

# LibWizard

Create Interactive Web Content Springshare's Way

Review Date: 5 December 2016

Overall Score (Weighted Total)	
-----------------------------------	--

Content — 40% (Quality, uniqueness, reliability, and appropriateness for community college audience)	4
Interface — 25% (Usability, customization, mobile supported, lack of problems, print/download/email content, citation formatting)	3
Cost — 15% (Value and terms of use)	2
Accessibility — 15% (Compliance with standards)	4
Support — 5% (For administrators and users)	5

*Springshare's LibWizard, introduced in February 2016, allows librarians to create forms, surveys, quizzes and tutorials. Approachable in interface, it provides a customizable, cloud-based platform for creating interactive content, from contact forms to step-by-step database instruction.*

## Method

A CCL-EAR Committee member explored a trial version of LibWizard, setting up one form, one survey, one quiz and one tutorial; browsed the user forum at the Springshare Lounge; and read Springshare's promotional and support materials.

## Review

### *Introduction*

LibWizard presents four content-creation modules, allowing editors to create an unlimited number of Forms, Surveys, Quizzes and Tutorials/Assessments. In all of these modules, a variety of question types are possible, including text input (single-line or larger text block),

multiple choice, ratings and so on. A rich-text editor can be used to insert blocks of Instructions, images, and other non-interactive content.

The first two modules, Forms and Surveys, require little explanation. To create one of these objects, you give it a name and start inserting questions of the appropriate type. But, given that a survey is simply a certain type of form, why are these even separate modules? In LibWizard, a Survey is simply a Form with more options (e.g. grid input, multiple pages). Perhaps Springshare, whose flagship LibGuides product has been known to inspire [satanically proliferating lists of links](#), is here trying to push its users toward good practice (keep that contact form short!).

Please let us know what item you recommend we purchase for our library collection

**What format is this item? (required)**

- Book
- DVD
- Print Journal
- Database or other online resource
- Other

**What is the name of this item? (required)**

If you know the ISBN, please enter it here.

**Submit**

With Quizzes, things start to get more interesting. In addition to inserting questions, quiz creators can customize the response to submitted answers; one can congratulate the user on a correct answer or provide a hint in response to an incorrect answer. Quizzes can also have a time limit.

**Which of the following types of content in academic journals are typically peer-reviewed? Check all that apply. (required)**

**Not everything in an academic journal is peer-reviewed.**

- Editorials
- Research articles
- Book reviews
- Features

Finally, the Tutorials & Assessments module will likely be appealing to libraries seeking to create sophisticated learning objects. Springshare, apparently inspired by the University of Arizona's open-source Guide on the Side, here allows creators to designate content—an image, PDF, custom text/html, or, most likely, a live website—to display in an inline frame on the right-hand side of the screen, while the left shows explanatory text or quiz questions. As with Surveys and Quizzes, users can get instant automated feedback on their answers. Clearly useful as a self-paced, asynchronous learning tool, this module could also be used to structure active learning exercises during in-person library instruction sessions.

