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Informal Field-Based Learning in Librarianship: A Case Study Applying the CAM-OS Framework to Library Guide Construction

Nicole R. Webber, *University of Northern Colorado*

ABSTRACT

Activities such as library guide creation and maintenance can take a large amount of our time without supplying evidence that the time spent is effective or worthwhile. Usage statistics and feedback are avenues for gauging the impact of a guide, but we overlook another benefit if we focus solely on the user. By applying Tannenbaum and Wolfson's (2022) CAM-OS framework, we can bring greater intention to tasks that foster informal learning opportunities and harness them to advance librarians' competencies. A case study of overhauling a library guide on copyright is used to demonstrate and apply the framework.

KEYWORDS

informal learning, professional development, library guides

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Introduction

Love them or hate them, library guides are a staple of academic librarianship in the digital age. The library community has developed a multitude of approaches for their use in its pursuit of outcomes at every level despite the undercurrent of uncertainties regarding their efficacy, success, or accessibility (Carey et al., 2020; Del Bosque & Morris, 2021; Hennesy & Adams, 2021). The wide variety of guide objectives, best practices, institutional contexts, librarian proficiency, and style ultimately require time-consuming review at a granular level to understand whether and how intended goals are being met. Further, the resources spent on guides do not necessarily correlate with their success. Rather than dwell on the perfection and assessment of guides, we frequently create guides as the means to broader organizational ends and attempt to manage our time and priorities reasonably along the way. This may feel uneasily like the antithesis of evidence-based librarianship for some of us, particularly in times of limited resources. How do we know whether we are wasting our time on guide production? How can we assess an activity that is so hard to measure? While I cannot provide an empirical answer to these questions in this article, I claim that there is deeper intrinsic value to research guide production than we explicitly acknowledge and that this creation process can be a valuable avenue for informal field-based learning (IFBL). I employ Tannenbaum and Wolfson's (2022) CAM-OS framework to reflect upon a personal experience in guide creation and explore how librarians in similar situations might leverage these opportunities into lucrative skill development to meaningfully advance their competencies. Finally, I propose that librarians become familiar with and embrace the CAM-OS framework to bring more intentionality to activities where the return on investment may seem low or indefinable.

There is little data that quantifies the effort spent on library guides or assesses their impact in a generalizable manner, though researchers have investigated related questions at local levels. Castro Gessner et al. (2015) found that their authors spent an average of 11.4 hours on creating a new guide, with some respondents spending up to 40 hours. Del Bosque and Morris (2021) discovered that librarians most often reported spending between one to five hours per term updating and revising guides, with over 22% reporting spending over 10 hours per term. Both studies acknowledge that there is great variance in how much time and attention librarians give to guides. Regardless, as Del Bosque and Morris (2021) conclude regarding one popular library guide platform, "LibGuides are here to stay, and they will dominate how librarians share information with patrons until there is a new shift in technology. Until that shift, librarians, library staff, and library patrons will continue their current relationship with LibGuides, however fraught and imperfect" (p. 19). In an earlier study "The Enduring Landscape of Online Subject Research Guides" Jackson and Stacy-Bates (2016) surveyed 32 heads of reference at ARL academic libraries regarding their institution's use and maintenance of library subject guides. They found that most respondents (66%) deemed guides to be worth the time and effort required, while the remainder were less inclined to make blanket positive statements.

These respondents cited that it depended on the individual guide and that some guides lacked usability and adherence to best practices. Despite these generally favorable views and calls for additional staff training, only 16% of the respondents reported that the quality of a librarian's guides influenced their performance evaluation (Jackson & Stacy-Bates, 2016), suggesting that these activities are not being rewarded in accordance with their perceived value. These studies illustrate that, while we are unsure how to accurately measure, assess, or reward activities related to guide development, there is a persistent sentiment that they are important enough to keep doing.

If this is the case and we are committed to providing library guides no matter their effect on users or our own performance, can we reframe how we justify the time and resources we spend on them? One possibility is found in the study by Bagshaw and Yorke-Barber (2018), who investigated library guides as a tool for professional development. In a survey of 89 Australian academic librarians, they posed the question, "Are the guides an essential tool for you in improving your skills as a librarian?" The results found that 57% of respondents described subject guides as essential in this way. As the only research found to address this topic at the time of writing this article, there is undoubtedly a dearth of evidence in this area; yet the findings of Bagshaw and Yorke-Barber echo a sentiment that resonates with information professionals and the ways in which they approach their work. In short, librarians are by necessity lifelong learners who are no strangers to supplementing their formal education (Ducas et al., 2020; Lund et al., 2023). Through greater intention and the application of theory, librarians can capitalize on this natural tendency in order to further elevate their skills.

