
Staying Connected: Best Practices for Online Marketing and Outreach

Lisa Martin

Coordinator of Outreach
University of Houston Libraries

Orolando Duffus

Business Librarian
University of Houston Libraries

Mea Warren

Natural Sciences and Mathematics Librarian
University of Houston Libraries

Abstract: In spring 2020, US universities were forced to transition to online learning and libraries were challenged to continue supporting their campuses in a completely online environment. The Liaison Services Department at the University of Houston first took a collaborative approach to this challenge, gathering ideas and suggestions into a best practices document for online outreach. Second, members investigated a variety of tools as they worked remotely, ultimately selecting tools to successfully support the university community via online outreach. This article describes a case study covering the process of creating best practices and investigating communications tools, which could be useful for academic libraries seeking new ways to do outreach in a constantly changing environment.

Keywords: Outreach best practices, collaborative outreach, virtual learning tools, online outreach, communications tools

Introduction

Effective outreach and marketing in the middle of a pandemic was (and continues to be) a daunting task. For librarians at institutions around the globe accustomed to in-person connection through campus events, coffee catch-ups, and collegial chats, it became a question of how to recreate that connection in the online space. For those librarians who needed to develop

relationships with new campus contacts and to sustain relationships with existing ones, it became a question of what methods existed to facilitate effective connection and communication in the online space. On top of the loss of connection and the challenge of working within the online setting, there was also the overwhelming uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic itself. Liaison librarians at University of Houston Libraries (UH) needed to communicate basic facts to faculty and students on what was happening to library services while often in the middle of finding out themselves what was happening with those services. Information was scarce, prone to rapid change, and confusing; people were anxious and scared.

The UH Libraries' Liaison Services Department Outreach Team tackled these challenges through two primary means: the collaborative creation of best practices for online outreach with liaison librarians and an ad hoc investigation into critical crisis communications tools. The best practices were intended to increase awareness of the new opportunities that the online space presented and to provide a structured opportunity to discuss ways to solve challenges presented by the space. The communication tools, which ranged from simple emails to specialized e-learning platforms, were intended to be used by liaisons with faculty and students in lieu of in-person tools that had been used previously. The end result of this work was a better-informed faculty and a more confident group of liaison librarians.

Literature Review

Liaison librarian outreach has received increased attention over the past couple of decades, as shown by Blummer and Kenton's (2019) meta-analysis. Their study provides more than 174 published examples of users bypassing libraries in favor of other resources and in response, libraries developing an outreach focus to remain relevant. As outreach has increased in significance and frequency in academic libraries, there has been a corresponding interest in using it to demonstrate value to parent organizations as well as to align it with institutional priorities. Building upon the work they started with the *ARL Spec Kit* (LeMire et al., 2018), Graves et al. (2018) published an article on outreach assessment, which explores the idea of treating outreach similarly to instruction via the creation of outcomes, the alignment of outcomes to broader organizational goals, and the assessment of those outcomes. German and

LeMire (2018) demonstrated these principles in action, as they reviewed the field of outreach for readers before moving into an explanation of how their institution made the leap from outreach assessment to a connection with broader programmatic and organizational goals at their institution. Beyond assessment, there has also been an interest in demonstrating return on investment (particularly for costly events and programs) for outreach in academic libraries. One example of this method of demonstrating institutional value is the discussion from Santiago et al. (2019) of their methodology for determining return on investment to align with student success goals at their institution. Articles like these provide a pathway to connect outreach to institutional priorities and an entry point to considering best practices and other codifications of outreach work.

