Using Pop Culture to Introduce New Users to the Library
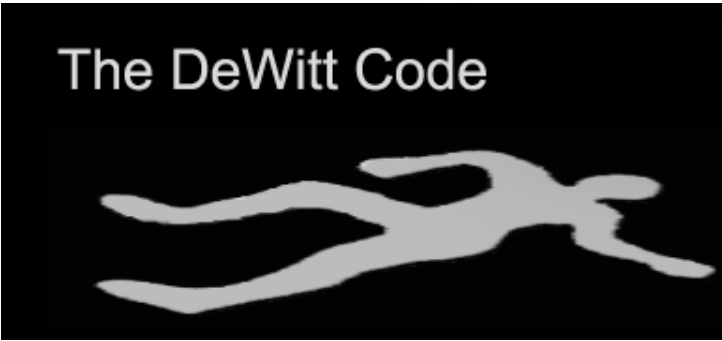
Library Technology Conference 2011
Ron Joslin, Macalester College
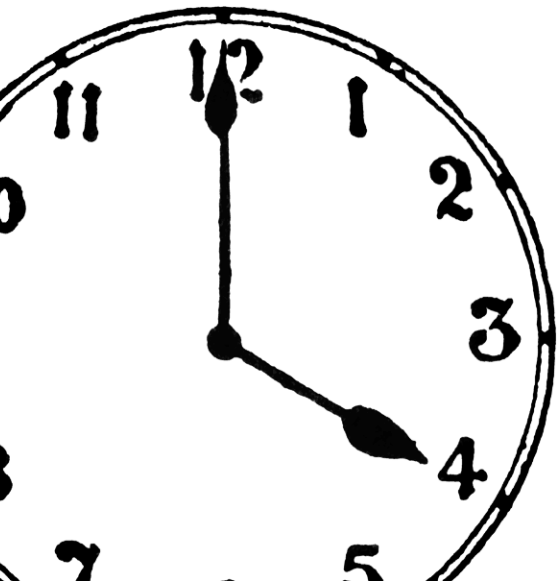
SURVIVOR LIBRARY

The DeWitt Code

LibTV

What we'll be doing….

#1 Describe Macalester's experience

#2 Opportunity for you to share how your library engages new users

First Year Student Orientation

A CHANGE IN DIRECTION

Orientation Weekend
LIBRARY and ITS
CHECKLIST

A variety of activities are planned by the Library and ITS (campus computing) to welcome you to campus! We hope that you'll stop by the library and participate in many of them.

Thursday, 9am - 4pm & Friday, 9am - 4pm in the library

Attend the Library and ITS

DROP-IN SESSION

Get answers to questions about registering your computer, resolve issues with your username/passwords, or get help with any other Library or ITS resource or service.

Thursday, 1pm - 4pm in the library

Mac Links Putt Putt Golf Classic

Putt your way alongside F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and George Orwell (or at least their novels!) on our 9-hole mini-golf course which meanders through the library book stacks and between floors! Fun for all!

Thursday, 1pm - 2pm in the library

Meet your librarian!

Meet the librarian who is the primary contact for your planned academic area of study. This person can be one of your contacts when you have questions about library resources and services! Cookies and coffee will be served!

Thursday, 2pm - 4pm in the library

Bring your family to the library for a

ROOT BEER FLOAT

Worked up a sweat moving all your stuff into your dorm room? The library will help you cool off with a tasty root beer float.

The Library and ITS (campus computing) Help Desk will also be open throughout orientation weekend. Stop by if you have any questions or we can be of service. The orientation schedule includes our weekend hours.

OUR GOALS:

Expose them to basic
Information Services resources

Let them know that we're fun
and approachable!

We asked and here's what our students told us:

1) <u>INTERACTIVE</u>: Don't just tell them, let them do

2) <u>SOCIAL</u>: Provide opportunities to interact w/ each other

3) <u>FUN</u>: Don't make it too instructional - make it fun!

4) <u>ENGAGING</u>: Make activity challenging *(just not too challenging)*

5) <u>FAMILIAR</u>: Connect with them where they already are online

6) <u>OFFER GOOD PRIZES</u>!

Making it work...

-optional summer activity
-low tech, web-based
-focus on the activity, not the library
-not too time-intensive

Why pop culture?

THE DA VINCI CODE

A NOVEL

DAN BROWN

TOM HANKS

THE DAVINCI CODE

EXTENDED CUT + 2-DISC SET

UNLOCK THE CODE

PlayStation 2

THE DAVINCI CODE

The DeWitt Code:

An online murder/mystery orientation
game for first-year students at Macalester

PERFECT RECIPE
FOR A MYSTERY

A dead librarian.

Two first year students

A not-so-famous-painting.

A secret society.