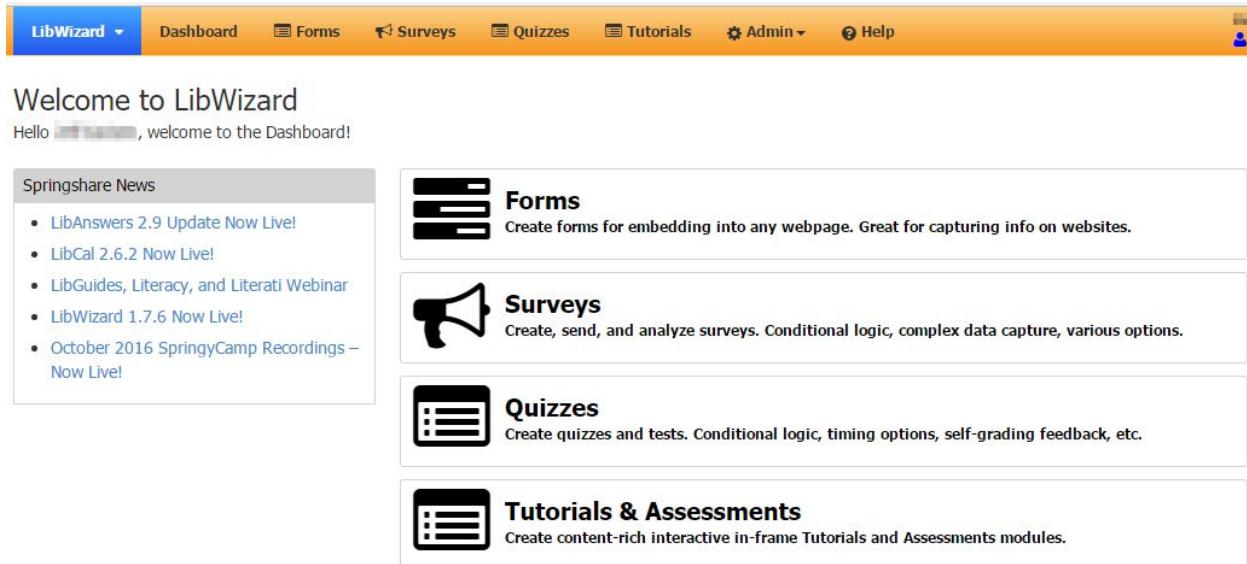
Questions used in any of these objects can be reused in new ones created by the same librarian (just as content may be reused in LibGuides). In addition, LibWizard administrators can enter questions into a question bank available to all librarian users. All created objects may be hidden behind passwords or made completely public, given a "friendly" URL, and have designated "open" and "closed" dates. Multiple choice options can be presented in randomized order, questions may be designated as required, and some basic checks can be put in place for valid email addresses, phone numbers, numerical inputs and even free text.

Objects created in any of these modules include a "View Reports" button, leading to a table including all submitted data for that object. This data may be viewed within LibWizard, which permits some sorting of fields and produces attractive downloadable visualizations—probably most applicable to survey responses, but perhaps also useful for determining which quiz questions caused the most difficulty. You can quickly view statistics of answered survey or test questions, viewing a single user's inputs or the aggregated whole. And of course the answers may be exported as CSV files for further analysis in Excel or other tools.



## Interface

Those familiar with LibGuides or other Springshare products will be unsurprised that LibWizard is easy to get started with. Options for creating content are intuitive, with contextual help available. Content is created from a dashboard linked to the LibApps control center, which allows administrative users to add librarians to LibWizard or other Springshare products. LibGuides users will find points of integration; it is easy to add a LibWizard-created object to a LibGuide, or display a LibGuide within a tutorial (in the unlikely event that such a pedagogical need should arise).



The screenshot shows the LibWizard dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for LibWizard (selected), Dashboard, Forms, Surveys, Quizzes, Tutorials, Admin, and Help. Below the navigation bar, a welcome message says "Hello [redacted], welcome to the Dashboard!". To the left, there's a sidebar titled "Springshare News" with a list of recent updates. The main area contains four cards: "Forms" (Create forms for embedding into any webpage. Great for capturing info on websites.), "Surveys" (Create, send, and analyze surveys. Conditional logic, complex data capture, various options.), "Quizzes" (Create quizzes and tests. Conditional logic, timing options, self-grading feedback, etc.), and "Tutorials & Assessments" (Create content-rich interactive in-frame Tutorials and Assessments modules.).

Springshare has built its 2nd-generation interface on the pervasive Bootstrap framework, so librarians creating content and students or other end-users will benefit from modern, HTML5-aware web design. Libraries can insert custom JavaScript (e.g. Google Analytics tracking code) and CSS, and can use a top banner, meaning that content can be integrated visually with LibGuides and other library-branded sites. (Custom styles can be applied to individual questions as well.) And just as with other Springshare products, libraries with cooperative IT departments can improve this brand integration by pointing their own domain name to Springshare's servers rather than using the default libwizard.com domain.

It should be said, though, that Springshare gives librarians plenty of freedom to wreck this interface, so, just as with LibGuides, librarians must practice good web design—and, in Quizzes and Tutorials, good instructional design—to create usable content.