As outreach as a sub-field has matured, the development of outreach work can be traced through articles focused primarily on planning and describing the work and, to a lesser extent, on best practices. One early entrant into this arena came from Hallmark et al. (2007) who examined the practicalities of a marketing outreach plan and some options for low-cost ways to market events. In addition, Huwe (2006) explored best practices, including audience and timeframe, for using technologies popular at the time, such as blogs and RSS feeds. Successful methods of outreach to first-year students, including an evaluation of what translated from an in-person to an online format and what did not, were discussed in Currie (2013). Lastly, Meyers-Martin and Lampert (2013) offered recommendations for ways to provide library outreach programming for online students in a college transition program. In terms of outreach best practices, these initial explorations provide evidence that published best practices and planning methods, particularly in an online environment, are an evolving area.

Outreach and communication are often mentioned side-by-side in academic libraries; thus, it is unsurprising that communication tools, too, have grown in importance as users have shifted away from libraries. Numerous studies have revealed a disconnect between campus perceptions of the library and its services and how the library perceives itself; this disconnect results, in part, from a failure to market the modern academic library. One particularly high-profile study looked at how liaisons and their faculty partners in universities across the United States each perceived the liaison's performance; one key factor that affected this perception was frequency of contact with the

department (Arendt & Lotts, 2012). Another example was a year-long mixed-methods study, which revealed that faculty at the authors' institution were satisfied overall with library services but found that marketing of those services could be improved (Heider et al., 2012). Finally, two recent additions to the literature cover the under-studied area of crisis communications in academic libraries. The first is a survey of ARL libraries (O'Neill & Kelley, 2021), which explored the ways libraries communicated with users about crises, both large and small. The authors found variation in immediacy and level of response from libraries depending on what type of crisis (health and safety versus massive journal cancellations, for example) was under discussion. The second, highly relevant to the case study discussed here, described initial responses to COVID-19, including using specific communications tools, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, from academic and other libraries in Ireland (Carbery et al., 2020). These articles reveal the importance of regular and organized communication to achieve success in reaching users, particularly during a crisis.

Finally, librarians have embraced specific technological tools for use in outreach and communications. There are a wide range of examples for social media and other new tools. However, as many academic libraries adopted and discarded technologies to align with their parent institution and society, they focused less on everyday tools, such as email or instructional software. One early example of this was described in the results of a survey of Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) member library websites to discover how institutions communicated collections and scholarly communications updates; the survey found little use of websites for that purpose (Hahn & Schmidt, 2005). A more recent article listed results from a survey of what services students prefer to hear about from library social media; the authors found that computers and study spaces were key priorities for students and, thus, the most relevant content for social media updates (Stvilia & Gibradze, 2017). Also, LibGuides are explicitly instruction-oriented tools that make use of a service design thinking model. This issue was outlined in German et al.'s 2017 article, which situated instructional tools into a broader design framework. Finally, a mention of Zoom for consultations with librarians at the Chinese University of Hong Kong was one of multiple innovations in response to COVID-19 mentioned in *Academic library services during COVID-19: The experience of CUHK Library* (Ma, 2020). Overall, while

communication is a key counterpart to outreach, academic libraries use a wide and constantly changing array of communications tools to achieve the goals of marketing and outreach, particularly in a crisis.

Best practices in outreach are an evolving area where more research is necessary. The literature on communication tools in liaison work is more widespread, but the unique demands of COVID-19 call for libraries to explore new tools and methods, which is leading to new research. In the case study below, the authors build upon existing literature by discussing two methods—collaboratively-created best practices for online outreach and an investigation of communication tools to support outreach and other liaison work—which improved the achievement of department and library goals during the COVID-19 crisis.

Collaboratively Creating Best Practices

The Outreach Team is a three-member sub-unit within the larger UH Libraries Liaison Services Department. The team is charged with providing professional development and offering messaging and communications recommendations to liaisons in the area of outreach, along with other duties, such as maintaining relationships with non-academic units. During the spring of 2020, at the start of the pandemic response, the team recommended that liaisons use a combination of established outreach approaches to meet the challenges of COVID-19. As time passed and liaison librarians found out they would be working remotely through the fall semester, the Outreach Team decided to hold a collaborative discussion with the rest of the department on the best ways to do outreach remotely. The end goal was to create a set of best practices for the unique situation. In early summer 2020, the Outreach Team requested time during one of the regular Liaison Services department meetings for the discussion. Facilitating this discussion consisted of three parts. The first was a large group discussion about the challenges and opportunities of online outreach. Next, the team facilitated small group discussions around new approaches to try or old ones to revisit, that were then shared with the larger group. The final part involved taking this information, which had been created collaboratively across the department, and turning it into a best practices document.

