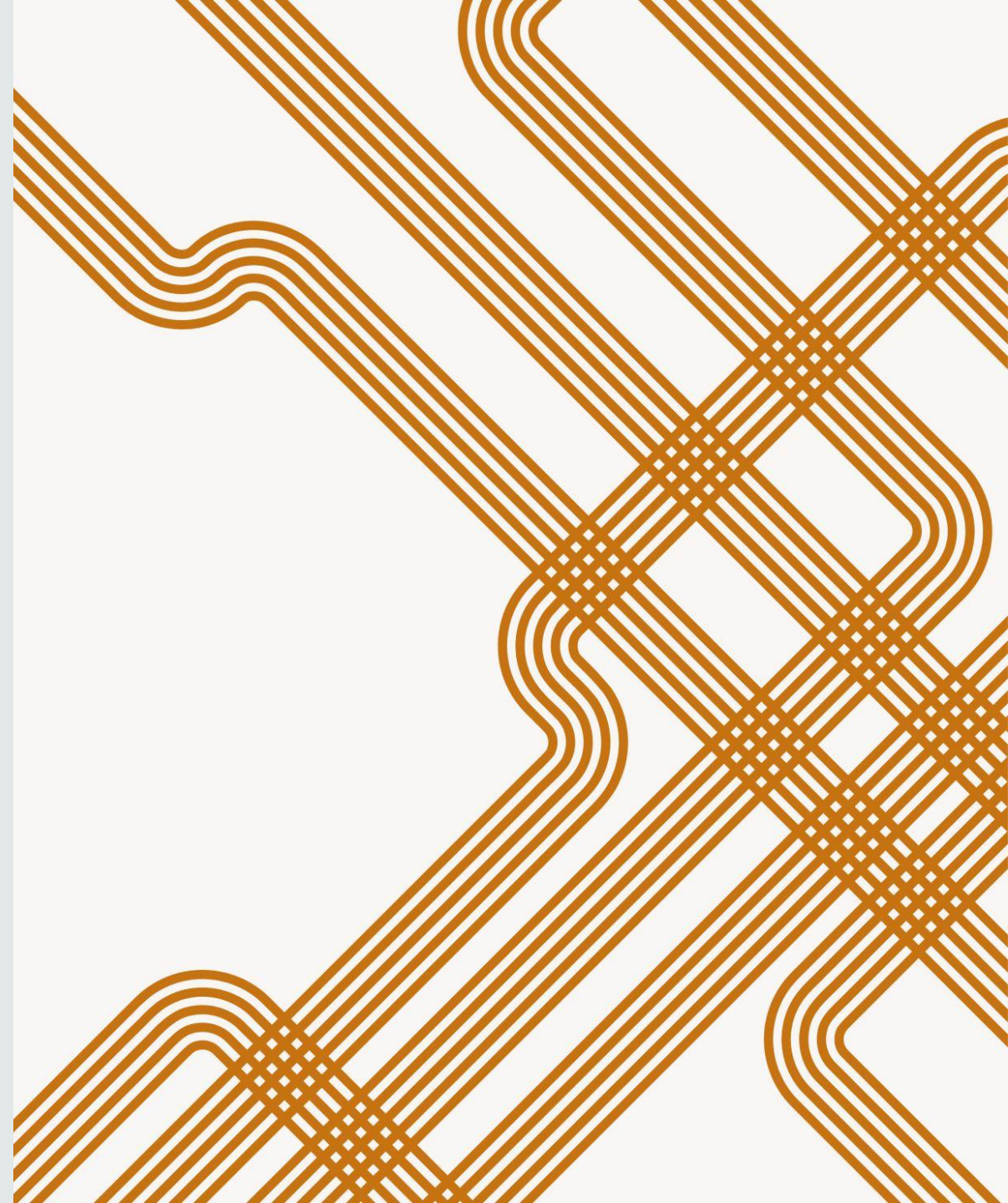




Revamping STEM LibGuides for Current Student Needs

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Introduction

Leah DiCiesare
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Started June 2022; previously a Graduate
Assistant at Grainger Engineering Library
Information Center at the University of Illinois
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Liaison to: Chemistry and Biochemistry,
Mathematics, Chemical and Biomolecular
Engineering, Bioengineering, Materials Science
and Engineering, and Fire Protection Engineering