The CAM-OS Framework

Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022), working primarily from the perspective of organizational behavior, present the CAM-OS framework (table 1) building off their previous work in informal field-based learning (IFBL). The framework "emphasizes five factors (Capability, Awareness, Motivation, Opportunity, and Support) that are potential leverage points for enabling effective IFBL" (Tannenbaum & Wolfson, 2022, p. 393). The factors are split into three in personal readiness and two in situational readiness, and while none is a new concept by any means, Tannenbaum and Wolfson provide structure and recommendations to help leaders and individuals maximize the informal learning taking place in the workplace.

Due to the established history and variance of terminology used in the framework, it is important to distinguish what IFBL is and is not. In a previous paper, Wolfson et al. (2018) define IFBL as "engaging in intentional self-directed behaviors aimed at learning new, work-oriented, and organizationally valued content outside of a formal learning program" (p. 16). Here, the authors are creating a distinct scope to allow for more specific and relevant insights, particularly through the limitation of workplace learning. Operating within this context, the three important characteristics emphasized in their definition are the continua of formality,

directedness, and intentionality—specifically that IFBL is informal, self-directed, and intentional (figure 1).

Table 1

The CAM-OS Framework

	Factor	Description
Personal Readiness	**C**apability	The learning skills of the individual, such as observation, asking questions, seeking, and processing feedback, reflection, and handling mistakes.
	Awareness	The individual intentionally engages learning opportunities and is able to assess those opportunities for validity within their situation.
	Motivation	The individual is curious and willing to seek out and engage in learning opportunities.
Situational Readiness	**O**pportunity	Characteristics that describe an environment's volume of learning opportunities, resources to participate in them, flexibility to enable them, and potential consequences.
	Support	Dynamics of the individual's work environment, supervisor, peers, and organizational climate that encourage or hinder learning, risk-taking, and innovation.

Note. Table contents based on Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022).

The core concept of IFBL, informal learning, is notoriously difficult to define (Lecat et al., 2020; Wolfson et al., 2018). According to Cerasoli et al. (2018), it can be described through its behaviors, which "are non-curricular behaviors and activities pursued in service of knowledge and skill acquisition that take place *outside* formally designated learning contexts. … [They] are not syllabus-based, discrete, or linear" (p. 204). Both Wolfson et al. (2018) and Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) are clear that they do not aim to change or add to the existing constructs of informal learning, but rather to discuss a specific subset within it. Therefore, IFBL is one of several types of informal learning.

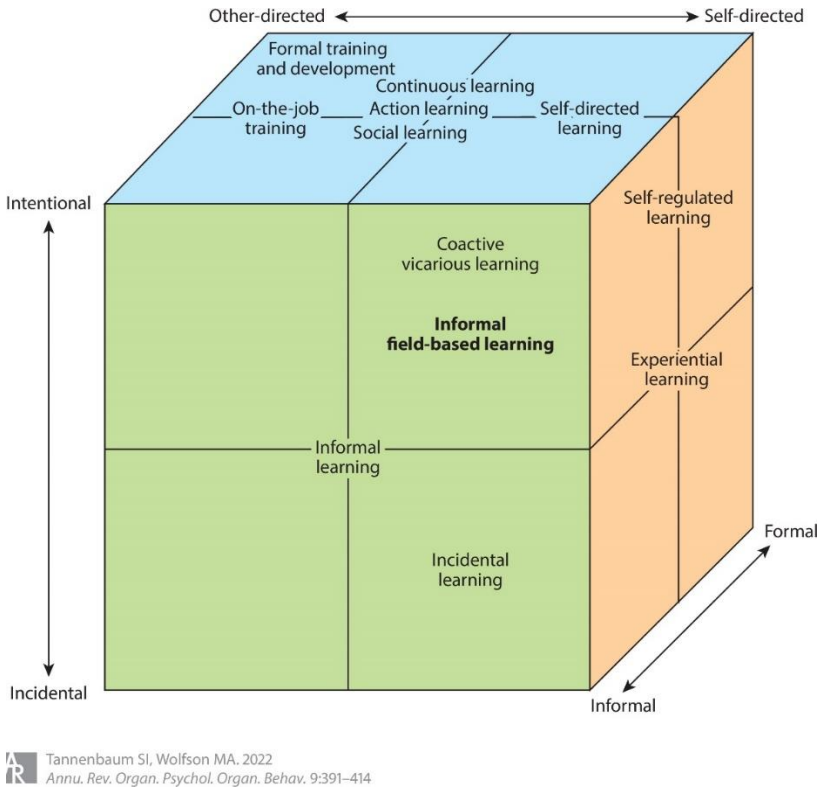
Similarly, IFBL is self-directed. While this characteristic often accompanies descriptions of informal learning, distinction can be seen through Knowles' (1975) seminal description as, "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning

outcomes" (p. 18). This characteristic often goes hand-in-hand with informal learning because the learner may be the only agent involved in the endeavor. Knowles nonetheless emphasizes that other people may be, and often are, a critical component of self-directed learning.