The first large group discussion asked department members about challenges and opportunities that had come up from doing online outreach during the spring and early summer. Examples from the discussion of challenges included the inability to use meals or coffee to connect with faculty, the fact that everyone was distracted because of the pandemic, childcare and caregiving challenges, and constantly changing priorities. Everything that was mentioned was later organized by the Outreach Team into three categories: competing priorities/distractions, the difficulty of email as the primary contact method, and the inability to have spontaneous and/or in-person contact. With these challenges in mind, members of the department then brainstormed opportunities as a large group. Opportunities mentioned included added flexibility, added creativity in solving problems virtually, and being more thoughtful before proceeding with contact since it was all through email. This conversation led to the creation of two new categories: the benefits of working virtually and unique opportunities of working in a library.

In the next phase, the Outreach Team moved department members into small group conversations to continue the discussion. Groups had an average of five members each, and all worked in a shared Google document to answer three questions that the Outreach Team had brainstormed prior to the session:

1. What is a truly new approach to outreach that may be useful for this situation?
2. What is an outreach approach that 'failed' previously that may work now?
3. How does your timeline for outreach change due to the pandemic?

For the truly new approaches, liaison librarians came up with ideas they had not tried before. Examples of these ideas included holding office hours, publicizing programs through social media, promoting existing virtual services, like instruction modules and asynchronous information literacy (IL) sessions, and using Microsoft Teams, the new technology promoted across the university. Some of these ideas, particularly holding office hours, were repeated in the brainstorm sessions for the second question about approaches that had failed previously. Challenges with office hours in the past included finding a good physical space or a high-traffic, high-impact time to hold them. However, with everyone online, liaisons found they could solve the physical space problem because they did not have to be on campus, and that helped

solve the timing problem as well. For the final question regarding the outreach timeline, generally liaisons thought they should reach out earlier to give more time for people to plan to attend programs and to schedule their classes for instruction. Liaisons also expected longer wait times for email responses, considering the circumstances.

The final discussion, facilitated again with the large group, was about developing and maintaining relationships. This section had three more questions to address. The first asked liaisons to consider, ‘How do you seek out new library advocates or key partners when your old ones are overwhelmed/not tech savvy/not responsive?’ Suggestions included looking at social media accounts of departments, forging connections with support people on campus, such as instructional designers, and congratulating faculty members who were recently awarded grants or other honors, all to keep the library in the forefront. Other suggestions included looking at course listings to find courses that could benefit from online library instruction and joining department meetings now that they were virtual. The second question from this section asked liaisons how they decided to prioritize relationships during the pandemic. As might be expected, liaisons generally prioritized by gauging the level of passion or interest from the faculty and noting who was responsive and generally open to working with them. Liaisons also emphasized the importance of having connections with department heads and other high-impact contacts and using these connections to pass the word along to the rest of the faculty in their department. Finally, participants were asked how to best take advantage of this time without overextending campus partners or themselves. Liaisons talked about being mindful of their own feelings and knowing how much they could handle. They also made a point of asking themselves why they were doing something and using that point of reflection to determine whether the outreach was beneficial. Several UH Libraries liaisons also chose to be upfront about their home situations with students and faculty, and to discuss potential interruptions or distractions. Liaisons finished off this part of the brainstorm by stating that it was valuable to remind other people (specifically older children and adults) in their household about work boundaries to minimize distractions and interruptions.