Menti Warm-Up

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Project Background

Worked on LibGuides as a Graduate Assistant at UIUC



Inherited LibGuides starting at UMD



Find LibGuides generally unappealing and question their usefulness

Key Points from Literature - Content

- There is a generally low awareness of the guides among students = low use of guides
- Too much information in a guide can be overwhelming
- Curated lists of resources are preferred
- Information is often outdated from not being updated often enough
- Text should be informal and jargon-free

Key Points from Literature - Format

- Students don't like scrolling – information “below the fold” might not be seen
- Smaller chunks of text are preferred
- Adding visual content helps break up the text
- Interactive pieces (tabbed boxes, gallery boxes, etc.) are good to add
- Overall organization preferences are highly dependent on the student and there doesn't seem to be one clear winner

Starting the Project

1. Decided to focus on content of LibGuides first
2. Looked at Big Ten Academic Alliance schools
 - Comparable in scope and size
 - Nice set of 14 universities, including UMD
3. Chose to look specifically at Chemistry and Mathematics LibGuides
 - Only the broad subject guides, no course guides, or more specific guides
4. Created a matrix to analyze the guides

Matrix Creation

Content
included:

Databases

Journals

eBooks

Catalog Links

Reference Works

Citation Help

Web Resources

Instructional Information

Notes

Matrix Creation – Rating System

Score	Qualitative	Quantitative
0	None	0
1	A few	<5
2	Some	5-10
3	A lot	>10

Findings Thus Far – General Observations

Guides vary greatly in size and scope

Most updated* within the last year

Many guides have an introduction page or box to the guide

Findings Thus Far – Rating Counts

Category	Count - 0	Count - 1	Count - 2	Count - 3
Databases	0	3	12	13
Journals	19	2	4	3
eBooks	14	6	5	3
Catalog Links	15	4	6	3
Reference Works	10	2	5	11
Citation Help	17	6	5	0
Web Resources	10	3	4	11
Instructional Information	16	8	1	3
Other	12	3	9	4

Findings Thus Far – Average Scores

Category	Total Average	Mathematics Average	Chemistry Average
Databases	2.36	2.07	2.64
Journals	0.68	0.43	0.93
eBooks	0.89	0.64	1.14
Catalog Links	0.89	0.93	0.86
Reference Works	1.61	0.86	2.36
Citation Help	0.57	0.57	0.57
Web Resources	1.57	1.71	1.43
Instructional Information	0.68	0.50	0.86
Other	1.18	0.71	1.64

Findings Thus Far - Discussion

1

Databases are the only resource included in all LibGuides

2

Top 3 resources included: databases, reference works, web resources

3

Bottom 3 resources included: journals, citation help, instructional information

Findings Thus Far – Discussion – Mathematics vs. Chemistry

Mathematics

- More resources in catalog links and web resources
- Total resources ranking: 0.94

Chemistry

- More resources included overall
- More resources in databases, journals, eBooks, reference works, instructional information, and other
- Generally, more robust guides
- Total resources ranking: 1.38



Findings Thus Far – Thoughts for Continuing

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- Specific journals included less often than expected
 - Most eBook links tended to be for Reference Works
 - Need to explore the “Other” Category and expand upon what it means
 - Ask students later if there is anything missing from the guides too
- 