...And the hint of a conspiracy!

STORYLINE

What body? No body, no murder? – is it a practical joke?
…but the 'Dean' is not laughing.

Paul and Maria work together to clear their names
(and enlist the rest of the first year class to help them)

They interact with various characters
while visiting locations in the library
around campus

(and one of them is the murderer!)

MAKE IT GAME-LIKE…

Add even more features frequently found in games including the ability to:

--- customize or personalize the experience
--- "collect" or acquire things
--- the ability to determine your own course through the game
--- need to use teamwork and collaboration in accomplishing tasks
--- earning points (and thus increase competition)

Not a '1 time for two hours' activity
        …instead many times for a few minutes

USE OF MULTIMEDIA…

Improve the games' "look appeal"…

…this means increased graphics, video, audio, etc.

…and this content needs to be integrated into the activity as opposed to be add-on content.

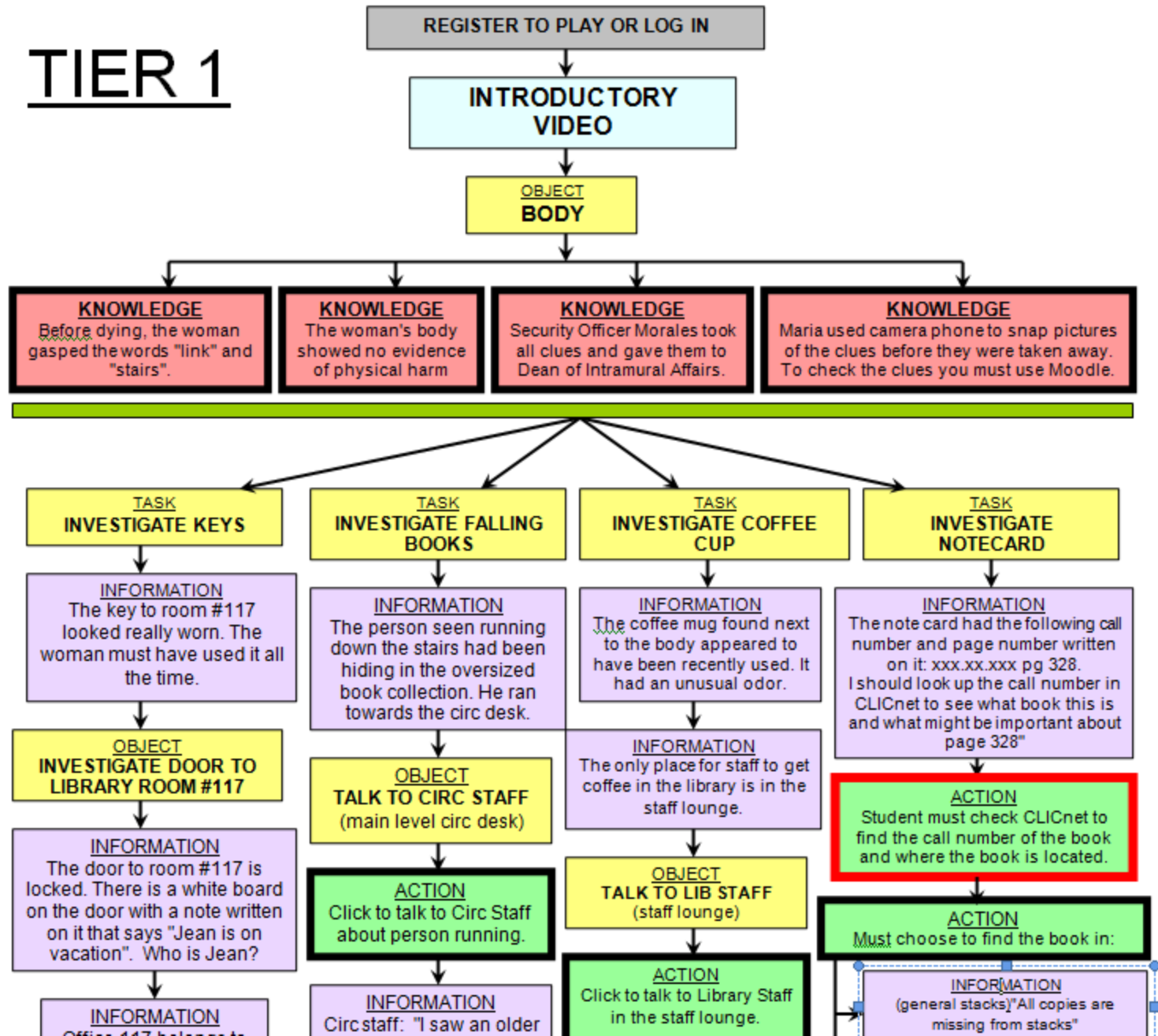Content should be brief and visual
    …USA Today not Wall Street Journal

AUTOMATE EVERYTHING…

Things need to happen automatically and not be human-driven so that players can be truly independent of library staff trying to "pedal the bike behind the scenes" to keep the game moving.