The information from this brainstorming session was compiled and used by the Outreach Team to create the “Outreach Best Practices in an Online Environment” document. The introduction classified it as a list of techniques,

methods, and actions to effectively communicate with faculty and student stakeholders. The introduction also noted that the document was created partially in response to COVID-19 and partially in response to other emerging trends, such as increased emphasis at the campus level on online instruction. The document was then divided into three sections based on the questions asked during the brainstorming session.

The first section was a list of ways to seek out new (and maintain existing) strategic partnerships by exploring key communication channels and teaming up with other support services on campus. Included within this section were considerations about new technology for the online environment such as Microsoft Teams, while also thinking about revisiting old approaches, like office hours and curriculum mapping. Lastly, it mentioned being creative and personable, asking how stakeholders were doing outside of their work life, and keeping communication open. The second section discussed ways to prioritize relationships relevant to liaisons' work and the UH Libraries' mission. The document presented opportunities for deeper connections with partners that were high impact and reciprocally engaged. The section also discussed looking for different outreach opportunities than had previously existed, being aware of changing priorities, and recognizing that everyone was busy and that some may not respond quickly or at all. The third and final section discussed ways to identify and capitalize on emerging opportunities, when feasible, by aligning expertise with circumstances. Liaisons were reminded to think about the time of year they normally made faculty requests and how they might reconsider that in light of the pandemic. The section also discussed ways liaisons could help with the redesign of courses, as instructors adapted to online environments and made new connections.

This best practices document, collaboratively developed from the brainstorming session with the department, was shared with Liaison Services in mid-summer. Liaisons were invited to use it during the summer period to prioritize relationships for fall and to think about creative ways to engage with faculty. While summer is usually a quieter period, during the pandemic, it presented a period of great opportunity as faculty re-wrote syllabi and learned new skills to meet new needs. General feedback was positive, and members of the department expressed appreciation for the opportunity to discuss challenges and concerns in online-based outreach with other colleagues. One librarian used virtual office hours, one of the techniques mentioned as more

feasible in a virtual environment than a physical one, in fall semester 2020; subject librarians incorporated other techniques into their fall marketing to varying degrees of success.

Tools Used to Facilitate Online Outreach

With the announcement of nationwide closures and lockdowns, libraries have been working overtime (DeFilippis et al., 2020) to keep students, faculty, and researchers connected to the vital resources they need to make informed decisions. Librarians across the world have been creating infrastructure not only to facilitate but also accelerate online learning and engagement. At UH Libraries' Liaison Services Department, an informal investigation into the best tools for communication and outreach identified specific ways, like creating an email template and exploring different communication tools, for facilitating and accelerating that outreach.

In spring 2020, the Outreach Team recommended that members of Liaison Services use an email template customizable by the individual liaison, which is a regular part of the team's recommended methods to communicate with campus, to get urgent messaging out quickly. The intent of a template is to create standardized messaging around relevant, key services and events offered by the Liaison Services Department and UH Libraries. The normal process for assembling an email template happens before the start of every semester. Prior to the semester's start, the Outreach Team creates the email for liaisons to customize and send to faculty and departments. To do so, the team discusses as a group what information should be included and edits the messaging, web links, and advertised services accordingly. The team confers with departments that are in charge of popular services, such as interlibrary loan, and ensures there have not been any major service changes. Changes to services, workshops, or other programs to highlight are reviewed with the Liaison Services Department via a short discussion within the regular department meeting.

The emails consist of concise paragraphs about services that appeal most to faculty, often mentioning IL offerings, research services and consultations. Each liaison can opt to send this email to their assigned departments at the beginning of each semester, including the summer, to cover the latest services

available in the library. From an informal survey of the department taken in 2021, all liaisons opt to send a version of the template email out. Liaisons can also use the Outreach Team's more urgent template emails, developed outside of the normal semester workflow, to communicate changes or interruptions in regular services. In the time of the pandemic, this use was even more crucial, as services were constantly changing. In addition to working closely with library colleagues to ensure that the library website was up-to-date and reflected current services, the Outreach Team provided liaisons with two urgent template emails, one in mid-spring and one in early summer, in addition to the start of semester emails. Most of the department, including all liaisons, utilize these emails, and customize them by adding their own best method of contact or other liaison-specific updates.

