Once upon a time…
a group of agribusiness students needed to prepare for a competition in three weeks…

Students needed to:
Learn how the competition functions and ways to win
Use a variety of business and agribusiness resources
Present their findings to a panel of experts

But who can prepare the students?
And how?

1. Danger, risk, and shrieking eels!
Only 3 weeks to prepare a group of agribusiness students for their competition!

How to dump a load of business research knowledge into the student’s brains in three early morning Saturday sessions!

Everybody Oversubscribed!
Students are busy with their studies
Faculty and two librarians busy with instruction and other projects

How can we cram all that stuff into the student’s craniums?

2. Barriers to student success
Student team needed to learn how to do private company research, and industry research
The team also needed to do agriculture research and commodities research
And the team needed to solve a company’s problem, supporting their solution with data found during the research phase

The students knew the industry prior to the competition, but they did not know the company or the company’s problem before the day of the competition

Can one person prepare the students?

3. Not one head but three heads

1. Agriculture librarian and LibGuide Queen
2. Agribusiness faculty member, PhD, with deep competition and industry knowledge
3. Business librarian and newbie to academia

4. The three-headed solution

- Created, in real time, customized LibGuide for students to use during the competition
- Taught agribusiness resources, including how to find high quality copyright free images of food products through NAL
- Group training in the ways of the competition, methods, and best practices
- Advice on which resources to use, what data the team should focus on for their presentation
- Created targeted information literacy group training covering the agriculture and business resources
- Wrote up a handout for private company and industry research

5. The invisible three headed dog

During the competition:
The LibGuide is a ‘silent’ librarian there to guide the students through the research process during the competition. All three collaborators developed the content for the LibGuide.

6. Customized LibGuide
LibGuide includes the following tabs:

- Industry
- Consumer Demographics
- Company Information
- Articles
- Production Statistics
- Regulations

Also includes links to these sites:
- MLA Formatting Style Guide
- Prezi link
- Flickr Creative Commons
- Images from the National Agriculture Library
- Google Advanced Search

7. Teaching and learning materials

- Printed handouts for business research
- Printed case studies to help students practice their research and presentation skills
- Printed metrics for competition scoring
- Had students read and study hard copies of industry trade publications including Dairy Goods and Hoard’s Dairyman

Key Takeaways
Cross campus collaboration critical for the success of this project
3 heads are better than one
Students get more out of each of us when faculty work together

Next Steps
Build on experience for next year’s competition
Apply structure to future collaborations
Sets stage for larger scale collaborations across disciplines
Develops working relationships between librarians, cross trains

Acknowledgments
Thanks to Katherine O’Clair and William (Bill) Amspacher for their collaboration on this project, and to Kristen Thorpe for her timely suggestions.

For further information
Please contact mbieraug@calpoly.edu.

And they lived happily ever after...

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Low Tech
Customized LibGuide created specifically to the student’s needs for the competition

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