No content creation tool is perfect, and LibWizard, still a new product, has limitations. When inputting questions, no rich text editor is available; to format questions (e.g. use italics, lists etc.) or add images, you must include raw HTML tags. If you create a multiple-choice question as single-answer-only (i.e. radio buttons), but want to change it to “all that apply” (i.e. checkboxes), there’s no way to do that; you need to trash it and create a new one. And oddly, even a simple Form must have a “Welcome” page, requiring a user to click a button to get to the form.

Welcome to this simple contact form. Please fill it out.

Begin

Branching, or showing/hiding content depending on previous answers, works somewhat differently than it does in Google Forms or SurveyMonkey, which allow you to enter rules at the question or page level. Instead, LibWizard has a special dialog called Add/Edit Field Rules in which all such logic must be entered. This can lead to a long list of items for a complex survey. In addition, to include this branching, generally one has to mark questions as hidden, then conditionally show them; if many must be skipped in some cases, and these span multiple pages, then users who are not to be shown those questions will encounter blank pages. For this reason, it's probably best to keep LibWizard surveys relatively simple, and use Google Forms, SurveyMonkey or similar tools for more involved projects.

Quizzes only go so far. You can't assign different points to different questions and have this be reflected in submission reports. You can set correct answers to multiple choice questions, which can then be graded; but for free-text questions, you can only set exact matches for a correct answer, and if you want to mark it as correct later, there's no way to do so in the reporting module. Quiz-takers can't save their answers midway through and then return to the quiz later. And while it's nice to have a question bank, there's no way to create a Quiz that auto-populates with questions from the bank according to rules you set, as more sophisticated quizzing tools found in learning management systems allow. And oddly, admins can't add an existing question to the bank--they need to go to the bank and create it from scratch.

The Tutorials/Assessments module, while seeming to carry so many active learning benefits, also has its pitfalls. It seems ideal to include live website content in the right frame, but some websites employ "frame-busting" code, making the "guide on the side" layout impossible. (EBSCO's frame-busting may be overridden by adding custom code via its own administrative interface.)

And, as with LibGuides: be careful deleting things, because there is no "undo" feature.

As usual with Springshare products, the interface permits various extensions. Content may be embedded into library websites or other pages using JavaScript snippets copied from the editing area. For technically ambitious users who want to go beyond what the reporting module provides, users' submissions may be processed by PHP scripts or other home-grown web apps.

### ***Mobile-friendly***

Published Forms, Surveys and Quizzes by default have a mobile-friendly responsive layout. (Of course, it is possible to break this layout when entering custom rich text with unsuitable formatting, or non-responsive custom CSS code.)

Tutorials/Assessments, because they often include external sites or documents that don't scale down well, are not suitable for mobile devices and in fact work best on a large desktop/laptop display.

The administrative interface is not mobile-friendly.

### ***Accessibility***

The WAVE and AXE accessibility checkers found only a few problems, having to do with malformed HTML. While creating content, certain actions, such as adding multiple choice options, were not possible to accomplish using the keyboard. And when custom messages are shown in response to user input, e.g. in response to an incorrect answer to a quiz question, it seems unlikely that a screen reader would be able to find such messages, since those alerts do not receive browser focus.

Most importantly, librarians must be vigilant about keeping the content they create with LibWizard accessible. In the tutorials/assessment module, one option is to load an image file rather than a website. If you do this, and then ask questions about the image, you have created an inaccessible tutorial.

### ***Support***

Springshare is widely praised for its quick and friendly email-based support. A Help link in the LibWizard dashboard leads to a [support site](#) providing instructions on creating content, training videos, and upcoming webinar sessions. A [LibWizard user forum](#) is available at the Springshare Lounge. Springshare frequently fields support questions on its [Twitter account](#). Phone-based support is not available. Springshare's [blog](#) announces product updates, of which LibWizard has already had five this year.

### ***Cost & Terms of Use***

LibWizard doesn't come cheap; it costs roughly the same as LibGuides, so current Springshare customers would see their annual invoice increase substantially. Springshare offers a stripped-down version, LibWizard Lite, at about half that price, but since Lite lacks the more innovative Quiz and Tutorials & Assessment modules and some of the reporting functionality, it's hard to see the appeal. (LibGuides CMS customers will find LibWizard Lite included, and can request a custom quote to upgrade to the full version.) And it is fair to expect that as the product improves, the price will rise.