The start of semester template emails also serve as an excellent lead generator. The Outreach Team ensures that the emails clearly and concisely communicate updates on relevant resources, services, and spaces. The intent is to offer just enough information to catch the reader's attention while being compelling enough to invite further inquiry. For example, the email for Fall 2020 provided updates on the following: course-related instruction (synchronous and asynchronous), electronic course reserves, Open Educational Resources (OER), access to online and physical materials and spaces, and finally, how to contact a liaison to get help. These were all relevant and time-sensitive pieces of information useful to students, faculty, and support services administrators like those in Career Services. The emails, along with the website updates and additional communication through other campus venues, allowed for coordinated messaging about changing services and plans from multiple departments to go out to campus.

In addition to the use of the template email, the Liaison Services Department also informally investigated tools for online communication and instruction. While some of the tools were new, others were existing tools that received renewed attention. In particular, the pandemic brought attention to both Google Workspace and Microsoft Office 365, which had previously been underutilized and undiscovered resources. UH was officially a Microsoft campus during the pandemic; however, Google tools were commonly used in daily tasks by Liaison Services members. Working remotely meant the use of networked storage was more complicated, so liaisons were utilizing OneDrive to store and share large files and Google Drive to collaboratively create and edit

materials (including the template email for liaisons). Liaisons were also creating more asynchronous learning objects and orientation videos, which demanded a certain level of privacy and security not offered by YouTube. Therefore, Microsoft Stream became a better alternative. Recorded Microsoft Teams meetings could be automatically stored in Stream at the end of each session. Then, the recordings were able to be automatically shared via email with all the participants of the meeting. This provided a secure and accessible way for liaisons to disseminate information discussed in virtual consultations. Students also found these recordings helpful because they could use the content as a refresher or share the content with group members who were not able to attend the consultation.

In terms of creating instruction materials during the pandemic, the Liaison Services' Instruction Team, functional specialists, and other liaisons used Articulate Rise 360, Camtasia, and other tools to create interactive lessons to teach IL concepts and research skills. One new favorite, Articulate Rise 360, is an e-learning platform that lets one build highly interactive courses or modules that are accessible from any device. This tool has increased the capacity of the business librarians in the delivery of IL concepts by reaching upwards of 82% of first-year business students compared to 30% prior to its adoption. For example, during the 2020-21 academic year, over 1,500 students took the IL lesson compared to about 300 prior to the implementation of Articulate lessons. The content of these lessons ranged from research question development to evaluating information sources to data literacy. Although Articulate Rise 360 is somewhat cost prohibitive, it is user friendly, both in terms of lesson creation and student learning. It also integrates with Blackboard and other learning management systems (LMS), which allows librarians and instructors to track the progress of students as they make their way through the lessons.

Research consultations to enhance the research skills of learners also remained an important service provided by liaison librarians during the pandemic. Over the past few years, the Outreach Team has been developing an infrastructure for liaisons to automate the process of scheduling research consultations. This allows patrons to conveniently schedule appointments without exchanging a series of back-and-forth emails with their librarian. There are many tools that can be used to facilitate this process, such as Calendly, YouCanBook.Me, or LibCal. The Outreach Team's tool of choice

during the pandemic was Calendly, because it was free and integrated well with Outlook 365. Another benefit of using Calendly is that one can embed a personal meeting link (Teams, Zoom, Skype, etc.) directly into the scheduler. This way, users know exactly how to access the virtual meeting room after scheduling the appointment. Doing this can help reduce the scariness (Nadworny, 2019) of a sometimes-intimidating service by removing an access barrier. Another way to reduce the scariness for students is to increase awareness and generate interest through marketing of the service. Some of the ways the Liaison Services Department did so during the pandemic included promoting the service during IL sessions and embedding Calendly links in research guides and email signatures. The department also regularly promoted the service three times per year (spring, summer, and fall) through the faculty template emails.

