

Creating a just-in-time resource for a campus-wide event

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About Alternative Academic (altac) Careers

Altac (or Alt-ac) is a term coined ~ 2010^{1,2}, referring to two post-PhD career tracks, most often the first:


- ▶ non-teaching positions inside academia;
- ▶ research or administrative positions in the public or private sectors outside academia.

¹<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/05/22/essay-defining-alt-ac-new-phd-job-searches>

²<https://storify.com/nowviskie/altac-origin-stories>

...with attendees participating in the creation

Objectives:

- ▶ To create a resource guide about altac careers in time for a 2-day campus-wide event.
 - ▶ To raise awareness of altac issues and the Altac Project at UNC-Chapel Hill.
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Why Here and Now?

- ▶ Significant decline in tenure track faculty positions, nationally (e.g. 30% in the humanities since 2007–2008).^{3,4}
- ▶ UNC leads in national altac conversation.
- ▶ Growth of UNC's Altac Project over 2014–2015.
- ▶ Pilot UNC fellowship for PhD students to explore alternative careers Summer, 2015 (Richard Bland Fellowship Professional Pathways Program).
- ▶ Two-day campus altac event (April, 2015).


³<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-24/an-academic-job-slump-is-making-graduate-students-depressed>

⁴<https://www.amacad.org/content/research/dataForumEssay.aspx?i=21673>


Project Tasks

- ▶ Research and explain the history of the altac concept.
 - ▶ Capture the national conversation.
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Project Tasks

- ▶ Create easy-to-use LibGuide for exploring altac careers with traditional and not-so-traditional resources.
 - Books and Articles
 - Online Publications: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education
 - Websites, blogs
 - Jobs Boards
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Just-In-Time

- ▶ Members of target audience involved in development.
 - ▶ Draft LibGuide unveiled for 2-day altac event attended by over 100 students & faculty.
 - ▶ During event, attendees tweeted the guide, shared how it was useful, and suggested additional resources we incorporated into the LibGuide.
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Users accessed guide during event

<http://guides.lib.unc.edu/altac>

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window with the title "What is Altac? - Altac (Alternative Academic) Careers - LibGuides at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill". The address bar shows the URL "guides.lib.unc.edu/altac". The page header features the UNC Health Sciences Library logo and contact information: "335 S. Columbia Street CB 7585 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7585 (919) 962-0800". Navigation links include "Ask a Librarian", "FAQs", "My Library Account", and "Chat Now!". A menu bar contains "Resources", "Services", and "About". The main content area is titled "Altac (Alternative Academic) Careers: What is Altac?" and includes a sub-header "Resources about Alternative Academic (Altac or Alt-ac) Careers and Resources for Developing Altac Careers". Below this are several tabs: "What is Altac?", "Altac @ UNC", "Altac in the News", "General Altac Resources", "Humanities & Social Sciences Resources", "STEM Resources", and "Jobs Boards (All Disciplines)". The "What is Altac?" tab is selected, showing a section titled "About Altac: Alternative Academic Careers" with a graduation cap icon. The text explains that "Altac" (or Alt-ac) is a term coined in 2010, referring to two post-PhD career tracks. A bulleted list identifies these as: non-teaching positions inside academia; and research or administrative positions in the public or private sectors outside academia. A section titled "How to use this guide:" is partially visible at the bottom. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 11:54 PM on 7/4/2015.

What is Altac? - Altac (Alternative Academic) Careers - LibGuides at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill - Mozilla Firefox

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Resources Services About


Altac (Alternative Academic) Careers: What is Altac?

Resources about Alternative Academic (Altac or Alt-ac) Careers and Resources for Developing Altac Careers

What is Altac? Altac @ UNC Altac in the News General Altac Resources

Humanities & Social Sciences Resources STEM Resources Jobs Boards (All Disciplines)

About Altac: Alternative Academic Careers



Altac (or Alt-ac) is a term coined in 2010, according to an [Inside Higher Ed article](#), referring to two post-PhD career tracks, most often the first:

- non-teaching positions inside academia;
- research or administrative positions in the public or private sectors outside academia.