Use PHP or scripting languages to automate most game processes.
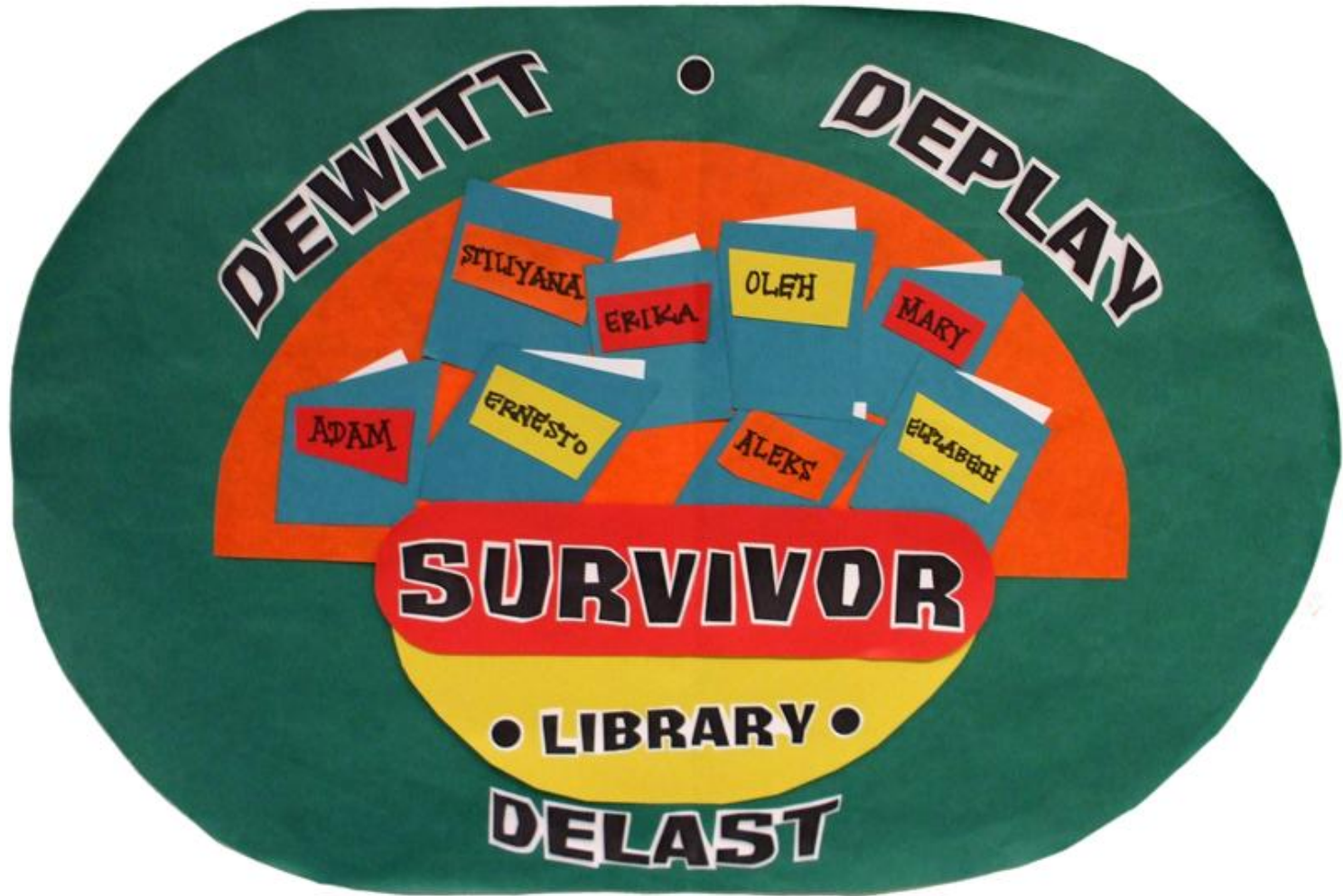
We chose to use Joomla.

TIER 1

REGISTER TO PLAY OR LOG IN

INTRODUCTORY VIDEO

OBJECT
BODY

KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE
Before dying, the woman gasped the words "link" and "stairs".	The woman's body showed no evidence of physical harm	Security Officer Morales took all clues and gave them to Dean of Intramural Affairs.	Maria used camera phone to snap pictures of the clues before they were taken away. To check the clues you must use Moodle.