The convenience of virtual consultations is also helping to bring in upper-level students and graduate students who regret not learning about the service earlier in their academic careers. Even prior to the pandemic, liaisons at UH Libraries held many consultations where students were joining from their office at work, from the break room during lunch, or from their nurseries while attending to their kids. These students often described virtual consultations as convenient, informative, and extremely helpful. Most research consultations during the pandemic took place through either Teams or Zoom, with Zoom being more popular, user-friendly, and secure after the rollout of end-to-end encryption. One of the best features of these platforms is the screen share options. This feature enables participants in the meeting to share their screens with everyone. This gave students the opportunity to show librarians their course syllabus or project deliverables and where they were in the research process. Librarians, in turn, used this feature to present ideas, offer feedback, and provide step-by-step instruction on where to find data and how to use various resources to find relevant information.

Liaison Services found that, collectively, these tools have the capability to improve efficiency and workflow and even save money. For example, Camtasia is an exceptional but expensive product used to create and edit the screencast tutorials frequently used in asynchronous learning and orientation videos. However, Zoom and Microsoft Teams produce similar quality screen captures at zero additional cost to the UH Libraries due to existing licenses. The disadvantage with using Zoom and Teams for screen captures is that the

librarian must use a secondary tool (for example, OpenShot on a Windows machine or iMovie if using a Mac) to edit the recording. The economic hardship triggered by the pandemic is testing libraries' resourcefulness. As a result, UH librarians are exploring free and open-source software alternatives to cost-prohibitive corporate tools that can help to bridge gaps in remote teaching, learning, and collaboration.

It is too early to say for certain how much the aforementioned tools have impacted student learning and outreach at UH Libraries. However, the utilization of these tools has afforded librarians the nimbleness to partner with instructors to develop online learning objects and to communicate quickly and conveniently. For example, the Instruction Team, in collaboration with liaisons and functional specialists, developed multiple interactive lessons to teach IL concepts and research skills. Some of those lessons are currently being used in several high impact, first-year courses required by all disciplines. The lessons are designed around individual IL concepts so that instructors can choose, à la carte, lessons to address perceived deficiencies or challenges that often block student success.

Some of the tools mentioned here have a steep learning curve, which meant that the Liaison Services Department had to develop a method to provide training and develop expertise. That was done by taking a team-based approach; expertise was developed within existing departmental teams and then those teams provided training as needed during the regular weekly department meetings. For example, the Instruction Team led the research and implementation of Articulate Rise 360. They provided training, technology support, and ongoing consulting. Similarly, the Outreach Team led the research and implementation of, and provided ongoing training for, Calendly. The team provided one-on-one consultations for librarians who needed assistance integrating the tool with their LibGuides and Microsoft applications.

UH Libraries liaisons discovered repeatedly during the pandemic that each software or tool, whether free or fee-based, has limitations. These limitations range from hidden costs to steep learning curves to compatibility issues. Therefore, it is recommended that each library investigate, as Liaison Services did, and then develop a set of guiding principles that will inform the use of the tools used to communicate and engage in outreach and other services.

Discussion

While the UH Libraries Liaison Services Department had a helpful and creative discussion to develop its online outreach best practices due to the large number of librarians in the department, that may not be available to academic libraries with fewer staff or a shrinking staff due to the pandemic. Some libraries also may not have the time or bandwidth to create space for this type of discussion due to competing priorities or the amount of time librarians need to spend on other tasks. The Liaison Services Department meets regularly, so it was natural during the pandemic to take time in a departmental meeting to do these exercises and gather the knowledge of our colleagues. It was also natural to share updates on services that would be going out through the template email or to provide instruction on how to use a specific communication tool. Other libraries may be able to do this type of information gathering over email, create a collaborative document where people can place ideas on their own time, or have a small group create best practices for other librarians to use.

