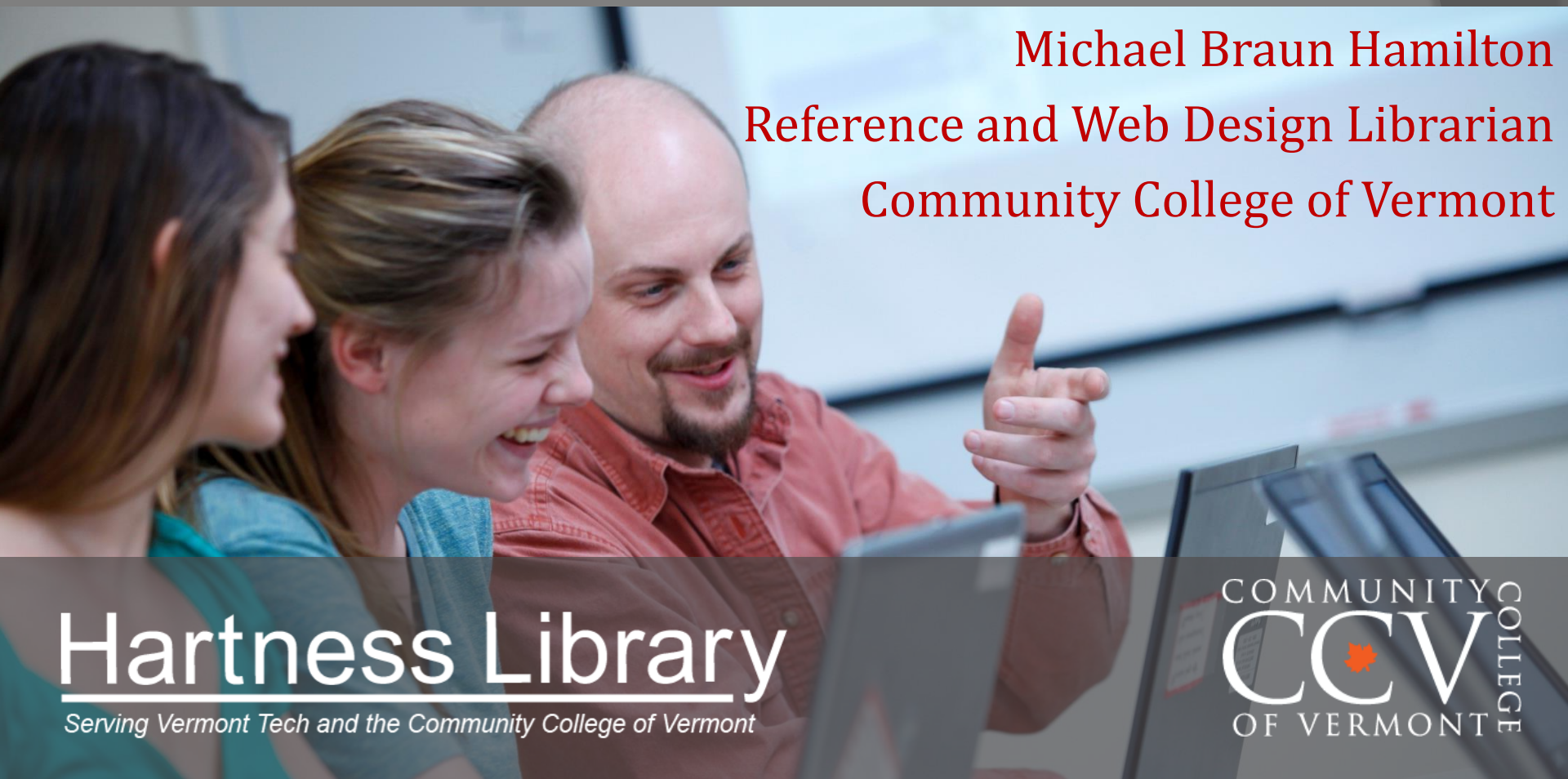
KEEP THEM ON YOUR WEBSITE!