Lastly, IFBL is intentional, which distinguishes it from other types of informal learning. A great deal of informal learning can happen unintentionally, but these modalities exclude important behaviors like seeking out new experiences, innovating, inviting feedback, reflecting, and studying experts (Wolfson et al., 2018). Summarizing the work by Watkins and Marsick (1992), Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) contrast this with incidental learning that "generally happens without forethought and at times without awareness, as a by-product of other activities" (p. 395).

Figure 1

Model illustrating learning constructs on three continua



Note. From "Informal (Field-Based) Learning," by S.I. Tannenbaum and M. A. Wolfson, 2022, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 9*(1), p. 394 (https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012420-083050). Copyright 2022 by Annual Reviews. Reprinted with permission.

The CAM-OS framework revisits these three characteristics of informal, self-directed, and intentional learning so that leaders and individual learners might recognize and strengthen

IFBL learning opportunities. These characteristics are woven throughout the five factors that make up the framework's acronym, which I explain individually below. Following this, I provide a brief case study on research guide development to which I will then apply each of the factors in turn.

Capability

Capability is one of three factors that make up personal readiness for IFBL (Tannenbaum & Wolfson, 2022). Many self-directed learning frameworks and theories at least mention the individual's learning skills (Blaschke & Hase, 2016; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). This is logical, because if these skills are lacking, the individual is likely to be more successful in more formal or mediated educational environments. While the terminology varies, capability generally encompasses skills such as asking relevant questions from the appropriate sources; noticing, processing, and incorporating new information and details; seeking and integrating feedback from others; and reflecting upon one's errors, experience, and growth.

The exact definition of this concept also varies, but Stephenson's (1998) description resonates by providing thoughtful insight with the distinction between competence and capability:

> Capability is a broader concept than that of competence. Competence is primarily about the ability to perform effectively, concerned largely with the here and now. Capability embraces competence but is also forward looking, concerned with the realization of potential. A capability approach focuses on the capacity of individuals to participate in the formulation of their own developmental needs and those of the context in which they work and live. (p. 3)

This emphasizes that the individual not only has the skills to learn on their own, but also to direct it. A capable learner is able to identify developmental needs, to decide which to fill, and to examine methods of doing so.

Awareness

Likewise, this inclination toward recognizing learning opportunities relates to the factor of awareness. This is where Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) separate intentional and incidental learning, and they posit:

> There are times when engaging in IFBL can be ineffectual or even detrimental. For that reason, employees cannot only benefit from an awareness of where and how they may be able to engage in healthy IFBL, but they should also be aware of the landmines to avoid. (p. 399)

While they do not expand on what these "landmines" might be in this paper, I suspect one for librarians might be the degree to which we are accustomed to learning on the job and teaching

ourselves new things. As this becomes our norm, how intentional do we make the actual practices of selecting approaches, tools, and objectives for ourselves? These practices might seem too formal or time-consuming for an informal learning construct, but we are less effective, or even waste time, when we do not deliberately pause to consider what we want to be able to do after participating in professional development, which webinars are actually the most relevant to our positions, or how we will implement new knowledge in our unique settings.

Motivation

All of the capability and awareness in the world are nothing without motivation, which is the third and final factor in the personal readiness side of the CAM-OS framework. Unfortunately, it is also the most fickle. We may start out with great intention for a valid learning opportunity and, when the time comes, find that we simply are not up to asking questions or applying the material that day. We might be passionate about a topic, but not connect with the instructor. Or we might be distracted by unrelated problems in our organization. Motivation is intrinsically tied up in the other framework factors, and it is for this reason that Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) claim, "Motivation in IFBL may be boosted by encouragement from peers and leaders, targeted organizational practices, perceived psychological safety, and seeing others who actively engage in IFBL be rewarded" (p. 399). While these cannot ignite motivation on their own, they can certainly make way for it. The other side of motivation, then, is knowing what motivates us as individuals.

