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

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Altac (or Alt–ac) is a term coined ~ 2010¹,², 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.

¹https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/05/22/essay-defining-alt-ac-new-phd-job-searches
²https://storify.com/nowviskie/altac-origin-stories
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.
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).

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

- Research and explain the history of the altac concept.
- Capture the national conversation.
Create easy-to-use LibGuide for exploring altac careers with traditional and not-so-traditional resources.

- Books and Articles
- Websites, blogs
- Jobs Boards
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.
Users accessed guide during event
http://guides.lib.unc.edu/altac
Tweeted it

Anne Whisnant
@awhismant

Great new Guide fr @UNCLibrary "What is Altac?/Altac @ UNC-Altac (Alternative Academic) Careers-LibGuides ow.ly/LpF8A
#UNCCaltac

Don't miss any updates from Anne Whisnant
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.
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.
For more information

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