INTEGRATING THIRD-PARTY TOOLS TO PROVIDE A CONSISTENT USER EXPERIENCE



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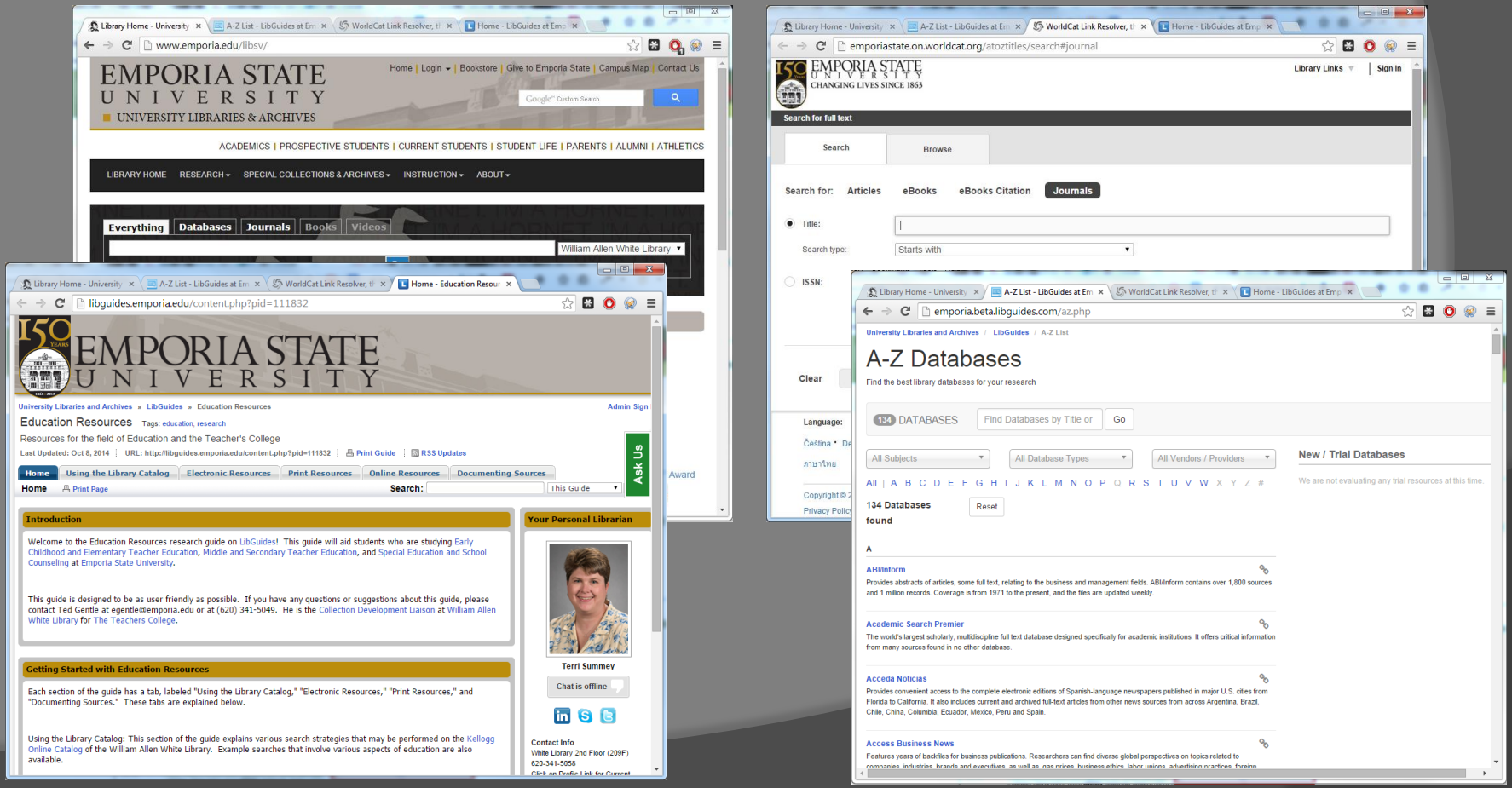
CCV