Opportunity

Situational readiness factors are equally important to facilitating IFBL, and they are arguably even more variable depending on the responsibilities, preferences, and priorities of others. Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) describe opportunity as the extent to which environments are rich with variety and complexity, have slack in resources (particularly time), are malleable, and are appropriate for particular learning opportunities. Therefore, a favorable opportunity is more likely to arise when there are frequent potential opportunities from which to choose and when an employee's tasks can be modified to accommodate it. What is more, the pursuit of the opportunity must be met with sufficient time and resources without taking the employee away from their core responsibilities. An individual may have the personal readiness to learn, but an opportunity cannot be field based if it cannot occur within the parameters of one's position.

Support

Closely linked to both opportunity and motivation, support is multi-faceted and subject to both fluctuation and interpretation. It is established through the overall work culture, actions of colleagues, and policies and programs of an organization. Three significant concepts that Tannenbaum and Wolfson (2022) highlight are safety, autonomy, and recognition. An

individual must feel as though taking risks and trying new things is acceptable to both their supervisors and peers. This sentiment may arise from seeing IFBL modeled at various levels or encouraged through informal interactions or formal reward systems. There must also be an understanding of task ownership and flexibility that allows an individual to explore new areas without causing animosity or confusion among colleagues. With adequate support, a learner has access to even more resources, such as mentors and time, but without it (or even with a perceived lack of it) they may feel relegated to the protection of their current role.

Learning Opportunity Scenario

My interest in informal learning theories arose out of my assignment to assist with the renovation of one of our library's long-standing research guides. The copyright guide at our institution had demonstrated consistent use over the years, and we were fortunate for many of these years to have a librarian well-versed and interested in copyright law and its application in higher education. Yet, in light of competing and shifting job priorities, changes to best practices in guide production, and developments in copyright law itself, it became clear that the guide required a massive overhaul beyond the capacity of a single individual.[1] In 2019, my department made the decision to prioritize this project by putting together a team tasked with updating the content in a manner that was in line with our library's guidelines and fit with the overall plan and scope of guides maintained by our department.

In the two years that followed, the team addressing this multi-faceted goal included three to five individuals at various points. The group was comprised of members of the library faculty and the staff person primarily responsible for our website. In addition to the skills of our resident copyright expert, strengths represented by the individuals included technical knowledge of the platform, design and user experience, pedagogical strategy, and content editing skills. Being the liaison librarian for the disciplines of business and communication studies at the time, my expertise and experience resided primarily in the technology we were using and the visual aspects of presenting information online rather than the guide's subject matter.

We approached the project by exploring the general scope of the guide and becoming acquainted with its existing content and known needs. We knew the guide was text-heavy and that it presented navigational challenges by having redundant information across 17 tabs. Moreover, the guide was out of compliance with our library's best practices, resulting in accessibility issues and incohesive branding, and it presented outdated copyright information and university policy. Despite several attempts to edit the existing guide and rebuild from the ground up, the project was not meeting its benchmark goals in its first months.

[1] Screenshots of the guide before and after the revision are available in Appendices A and B.

After reexamination and a period of research, discussion, and proposed solutions, we decided to pursue the adaptation of another institution's copyright guide. By shopping for models that we felt presented the information in an organized, digestible manner, we were able to better manage our workload and shift our focus to personalizing content with information relevant to our institution's needs. This effectively brought in an additional passive collaborator and copyright expert via the creator of the adapted guide, and it had an overall positive impact on the resources available for the project. With this decision in place, we were able to move forward with more ease, and I soon found myself in the position of both information consumer and provider. I was simultaneously learning and applying new copyright concepts. As will be demonstrated, this was a prime opportunity to advance my skills in the matter of copyright resources, needs, and approaches at our institution, not to mention in leadership and project management as well.

Framework Application

Reviewing the copyright guide project through the lens of the CAM-OS framework, it becomes clear how the five factors—Capability, Awareness, Motivation, Opportunity, and Support—came together to establish significance that extended beyond the end user's experience of the guide. The project did not start out as an instance of IFBL as defined by Wolfson et al. above because it was not an intentional learning experience. However, it gradually became one. As I spent more time on the project, I recognized more openings for learning and made calculated decisions about how to retain and apply new information and skills for the future. Culminating in the reflection for this article, the revision of the copyright guide exemplifies the CAM-OS framework and how it might be used in similar scenarios.

Capability

Over the years as a liaison and scholarly communication librarian taking on new roles, I had honed an ability to teach myself new skills and seek out relevant professional development. Like many librarians, I did not master many skills until I was able to apply them on the job. Being at the same institution for several years further advanced my ability to formulate questions and efficiency in knowing where to direct them. I experienced multiple avenues for learning and discovered how I learn best in a workplace environment. Significantly, I found that I often thrived most when I had the opportunity to solicit feedback regarding the incorporation of new concepts into my work. Many aspects of my role allowed me to employ my affinity for taking things apart to learn about how they work and then reconfigure them in new ways and assess how others responded.