Next Steps



Analyzing format in addition to content



Looking at more institutions' guides to include in analysis



Updating my Chemistry and Mathematics guides based on findings



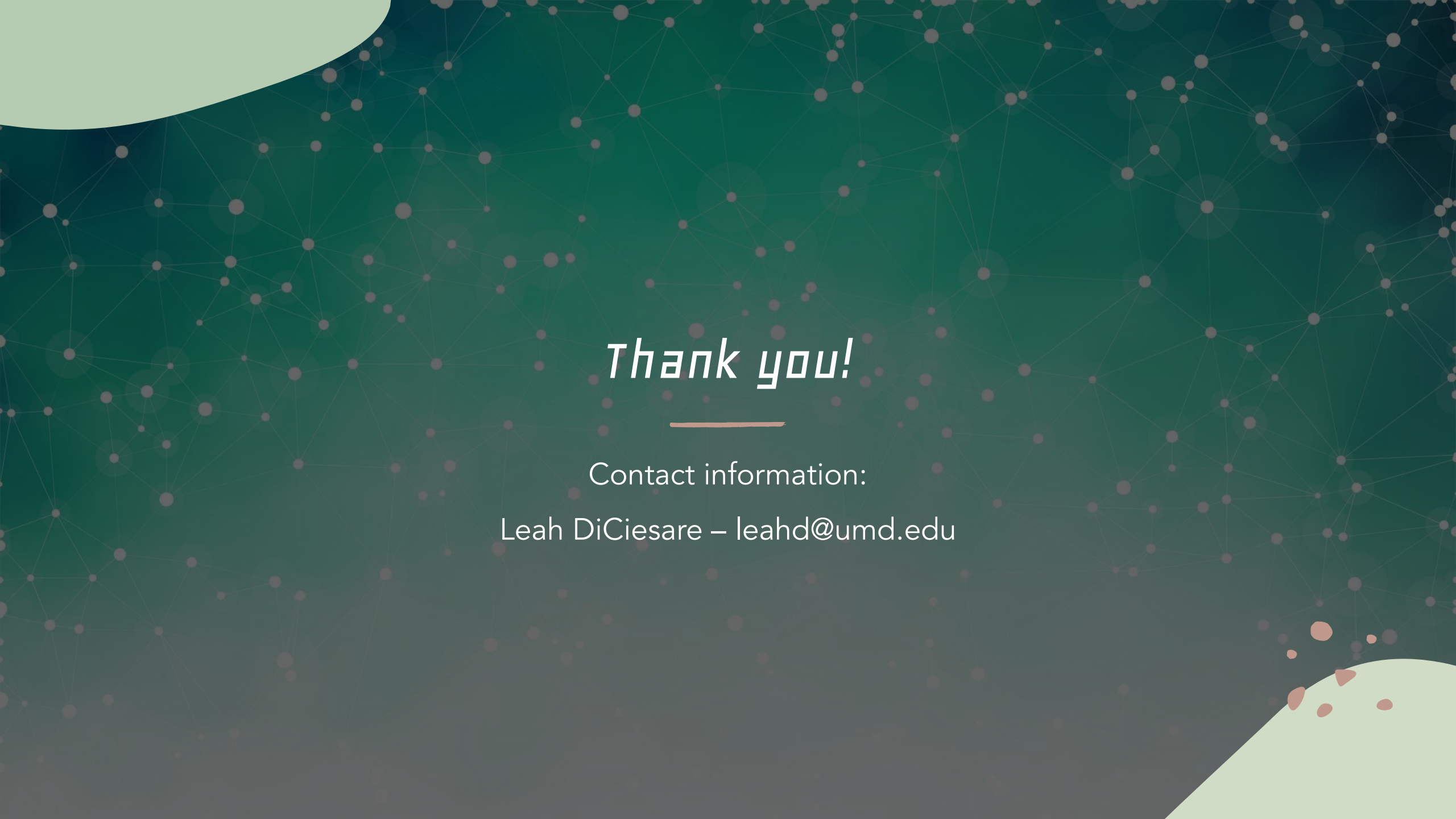
Expanding to engineering guides with my colleague



Implementing updating schedule



Survey students about research guides



Thank you!

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