The Problem

http:www.emporia.edu/libsv/

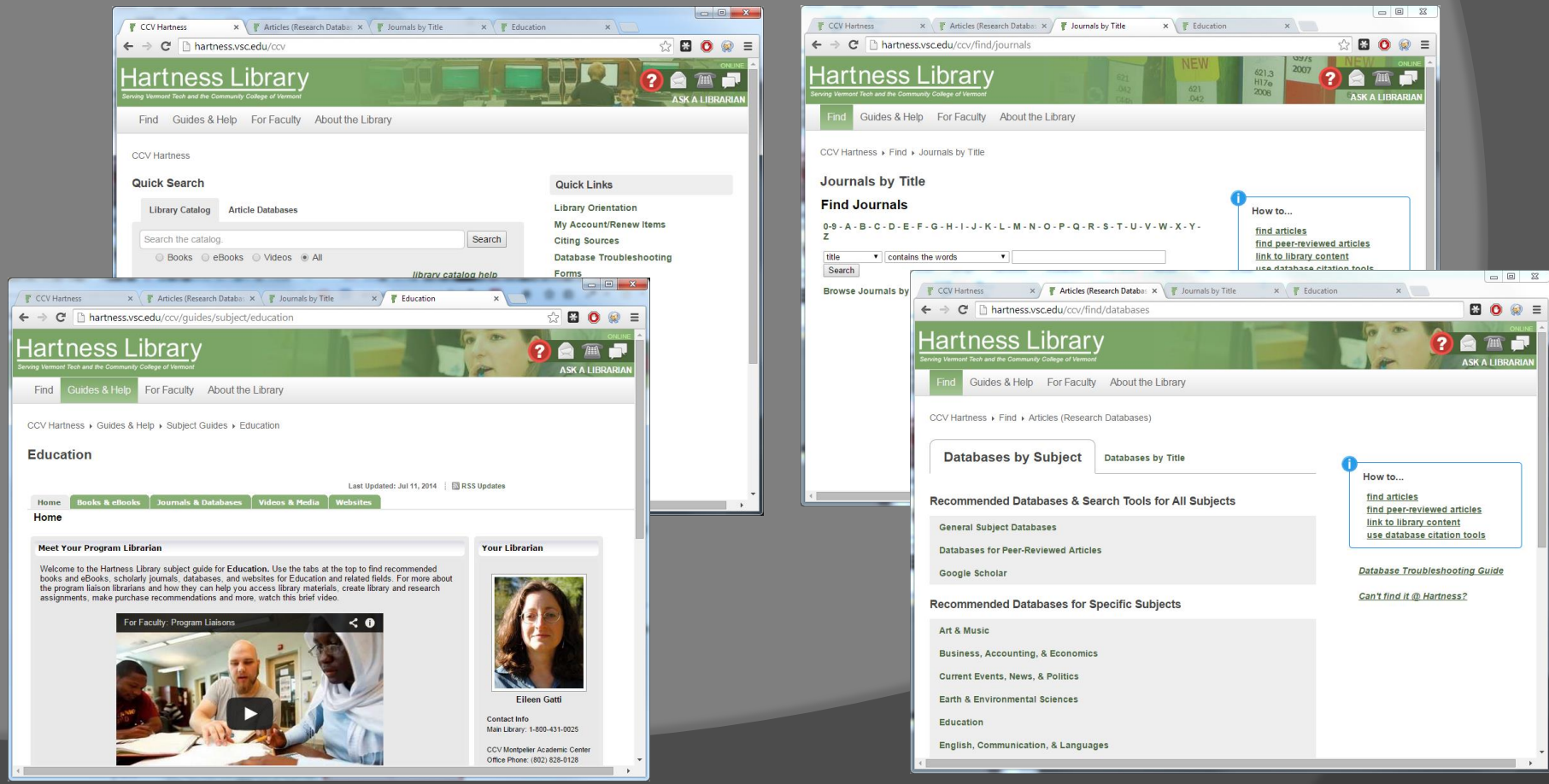
Multiple third-party tools with different interfaces



Our Solution

http://hartness.vsc.edu/ccv

Framed third-party interfaces



What are iframes?

Iframes are external web pages that are displayed inside another page. They are a common way to embed external content on a web page. (YouTube and Google Maps embed codes are iframes, for example.)

```
<iframe id="Education_LibGuide"
src="http://libguides.hartness.vsc
.edu/ed" width="100%"
height="3000" scrolling="auto">
```

Why frame third-party interfaces?

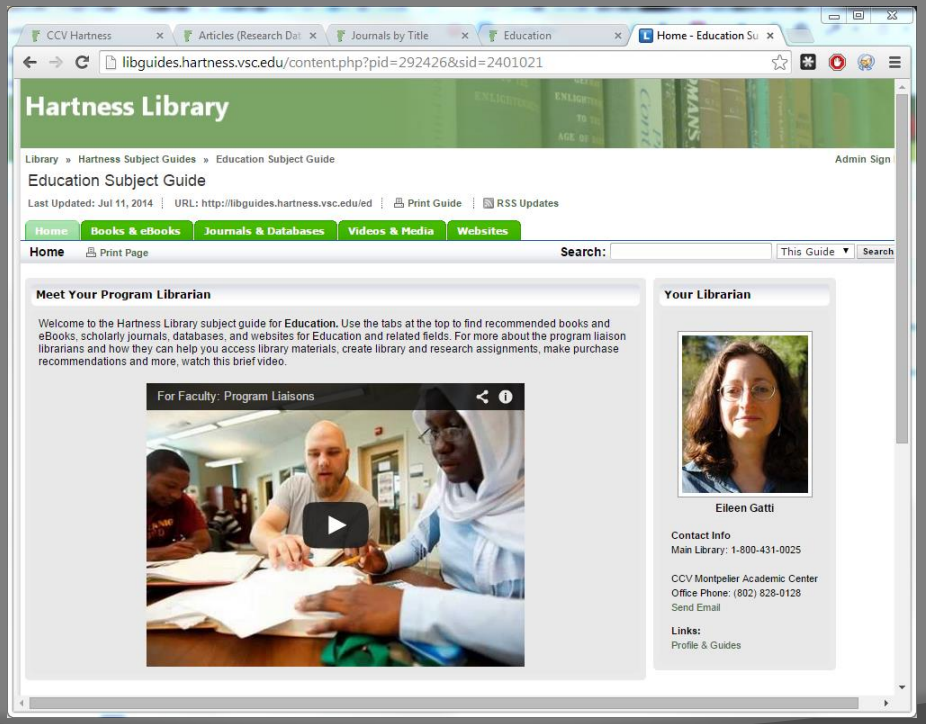
- Consistent User Experience!
  - Uniform Header & Footer
  - Uniform Main Menu
  - Pages exist in the overall site menu structure. (Breadcrumbs make sense!)