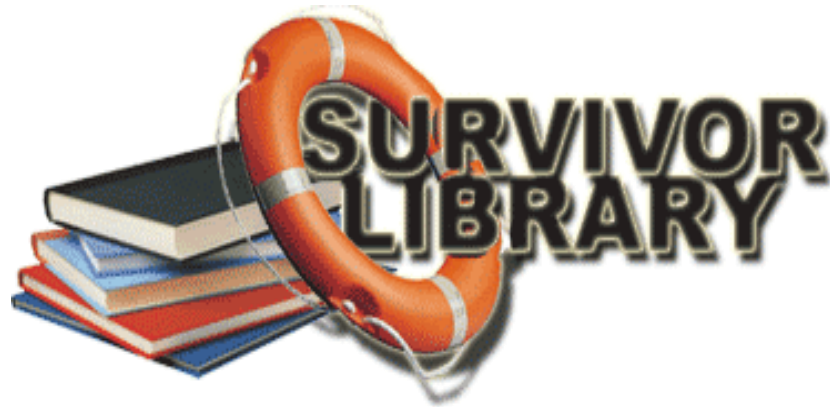| TASK **INVESTIGATE KEYS**	TASK **INVESTIGATE FALLING BOOKS**	TASK **INVESTIGATE COFFEE CUP**	TASK **INVESTIGATE NOTECARD**
INFORMATION The key to room #117 looked really worn. The woman must have used it all the time.	INFORMATION The person seen running down the stairs had been hiding in the oversized book collection. He ran towards the circ desk.	INFORMATION The coffee mug found next to the body appeared to have been recently used. It had an unusual odor.	INFORMATION The note card had the following call number and page number written on it: xxx.xx.xxx pg 328. I should look up the call number in CLICnet to see what book this is and what might be important about page 328"
OBJECT **INVESTIGATE DOOR TO LIBRARY ROOM #117**	OBJECT **TALK TO CIRC STAFF** (main level circ desk)	INFORMATION The only place for staff to get coffee in the library is in the staff lounge.	ACTION Student must check CLICnet to find the call number of the book and where the book is located.
INFORMATION The door to room #117 is locked. There is a white board on the door with a note written on it that says "Jean is on vacation". Who is Jean?	ACTION Click to talk to Circ Staff about person running.	OBJECT **TALK TO LIB STAFF** (staff lounge)	ACTION Must choose to find the book in:
INFORMATION Office 117 belongs to	INFORMATION Circ staff: "I saw an older	ACTION Click to talk to Library Staff in the staff lounge.	INFORMATION (general stacks)"All copies are missing from stacks"

Follow-up survey:

(37% responded to survey)

100% glad they participated

89% felt they learned
new things that would make the start of
classes at Macalester easier

SURVIVOR LIBRARY!

-- eight Mac students compete in weekly tasks to avoid being kicked out of the library.

-- used 'video diaries', blog postings, forums, etc.

-- each week vote on who they thought should be kicked out!

-- each week first year students voted on who they thought should be kicked out of the library!

The 'Survivor Library' cast of characters

ADAM   -   conspiracy is his thing

STILIYANA   -   international student

ERIKA -   the St. Thomas student taking a class at Mac

MARY -   the environmental activist

ERNESTO   -   the jock with 'a crush' on Mary

ALEKS -   the spoiled rich kid

ELIZABETH   - the politician

OLEH -   the party animal

Production hurdles

Making it interactive while producing videos on our schedule

Most popular features:

--Forums

More than 10,000 individual posts in the three months

--Additional (non-library) content

Macalester College
REALITY CHECK ✓

- do a 'reality check' on assumptions about Macalester

       -how international is Macalester?
       -is everyone who attends Macalester very liberal?
       -how 'socially conscious' is Macalester? Green?
       -sports teams?

- all from a student perspective

Who is the class of 2013?

- create a 'profile' of the incoming first year class

- use polling to allow first years to create their own profile

- make it non-traditional

> EXAMPLES:
> - How many continents have you visited?
> - Private vs. public high school?
> - Do you play a musical instrument? The bagpipes?
> - How languages do you speak?
> - Vegetarian or meat-eater?
> - Ever cause a car accident?
> - PC or MAC (or Linux)?

Examples of other ideas being developed…

--Interactive Map of neighborhood

--Cool Library Tools

--Coffee Shops/Local Businesses

--Journal or Not

--How Information Literate are You?

--Getting your Computer Macalester ready

-- Campus legends and lore

-- Student employment in Info Services

The site also included many of the traditional 'social networking' features:

- adding user comments
- uploading pictures / video
- interests tag cloud / affinity grouping

LibTV

Promote library services with short videos in 'hurry up and wait spaces' spaces

Short-lived project at Macalester

Now it's your turn…

THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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