Why Redesign?

- Dated appearance
- Lengthy and unwieldy column of links in left column on homepage
- Confusing link names
- News given central importance over resources and services
- Stagnant news box
- Tiny font size
- Hidden site search option
- Confusing image links and organization on E-Resources pages
- Numerous text-heavy secondary pages
- Hidden related links
- Web survey of 223 students, 43 faculty, 13 residents, and 18 library staff was conducted in October 2006 to obtain information about the website including user demographics, user experience, tasks performed, perceptions of the website, and suggestions for improvement.
- Many problems associated with the website were confirmed and new issues were identified.

Goals for Redesigned Website

- Easy access to frequently used resources
- User-friendly wording
- Cleaner, more attractive, user-centered design
- Continually updated news box
- Search tool on the top level
- Simplified categories for resources and services on top level
- Streamlined content on secondary pages

Challenges

- Migrating from a customized in-house E-Journals page to Serials Solutions in the middle of the redesign process. This had many implications for the design of the interface as well as changes to the SQL database used to generate the E-Journals, E-Databases, E-Texts and Internet Resources pages.
- Reworking the content from the former Faculty, Student, Residents, Hospital sections at the top of the old webpage into the new Portals area for Medicine and Health Sciences and Public Health & Health Services required on-going collaboration with a sub-committee to develop the new pages.
- Communicating the timeline and technical impact of adopting Serials Solutions (versus moving forward with modifications to our existing database) required frequent meetings with members of the administrative and electronic resources staff, and a high level of flexibility in the development of the E-resources pages.

Usability Testing

- Two rounds of usability testing were conducted.
- The first round, conducted in May 2007, tested the homepage and secondary pages except the E-Journals, E-Databases, E-Texts and Internet Resources pages. There were 6 student participants.
- The second round of testing was conducted in early July 2007 (1 month before going live) and covered the entire website including all E-Resources pages. There were 4 faculty and 5 student participants.
- A Reference Librarian was available for all usability sessions to assist in answering questions related to specific databases, journals, and other resources.

Changes Made Based on Usability Results

- Link names and wording of content were modified (Example: Borrowing from other Libraries, GW Portals for... Off-Campus / Wireless Access)
- Suggestions were incorporated (Example: Move library hours into the banner space)
- Selection of links and clarity of new areas of the webpage were confirmed (Example: Quick Links, My Accounts, and GW Portals for... sections)
- Problem areas were identified (Example: The A-Z browse links on the Internet Resources pages caused repeated user confusion and were subsequently removed.)

Future Plans

- Incorporation of WebFeat federated search tool searching across 40+ bibliographic and full-text databases
- Addition of downloadable toolbar providing quick access to select library resources from a browser
- Adding tagging options (i.e. del.icio.us) for patrons to tag web pages
- Adding a features section to better promote individual library resources; use in conjunction with library marketing plan
- Highlight comments feature to make it more visible to patrons
- Provide ability for patrons to rank library web pages
- Expand use of Serials Solutions to include E-Texts and E-Databases when Serials Solutions versions are available