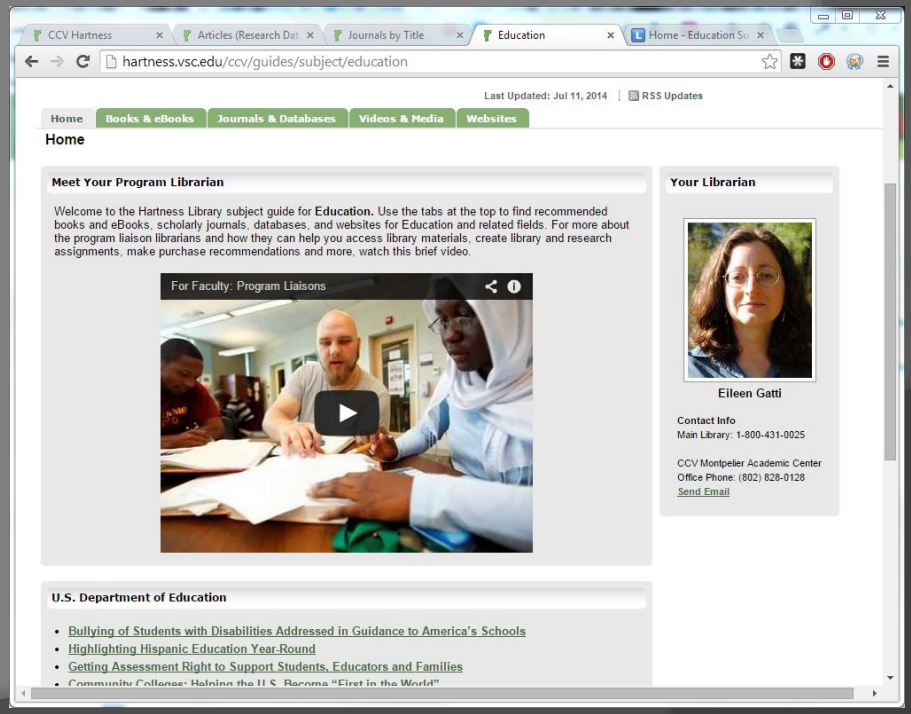
How do I do it?

1. Remove cruft / Align styles
2. Embed in your site
3. Fix links (as necessary)

1) Remove cruft

…cruft being headers/footers/logins/searches/etc. (anything that might be redundant and/or confusing when embedded in your website).