I may not have been ready for this IFBL opportunity without the skills I had developed in the early years of my position. Fortunately, amid the task of updating our copyright guide, I recognized a choice: to participate in the collaborative project in a way that exclusively offered my existing skills or to do so while increasing my knowledge of the topic. Several capability

indicators signaled me to pursue the latter. Perhaps most notably, I knew that I had more interactive and engaging resources at my disposal, which matched my learning needs for this topic. I had several colleagues experienced in copyright and our institution to provide context and curated lists of helpful websites, articles, and books. I felt confident that I could be successful if I could augment my independent research with the observation of and feedback from my peers. Additionally, both the guide revision and occasional inquiries from patrons provided application and direction. I was able to navigate my inquiries and research based on relevant user needs (for example, the common questions involving the reuse of content in doctoral dissertations), rather than try to master all areas of copyright to be ready for hypothetical scenarios. I identified the most advantageous topics to study and tested them in draft revisions for the content of the copyright guide.

In this manner, I had greater control over how I might learn both copyright and project management more thoroughly in the environment created by this opportunity due to its alignment with my capabilities and my knowledge of them. I was able to direct isolated learning opportunities more effectively with this knowledge and by making deliberate decisions when I had the resources and desire to grow in specific areas. Self-awareness and autonomy are key components that librarians can embrace to turn tasks into IFBL opportunities.

Awareness

Nonetheless, awareness is not only an ability but an ongoing practice. I have certainly known myself to fall into a mindset in which I attend a webinar or a conference at a given time with the intention of figuring out what to do with it later. What has become apparent for me is that later often never comes, and valuable materials sit stagnant in the notes on my computer. As I became more aware of my learning skills, preferences, and circumstances, I could make better use of my time by intentionally analyzing and selecting learning opportunities and then curating modalities and goals. From this awareness, I could enhance my capability to identify and leverage appropriate opportunities while turning down others.

In the case of leveraging the copyright guide revision for my own development, the awareness of the opportunity did not happen immediately. Fortunately, I was conscious of another resource I had for this project: time. After several months on the project, I began formulating informal objectives for myself. I wanted to decrease my need to consult with colleagues when fielding copyright questions from students and faculty. I wanted to be able to digest complex issues into the most salient and digestible components for lay audiences. And, eventually, I wanted to be able to make connections between copyright conversations and new developments like Artificial Intelligence. The identification and intention of these objectives turned an otherwise passive opportunity into effective IFBL.

In our line of work, it is becoming more common for webinars and other forms of professional development to explicitly list intended outcomes for participants. As presenters or

instructors, librarians are accustomed to doing this for their audience. It follows that we then have the ability to adapt this practice for ourselves in informal environments for our own learning and advancement.

Motivation

In conducting research for the copyright guide, I found that I had a genuine curiosity for how various laws and exceptions worked and how they affected our students and researchers. The informal objectives I had formulated had helped direct my motivation, and my curiosity fueled my willingness to contribute more effort and seek out solutions on my own. Furthermore, I found I could borrow motivation from my colleagues, who were also interested in discussing the intricacies of the topic and working together on complex queries. This led me to take on the team's leadership role for the second year of the project. This transition occurred when it would have been easy for the whole group to lose motivation after seemingly spinning our wheels the first few months. Instead, I reframed our initial attempts as part of an integral process that enabled us to make more informed plans and decisions moving forward—not only remotivating myself but hopefully my team members as well.

This particularly long-term project illustrates that motivation shifts and fluctuates over time and underscores the importance of frequent check-ins and reflection. This culminated for me as our new copyright guide took form, because it became likely that our resident copyright expert might soon retire. This placed a more tangible deadline on my mastery. Whereas before our department had been working toward holistic development of scholarly communication proficiencies, I now felt more inspired to work toward preserving our institutional knowledge and quality of service. If I had already possessed the capability and awareness to take on the content, the forecasted loss of a significant resource rounded out my motivation, and thus my personal readiness, for IFBL.

Opportunity & Support

The opportunity to develop my expertise in the areas of copyright depended a great deal upon the department structure that had been developing over the years preceding the copyright guide project. As a department that had been transitioning from traditional reference and research services to one that was focused on scholarly communication, there were a greater number of naturally occurring learning opportunities that were relevant to our work as a whole. We began to collaboratively develop more structured goals and priorities with the possibility to participate in those we found most fitting and take on leadership roles. As for this specific project, the age and deterioration of our copyright content resulted in its inclusion in our department goals for two consecutive years. Its update was a priority to which we were willing to commit resources, and I had the autonomy to determine my level of involvement.