Another limitation from this case study is other libraries' access to the technology used at UH. For example, Zoom has limits on its free service but otherwise requires a license, and Teams comes with a cost that is absorbed by a Microsoft-based campus. Learning how to use these tools takes time and often trial and error. One example of this at UH Libraries during the pandemic was the use of Microsoft Teams. Teams was a new platform, and UH Libraries' use of it evolved as the whole UH community learned how to use it and used it more frequently. A common complication that comes up with online IL sessions is that online classes may take place on a platform that liaison librarians do not have access to, such as an LMS like Blackboard. This complication was occasionally challenging at UH Libraries during the pandemic, as some librarians needed to learn or re-learn how to use Blackboard. Other libraries will have to be creative in their investigation of tools if they do not have the budget for a paid platform to host classes or to hold virtual consultations.

As everyone scrambled to adjust in March 2020, the initial focus both at UH Libraries and around the world was on the crisis itself and getting situated in spaces that were not normal offices. As time passed, however, it became obvious that this situation would last until fall, if not longer. The focus changed from an emphasis on the immediate crisis to an emphasis on the

continuity of services in a new format, which provided librarians with an opportunity to build new connections and sustain existing ones. The Outreach Team's online outreach best practices document was created in May 2020, and since then things have continued to change. Because the situation was (and is) constantly evolving and changing, it is hard to determine whether what was created then will still be relevant a year later. Even the technology we used changed over time. For example, Liaison Services started out primarily using Zoom for its work and transitioned to Microsoft Teams due to an increase in Teams' functionality as time went on and more training for UH staff and faculty became available. Other libraries could develop outreach best practices during this challenging time by asking staff members, or by reaching out to other libraries and librarians and asking what is working and not working for them. Even though the number of staff, the amount of budget, and the time available vary significantly among academic libraries, there are elements of this case study which could apply to any library.

Conclusion

Successful library marketing and outreach is difficult in the best of times, and the COVID-19 pandemic made it even harder. Concurrently, the pandemic has also presented new opportunities to connect with users virtually on a scale the world has never seen before. Prior to COVID-19, only 20% of UH faculty had ever taught an online course and half of UH students had never enrolled in one (Khator, 2020). However, instructors and students alike speedily transitioned to online teaching and learning. This presented an opportunity for librarians to leverage existing infrastructure and technical skills to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with faculty and other support units on campus. UH Libraries responded to the new environment by developing best practices for outreach and by adopting new and existing technologies expeditiously. These relationships will positively influence the UH community's perception of the value of libraries and librarians going forward.

To maximize impact and return on investment, UH liaisons optimized their outreach efforts by creating a best practices framework that informed the way librarians engaged with stakeholders remotely. The framework offered strategies to seek out new and maintain existing strategic partnerships; prioritize relationships relevant to individual work and the Libraries' mission;

and to identify and capitalize on emerging opportunities. The way libraries perform outreach and engage with users has been changing gradually throughout the years but was accelerated by the pandemic. This brought renewed attention to a plethora of tools used to enhance communication, collaborative work, and support teaching and learning in an online environment. It is worth a library's time to investigate the tools which work best for communication and outreach, whether that is an email template that standardizes messaging or a complex tool, like Rise 360 and Calendly.

There are limitations to every outreach and marketing strategy; therefore, each library, by necessity, develops their own framework to inform how they will communicate and engage with users. This is particularly true during crisis points, such as the pandemic. The authors of this case study firmly believe that libraries should regularly engage in conversations that critically examine the ways they promote, communicate, and deliver library services; consider the development of best practices; and investigate tools and resources for communication and outreach.

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