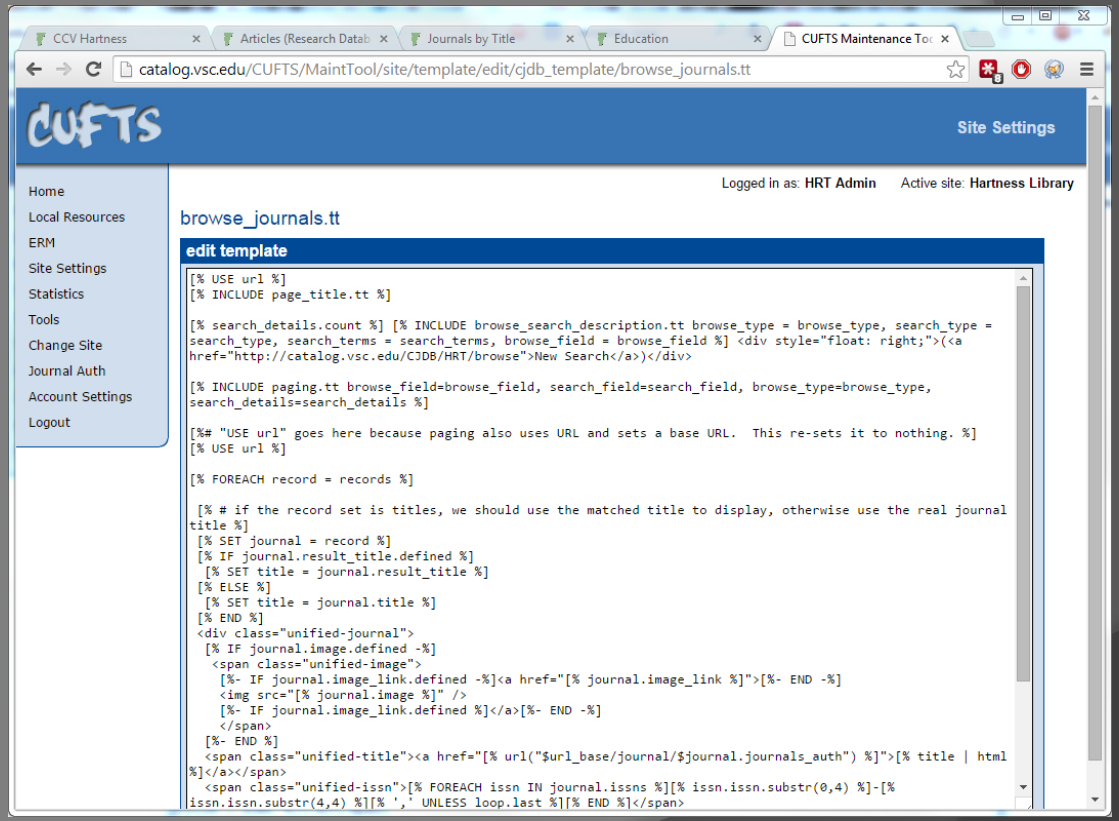


1) Remove cruft…

Either:

…edit templates to remove unnecessary elements.

(Details will depend on the third-party system in question.)



1) Remove cruft…

…or use **display:none** in the CSS of the framed site:

```
#header, #contact, #search, #footer {display:none;}
```

If the framed page might be viewed on its own, wrap the CSS in JavaScript that adds it only when the page is framed:

```
<script type="text/javascript">
    if (top != self) {
            document.write('<style
            type="text/css"> #header, #contact,
            #search, #footer
            {display:none;}</style>');
     }
</script>
```

1b) Align styles…

Once you have extra stuff removed (and while you're playing with templates/CSS) take a look at what's left and adjust the CSS to match your main site:

- Fonts
- Colors
- Header styles
- Link styles
- etc…

2) Embed in your site

- Many content management systems (Joomla, Wordpress, etc…) have built-in functionality to create pages that frame other sites.

- Otherwise create a new page with the iframe code:

```
<iframe id="Education_LibGuide"
src="http://libguides.hartness.vsc.edu/
ed" width="100%" height="3000"
scrolling="auto">
```

2) Embed in your site…

Iframe Sizing

If the content of an iframe is bigger than the frame, scroll bars will appear. Generally you want to avoid this.

- Set the **width** of your iframe to 100% – this should avoid scrollbars unless the framed page has a fixed width (in which case you may need to do some tweaking of its layout CSS before this will work)

2) Embed in your site…

Iframe Sizing…

- The **height** of your iframe is harder, because it may not be fixed – It may vary according to the browser width or interaction on the page itself (display of search results, etc.) I use the following Javascript library to dynamically adjust frame height according to content height:

http://davidjbradshaw.github.io/iframe-resizer/

3) Fix Links

Links from a framed page will open in the frame unless you add a target="_top" attribute:

```
<a
href="http://www.google.com"
target="_top">Search
Google</a>
```

3) Fix Links…

You can either:

1. add the target attribute manually to links that you want to open in the same window (but not in the frame),

2. or use JavaScript to automatically append it for certain conditions – e.g. links to pages of your library website or all external links.

   (See https://gist.github.com/allybee/5871749 for a good starting point.)

Yes – there is a downside

There is one major downside to embedding content in this manner.

Changes in the url of the embedded page (through navigation/searches/etc.) don’t effect the main page address. This means subpages or search results are not bookmarkable or linkable.

Resources

Code:

- iFrame Resizer

  http://davidjbradshaw.github.io/iframe-resizer/

- Add target attributes to external links with pure JavaScript

  https://gist.github.com/allybee/5871749

Further Inspiration:

- Rethinking Stock User Interfaces

  http://matthew.reidsrow.com/articles/11

QUESTIONS?

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