In fact, the work culture during the period of this project supported job autonomy and professional development as a general rule. Leadership at the University Libraries had consistently devoted, and at times increased, funding for professional development and hosted webinars for their faculty and staff. It was rare for new ideas or strategies to be dismissed, and it was common for innovation and leadership to be positively acknowledged in annual evaluations. At the department level, members were entrusted to help develop department goals, take on leadership roles, and try out new approaches. Support at various levels in the organization created a positive culture that was constructive and informed. Through our collaborative approach, I shaped an appropriate learning opportunity for myself that was also relevant to the work of my department and institution as a whole.

Individuals do not always have control over their environments as embodied in the situational readiness factors; therefore, both opportunity and support are important areas for library leadership to be aware of and intentional about. Cultures may be difficult to change, so attention at levels higher in the organization is key. Tannenbaum and Wolfson's article (2022) includes recommendations for senior and team leaders that center around opening communication and furnishing resources and that acknowledge that IFBL can be difficult to observe and track as readiness factors change. But even so, as individuals we should be careful to avoid making assumptions about our work environments lest we miss an opportunity or approach it in a detrimental way. If the factors of opportunity and support are lacking, being deliberate and clear about our personal readiness factors can begin to pave the way for situational readiness. Initiating ongoing conversation about IFBL, and modalities of workplace learning in general, from either side will increase the value we place upon on-the-job learning.

Discussion

Informal learning is a frequent occurrence, but the work of Tannenbaum and Wolfson encourages us to bring greater intention to it through IFBL and the CAM-OS framework, which highlight behaviors such as seeking new experiences, taking the time to reflect on our experiences and new knowledge, seeking feedback from others, and observing and talking with experts (Tannenbaum et al., 2010; Wolfson et al., 2018). While we are constantly learning and keeping up with change, librarians are often at odds with time limitations, job creep, and silos of expertise. We are aware of a multitude of learning opportunities, but we have a tendency to commit to too many at once or to be randomly selective. In other words, we suffer from opportunity overload and struggle to evaluate the fitness for our needs.

Preceding the renovation of our copyright guide, I had engaged in formal education on a variety of related topics through conferences and webinars. These learning modalities provided valuable foundational knowledge, but they lacked room for autonomy and direct application to my unique role and environment. Topics such as copyright are large and complex; they require the focus of specific context and implementation to make new knowledge and skills more

concrete. At the end of the revision process, I gained greater confidence in my ability to research copyright questions and have since held far more consultations with coworkers and patrons on matters of copyright. IFBL brought my understanding of copyright to a higher level, enabling the application of what I have learned to tasks and services beyond the maintenance of a single library guide. In this way, I believe IFBL is an important component of our training as librarians, especially in light of the heterogeneity of our patrons, job tasks, and situations.

Not all activities lend themselves to IFBL or the framework as illustrated in this case study. I have been responsible for other library guides that have not provided constructive opportunities in this way, such as one on the measurement and tenets of research impact. This guide represents an area of growth and exploration at our institution, and there are far fewer local resources and requests for assistance with the subject. I have instead leaned on more formal learning methods, such as self-paced online courses. Still, aspects of the CAM-OS framework are transferrable, and I contend that the factors are applicable to formal learning as well. I have consciously incorporated reflection into all types of learning to increase my awareness and motivation. In this way, I make greater connections to my work, track my capability, and am more selective about the learning opportunities and methods I pursue.

Ultimately, it is in our best interest to seek opportunities for adopting the CAM-OS framework because it increases the potential that current activities possess to facilitate and expedite future tasks. It invites the question: Rather than passively complete tasks that feel rote or tangential, how can we leverage them to be more meaningful and support future priorities through the advancement of skill and awareness? Furthermore, taking the time to consider the framework and its suitability in specific circumstances advances our learning capability in itself. There are steps we can take as individual learners, but it is imperative that both leadership and learners be aware of the factors that can enhance or inhibit IFBL, as the CAM-OS framework demonstrates the significance of communal factors on even the most informal and independent learning.

Conclusion

Librarians will continue to take advantage of many learning modalities, whether they are formal or informal, self-, or other-directed, and intentional or incidental. We better leverage amorphous activities as learning opportunities by bringing intentionality and structure to them through the CAM-OS framework. While I do not discourage the pursuit of empirical assessment of research guide production, I echo Tannenbaum and Wolfson's call for further research into the efficacy and enhancement of informal learning. The field of librarianship is fertile ground for us to explore this concept for our own benefit and how it can further improve our outputs and facilitate future tasks.