Springshare's [license agreement](#) contains welcome, unambiguous language disclaiming any ownership of the content you create on its servers. In addition, it has a [privacy policy](#) that promises not to share personally identifiable information with third parties. Nevertheless, libraries using LibWizard for credit-based assessment may need to check in with administration to see what FERPA protections apply when hosting student work a third-party platform. On a more general privacy note, while the administrative interface is carried over an encrypted ([https](https://)) connection, created content cannot be viewed over <http://> without producing security warnings<sup>1</sup>, and if you use a customized URL including your own domain, [https](https://) isn't available at all.

### ***The Competition***

#### Forms & Surveys

Dozens of such tools are available. Among the most commonly used:

- **SurveyMonkey** is perhaps the most pervasive online form- and survey-creation tool, with well-developed reporting functionality. The free version is quite limited; bumping up to a paid plan costs much less than LibWizard, but you'd need to share the password within your organization, and while you can customize the look and feel somewhat, integrating the look and feel with your library site's is probably more challenging than with LibWizard. <https://www.surveymonkey.com>
- **Google Forms** is less full-featured than SurveyMonkey and far less customizable, but the interface is oh-so-easy, it's free, and if Google Drive/Docs is heavily used in your organization, it is an especially attractive option. <https://docs.google.com/forms>

For a table comparing some of the other options, see e.g. Wikipedia's list:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_survey\\_software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_survey_software)

#### Quizzes

- **Google Forms** has some built-in quiz functionality.  
<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/7032287?hl=en>
- The free **Flubaroo** script purports to enhance the use of Google Forms/Sheets as a quizzing tool. <http://www.flubaroo.com>
- **ProProfs** is a resilient online solution, but the free plan lacks any reporting functionality, and paid plans are pricy. <http://www.proprofs.com>
- The long-tenured, freeware **Hot Potatoes** tool outputs quizzes as HTML. This tool should be vetted for accessibility before adoption, and might require significant work to update the look and feel, and you have to host the content yourself. <https://hotpot.uvic.ca>

---

<sup>1</sup> An [update released on December 2](#) enables https, but the reviewer did not test this enhancement. In addition, Springshare has said it will be increasing its support for https generally.

- **Canvas and other LMS's** have quiz-creators with assessment features reaching beyond LibWizard's; however, it might be difficult to make use of these features outside of a formalized course.

## Tutorials

- The open-source **Guide on the Side** currently includes some functionality LibWizard lacks. But while it has been around for years, it is still in beta, and one wonders if it will ever graduate. For libraries with limited IT resources, it has a much higher bar to entry than LibWizard: it requires a server for hosting, it's tricky to customize, and support, offered only via a Google Group, can be unresponsive. <http://code.library.arizona.edu>
- Desktop software such as **Camtasia** from TechSmith and Adobe **Captivate** can both produce tutorials with assessments, although with canned video rather than live content. <https://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html> <http://www.adobe.com/products/captivate.html>

## *Recommended Improvements*

We can expect that many of LibWizard's shortcomings are known to Springshare, and as the reviewer has not actually implemented the tool in production, it becomes difficult to determine which problems, aside from the few accessibility issues noted, are most urgent to address. Springshare knows from its support cases and the chatter at Springshare Lounge what its clients are frustrated by; for the purposes of this review, what most stuck out were the lack of rich-text question editing (relatively easy to fix) and the problematic approach to form branching (likely much harder to fix, since it's baked into the site's programming).

In general, in this reviewer's judgment, going beyond a rather elementary threshold in LibWizard sets one up for failure; while the tool does provide value in its current form, librarians seeking a truly full-featured solution for creating this kind of content will need to wait until Springshare rolls out further enhancements.

### Conclusion

LibWizard is not the most flexible tool available for creating forms, surveys, and quizzes, and its tutorial module has significant limitations. Given the tool's current limitations, the yearly cost is a bit high. Nevertheless, libraries seeking a user-friendly, library-brandable, cloud-hosted platform for creating this sort of content should consider it and request a trial, understanding that keeping things simple will for now be the best strategy. Springshare has a good track record for improving its products over time, so many limitations observed in this review may well be addressed in future releases.

## **Other Reviews**

None located.