishing software available for public use and the public services desk is always staffed with people who have a strong background in multimedia development and web design. Some one-on-one training can take place on a walk-in basis. We also link faculty and students with other training resources including short courses held within the Libraries and elsewhere on campus, instructional videotapes, and online tutorials.

In addition, each Bailiwick content provider is assigned an Information Arcade Consultant as their primary contact person for technical support, troubleshooting, basic interface design guidance, and referrals to other staff both within and without the Arcade. At present, we have been able to accommodate this sort of assistance with our current staffing patterns.

Issues for Future Development

Although we have not yet been inhibited in expanding the scope and number of Bailiwicks to date, adequate staffing will always remain a concern. Some faculty are desirous of working more closely with Arcade consultants than they can now manage and the consultants would certainly find it enriching to be more intimately involved with the development of each Bailiwick site than time now allows.

Marketing of Bailiwick has been discrete to say the least because of the limited staffing available. However embedded in the collaboration inherent in Bailiwicks is the potential for stronger collaboration with faculty on obtaining grant funding to support the development of

specific Bailiwick sites. This path is being tested in a project with two scholars, one from the University of Iowa and one from a university in Germany. Should grant funding be obtained, we would be able to create a new academic resource consisting of a searchable critical edition of an author's corpus coupled with thematic websites containing bibliographies, a hypertext archive, and searchable commentaries. This Bailiwick would result an unprecedented resource for scholars from many fields and present a model for the development of academic websites that not only reflect serious study but actually nurture the creation of new, international scholarship. Other site proposals might also lend themselves to outside funding and we must be alert to these opportunities.

Technical infrastructure challenges are not overwhelming as yet. This year we will begin monitoring how quickly creators are developing their sites, what are the implications for network delivery of these resources, what are reasonable projections for disk space, and who is using these resources. A policy on what constitutes a dormant site and how long those sites are maintained also needs to be developed.

Conclusion

The integration of networked information and new technologies into personal research is a risky enterprise for many faculty. It involves learning software and hardware that likely did not exist during the course of their Ph.D. study. They often must depend upon technologies and infrastructure beyond their ability to design or control. The fruits of intense work required to master and apply new technologies to their particular discipline in terms of either professional rewards or increased student learning may be uncertain at best.

Once a faculty member has taken the decision to risk this investment of time and intellect, learning how to use new technologies can be another struggle. The need for increased training opportunities is consistently mentioned by faculty on surveys as a high priority need. For those information technology centers that have the mission of actively promoting the use of information technologies in faculty teaching and research, a fundamental challenge is how to create an environment that optimizes the faculty's potential for success.

We have addressed some of the challenges of successful user support in pursuit of academic inquiry by establishing the Bailiwick Project. This project offers an exciting model of how to harness the potential of new media for serious scholarship. Bailiwicks combine the intellectual passion of faculty with the unique human and technical service model of the Information Arcade to produce new opportunities for creative expression and scholarly communication never before available to the Iowa community.

ONLINE PRESENTATION:
http://staffweb.lib.uiowa.edu/psoderdahl/cause98