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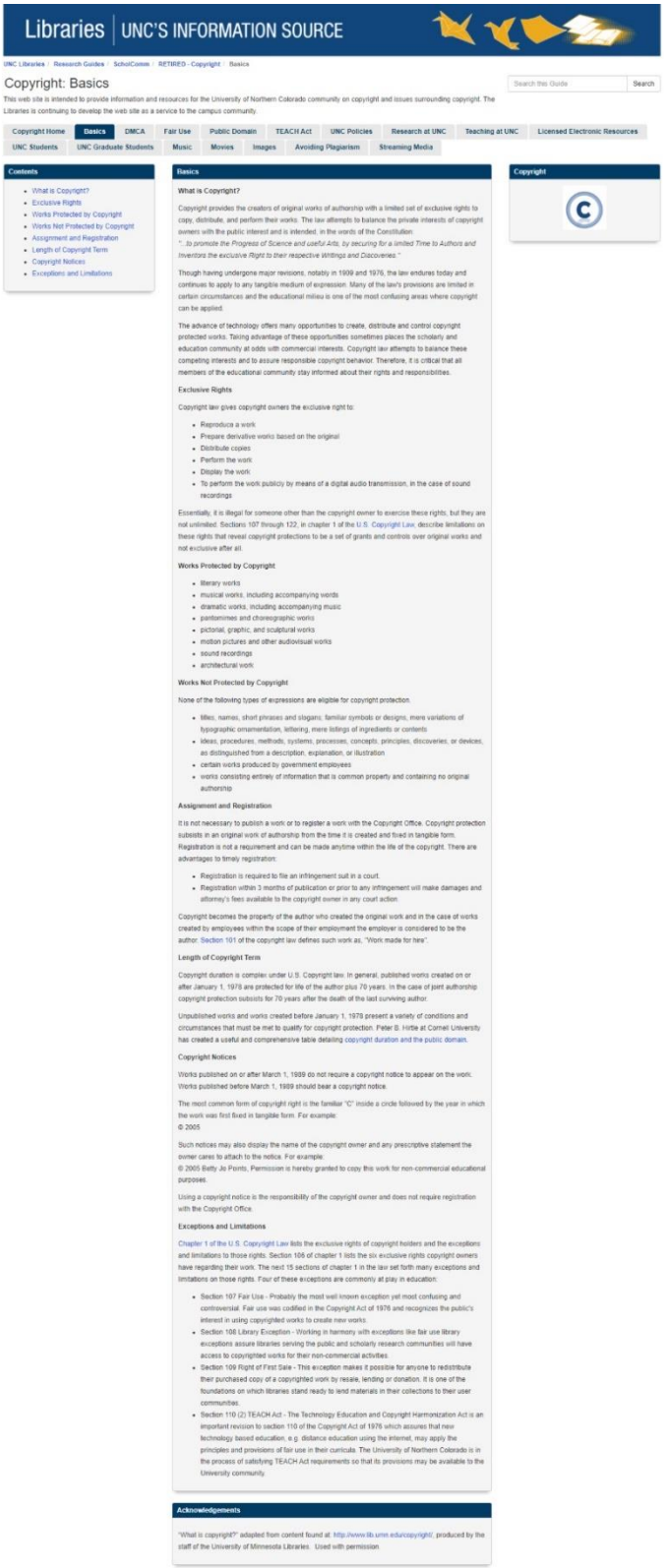
Appendix A

Screenshot of the original “Copyright Basics” tab of the Copyright library guide.



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UNC Libraries / Research Guides / ScholComm / RETIRED - Copyright / Basics

Copyright: Basics

This web site is intended to provide information and resources for the University of Northern Colorado community on copyright and issues surrounding copyright. The Libraries is continuing to develop the web site as a service to the campus community.

Search this Guide | Search

Copyright Home | Basics | DMCA | Fair Use | Public Domain | TEACH Act | UNC Policies | Research at UNC | Teaching at UNC | Licensed Electronic Resources | UNC Students | UNC Graduate Students | Music | Movies | Images | Avoiding Plagiarism | Streaming Media

Contents

- What is Copyright?
- Exclusive Rights
- Works Protected by Copyright
- Works Not Protected by Copyright
- Assignment and Registration
- Length of Copyright Term
- Copyright Notices
- Exceptions and Limitations

Basics

What is Copyright?

Copyright provides the creators of original works of authorship with a limited set of exclusive rights to copy, distribute, and perform their works. The law attempts to balance the private interests of copyright owners with the public interest and is intended, in the words of the Constitution:

"...to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for a limited Time to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries."

Though having undergone major revisions, notably in 1909 and 1976, the law endures today and continues to apply to any tangible medium of expression. Many of the law's provisions are limited in certain circumstances and the educational milieu is one of the most confusing areas where copyright can be applied.