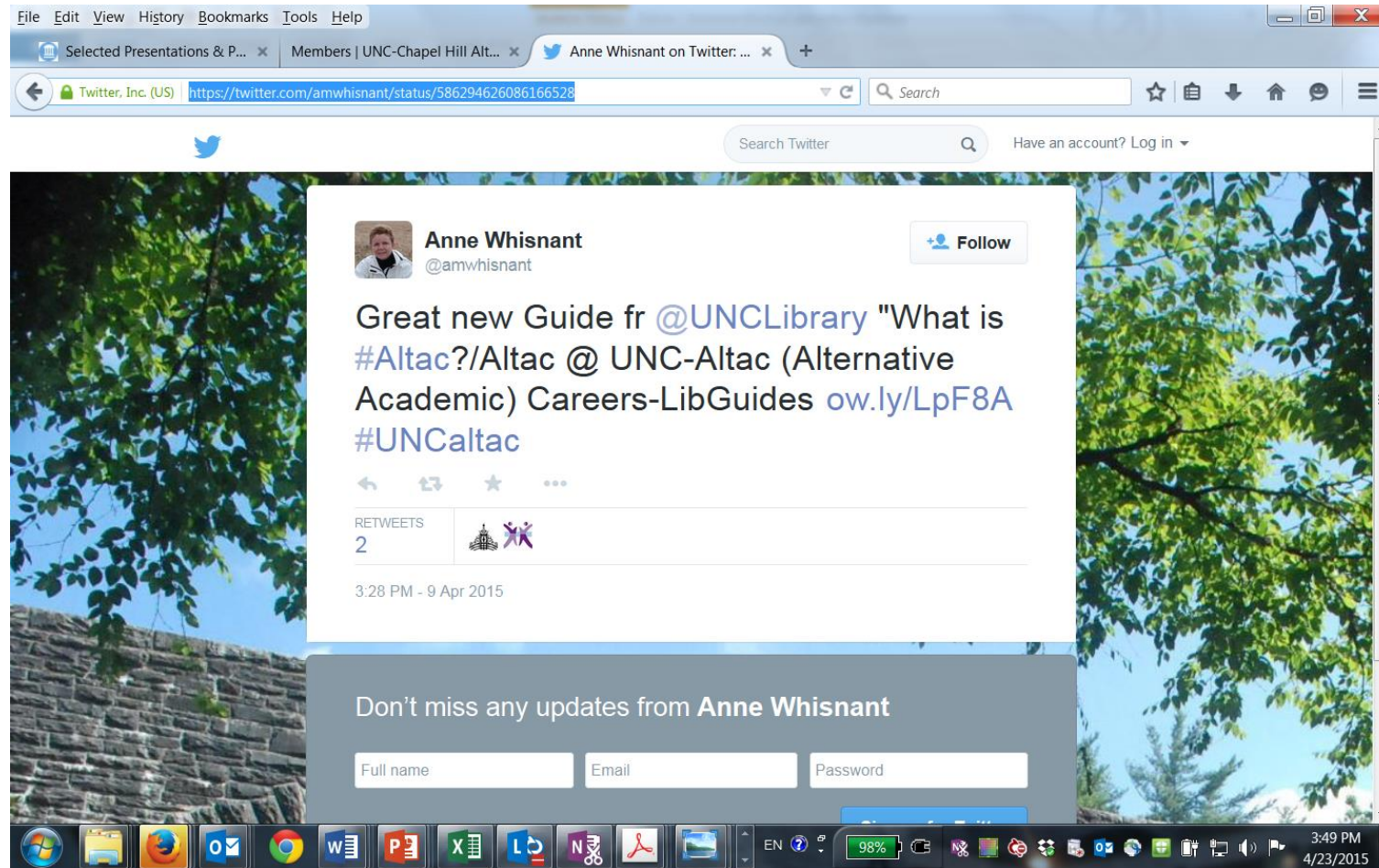
How to use this guide:

Start

100%

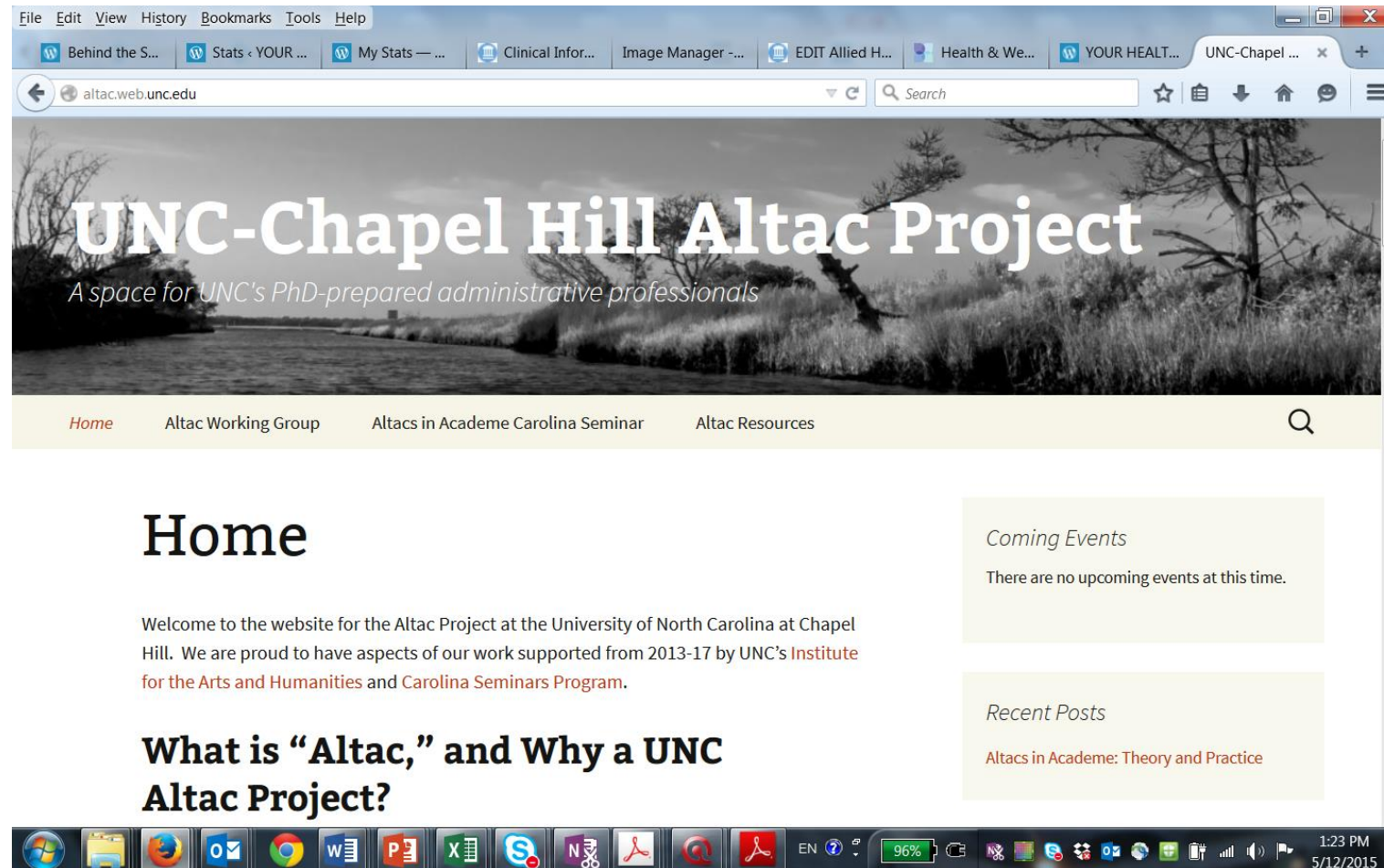
11:54 PM 7/4/2015

Tweeted it




Linked it to UNC-Chapel Hill Altac Project website

altac.web.unc.edu



Unique Challenges

- **Keeping it current while national conversation is exploding:**
 - Created live searches of online and interactive resources.
 - Involved key campus figures (ALTAC Working Group) during development.
 - **Audience is UNC and beyond:**
 - Separate instructions for licensed resources.
 - **Meet just-in-time needs:** draft released for 2-day campus event
 - Guide previewed at kick-off public event.
 - URL sent to registered students just prior to workshop.
 - URL shared with PhD program directors and faculty during event.
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Additional challenges & questions


- **Updated and revised significantly after draft published:**
 - Edited private copy (vs. hidden pages) for previewing.
- **Whether to include jobs boards?**
 - Resounding yes from students and doctoral program advisors, who gave us additional discipline-specific links.
- **Where to locate guide on libraries website?**
 - Will publicize across libraries, via LAUNC-CH poster, TRLN presentation, and library news story.
 - Create new LibGuide category? Trialing “[Atypical Topics](#)”

For a LibGuide on an emerging issue for a diverse audience:

▶ **Very early input**

- saved time and involved users in development and promotion, resulting in a stronger tool.

▶ **Involving attendees**

- resulted in positive feedback with event attendees–
 - Promoting the guide.
 - Suggesting additional resources.
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For more information

- ▶ <http://guides.lib.unc.edu/altac>
 - ▶ altac.web.unc.edu
 - ▶ brrenner@email.unc.edu
 - ▶ manzo.robert16@gmail.com
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