

Creating a Resource for PhDs On Careers Beyond the Faculty Track

<http://guides.lib.unc.edu/altac>

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Objectives

- Create a resource guide for PhD students about alternative academic (altac) careers in time for campus events.
- Raise awareness of altac issues and the Altac Project at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Why Here & Now?

- Significant decline in tenure track faculty positions, nationally (e.g. 30% in the humanities since 2007-2008).^{1,2}
- 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).

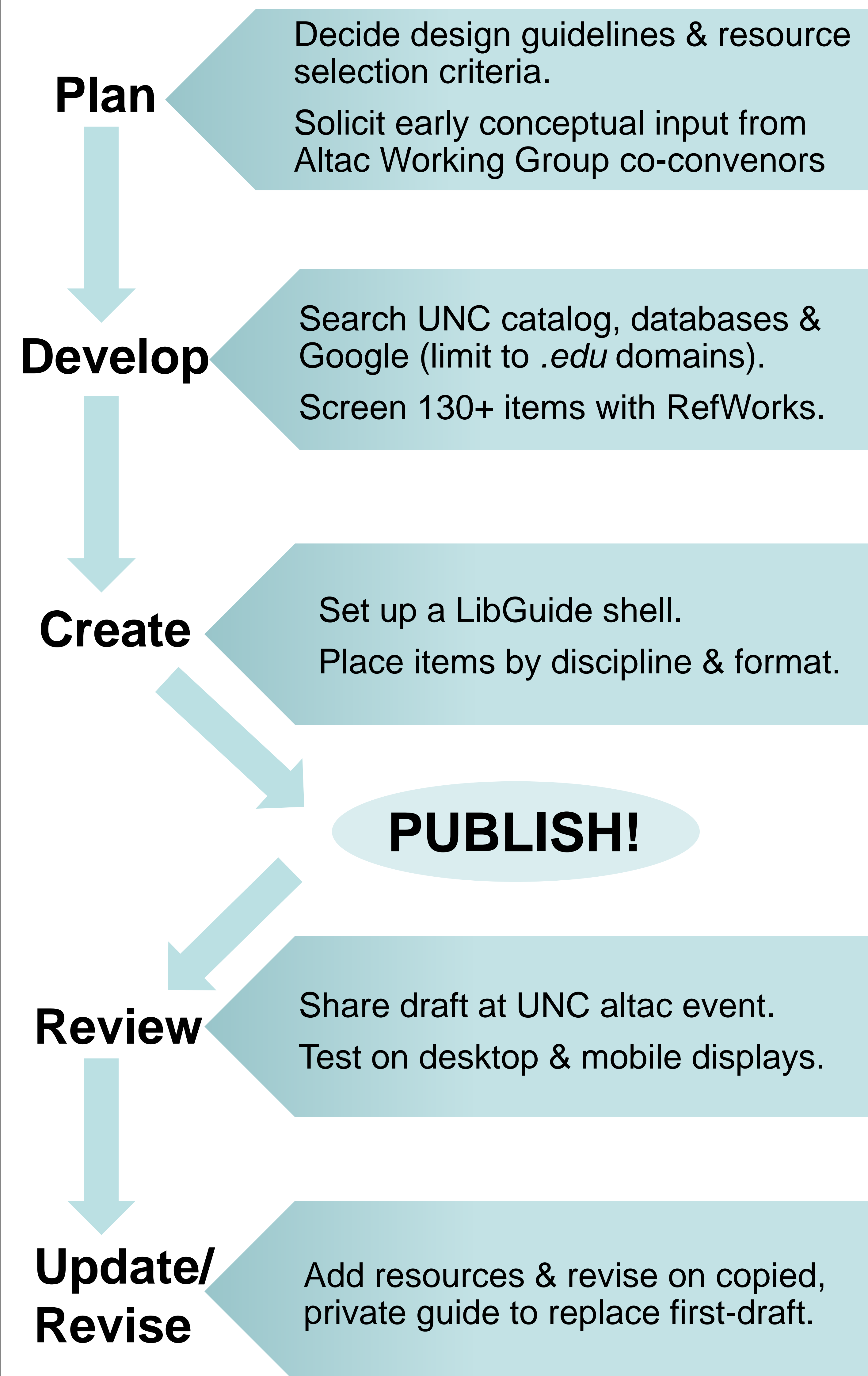
Project Tasks

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

Beta Testing

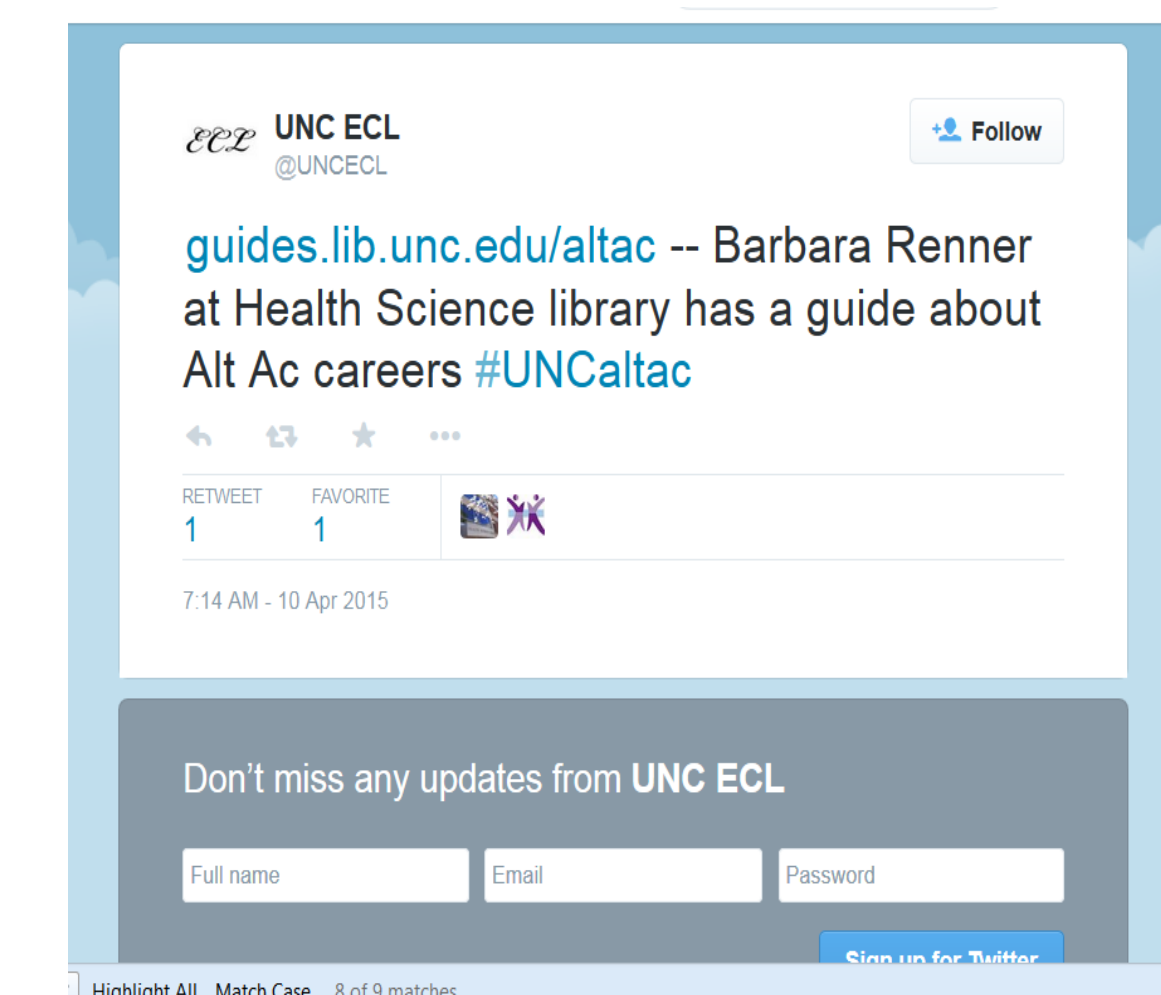
- Members of target audience involved in development.
- Draft LibGuide unveiled for 2-day altac event attended by over 100 students & faculty!
- During event, attendees began tweeting the guide, sharing how it was useful to them, and suggesting additional resources incorporated into the LibGuide.

Making the LibGuide



Unique Challenges

- *Keeping it current while national conversation is exploding:* Guide includes live searches of online and interactive resources such as *The Chronicle*.
- *Audience is UNC and beyond:* Separate instructions for licensed resources.
- *Meet just-in-time needs:* Released draft guide in time for events and to involve key campus figures and intended users early. URL sent to student workshop participants; users accessed guide during event, tweeted it, linked it to Altac Project website.



- *Update and revise after draft published:* Edited private copy (vs. hidden pages) for previewing.
- *Unclear where to locate guide on libraries website:* Will publicize across libraries, via LAUNC-CH poster and library news story.
- *Whether to include jobs boards:* Resounding yes from students and doctoral program advisors, who gave us additional discipline-specific links.

Conclusion

This LibGuide concerns an emerging issue for a diverse audience. Very early input saved time and involved users in development and promotion, resulting in a stronger tool. Feedback was positive: event attendees tweeted out the guide and suggested additional resources.

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¹<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-24/an-academic-job-slump-is-making-graduate-students-depressed>.

²<https://www.amacad.org/content/research/dataForumEssay.aspx?i=21673>.