The advance of technology offers many opportunities to create, distribute and control copyright protected works. Taking advantage of these opportunities sometimes places the scholarly and education community at odds with commercial interests. Copyright law attempts to balance these competing interests and to assure responsible copyright behavior. Therefore, it is critical that all members of the educational community stay informed about their rights and responsibilities.

Exclusive Rights

Copyright law gives copyright owners the exclusive right to:

- Reproduce a work
- Prepare derivative works based on the original
- Distribute copies
- Perform the work
- Display the work
- To perform the work publicly by means of a digital audio transmission, in the case of sound recordings

Essentially, it is illegal for someone other than the copyright owner to exercise these rights, but they are not unlimited. Sections 107 through 122, in chapter 1 of the U.S. Copyright Law, describe limitations on these rights that reveal copyright protections to be a set of grants and controls over original works and not exclusive after all.

Works Protected by Copyright

- literary works
- musical works, including accompanying words
- dramatic works, including accompanying music
- pantomimes and choreographic works
- pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works
- motion pictures and other audiovisual works
- sound recordings
- architectural work

Works Not Protected by Copyright

None of the following types of expressions are eligible for copyright protection.

- titles, names, short phrases and slogans; familiar symbols or designs; mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, mere listings of ingredients or contents
- ideas, procedures, methods, systems, processes, concepts, principles, discoveries, or devices, as distinguished from a description, explanation, or illustration
- certain works produced by government employees
- works consisting entirely of information that is common property and containing no original authorship

Assignment and Registration

It is not necessary to publish a work or to register a work with the Copyright Office. Copyright protection subsists in an original work of authorship from the time it is created and fixed in tangible form. Registration is not a requirement and can be made anytime within the life of the copyright. There are advantages to timely registration:

- Registration is required to file an infringement suit in a court.
- Registration within 3 months of publication or prior to any infringement will make damages and attorney's fees available to the copyright owner in any court action.

Copyright becomes the property of the author who created the original work and in the case of works created by employees within the scope of their employment the employer is considered to be the author. Section 101 of the copyright law defines such work as, "Work made for hire".

Length of Copyright Term

Copyright duration is complex under U.S. Copyright law. In general, published works created on or after January 1, 1978 are protected for life of the author plus 70 years. In the case of joint authorship copyright protection subsists for 70 years after the death of the last surviving author.

Unpublished works and works created before January 1, 1978 present a variety of conditions and circumstances that must be met to qualify for copyright protection. Peter B. Hirtle at Cornell University has created a useful and comprehensive table detailing copyright duration and the public domain.

Copyright Notices

Works published on or after March 1, 1989 do not require a copyright notice to appear on the work. Works published before March 1, 1989 should bear a copyright notice.

The most common form of copyright right is the familiar "C" inside a circle followed by the year in which the work was first fixed in tangible form. For example:
© 2005

Such notices may also display the name of the copyright owner and any prescriptive statement the owner cares to attach to the notice. For example:
© 2005 Betty Jo Ponts, Permission is hereby granted to copy this work for non-commercial educational purposes.

Using a copyright notice is the responsibility of the copyright owner and does not require registration with the Copyright Office.

Exceptions and Limitations

Chapter 1 of the U.S. Copyright Law lists the exclusive rights of copyright holders and the exceptions and limitations to those rights. Section 106 of chapter 1 lists the six exclusive rights copyright owners have regarding their work. The next 15 sections of chapter 1 in the law set forth many exceptions and limitations on those rights. Four of these exceptions are commonly at play in education:

- Section 107 Fair Use - Probably the most well known exception yet most confusing and controversial. Fair use was codified in the Copyright Act of 1976 and recognizes the public's interest in using copyrighted works to create new works.
- Section 108 Library Exception - Working in harmony with exceptions like fair use library exceptions assure libraries serving the public and scholarly research communities will have access to copyrighted works for their non-commercial activities.
- Section 109 Right of First Sale - This exception makes it possible for anyone to redistribute their purchased copy of a copyrighted work by resale, lending or donation. It is one of the foundations on which libraries stand ready to lend materials in their collections to their user communities.
- Section 110 (2) TEACH Act - The Technology Education and Copyright Harmonization Act is an important revision to section 110 of the Copyright Act of 1976 which assures that new technology based education, e.g. distance education using the internet, may apply the principles and provisions of fair use in their curricula. The University of Northern Colorado is in the process of satisfying TEACH Act requirements so that its provisions may be available to the University community.

Acknowledgements

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Copyright

Appendix B

Screenshot of the revised “Copyright Basics” tab of the Copyright library guide.