

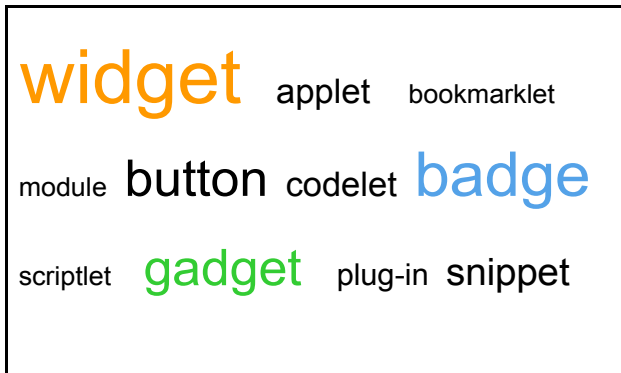
Widgets, Gadgets, and Badges

for your

Library, Website, or Blog

What are Widgets, Gadgets & Badges?

Widgets, gadgets, badges, and many other terms all refer to useful tools that you can use to enhance your website. The most common term is *widget*, but Apple has a trademark on the term *web widgets* so Google and Microsoft use the term *gadget* instead. The terms *badge* and *button* are usually used when the content is a single image instead of HTML. It is safest to use the generic term *widget* unless you are referring to something specific.



The terms can be vague and confusing: two different people might use the same term to refer to completely different tools and sometimes different terms might be used to describe the same general concept. All of these terms refer to things that share one or more of these features:

- **small content or interface**
- **easy to copy or install**
- **content from another website**

The most popular term is simply *widget* and in general this refers to **small, easily copied items, that enhance your website with content from other places.**

The widget is NOT the content

When you copy a widget you are NOT copying the content that you end up seeing on your website. A widget is usually a small amount of HTML. The widget HTML causes other content to appear as if it were part of your website. *You don't copy the content, you copy the widget* and the widget takes care of inserting the content for you. This is very powerful, because it means that the content can change but you do not have to do any work.

Copy and Paste



A good example is a Flickr Badge. The following HTML can be copy-and-pasted into any webpage to add a vertical rectangle that will contain three images from Flickr.com. The rectangle will contain three randomly selected photos that were tagged with the word "netspeed2005".

```
<!-- Start of Flickr Badge -->
<table id="Flickr_badge_uber_wrapper" cellpadding="0"
cellspacing="10" border="0"><tr><td><a href="http://www.flickr.com"
id="flickr_www">www.<strong style="color:#3993ff">flickr<span
style="color:#ff1c92">r</span></strong>.com</a><table cellpadding="0"
cellspacing="10" border="0" id="flickr_badge_wrapper"> <script
type="text/javascript" src="http://www.flickr.com/badge_code_v2.gne?
show_name=1&count=3&display=random&size=t&layout=v&source=all_tag&tag=netspeed2005&use
=47632655%40N00"></script> <tr> <td id="flickr_badge_source"
valign="center" align="center"> <table cellpadding="0"
cellspacing="0" border="0"><tr> <td id="flickr_badge_source_txt">More
<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/netspeed2005/">Flickr
photos tagged with netspeed2005</a></td> </tr></table> </td> </tr>
</table> </td></tr></table>
<!-- End of Flickr Badge -->
```

You do not have to understand this HTML. If you can copy-and-paste, you can add a dynamic photo-gallery to your website: without uploading any images or programs to your webserver.

Desktop Widgets

Widgets are not just for websites. The W3C has published a proposed standard for widgets which defines them broadly as "small client-side applications for displaying and updating remote data, packaged in a way to allow a single download and installation on a client machine." The W3C believes that widgets could be small programs on the desktop that get data from the web. Non-standard *Desktop widgets* already exist and Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and Apple all offer desktop widgets software.

What can libraries do with widgets?

1. *Promote events* by creating badges and buttons that staff and patrons can easily copy and share on their blogs, facebook accounts, etc.
2. *Make resources more visible* by creating google gadgets that list your online databases.
3. Use book widgets to *help readers in your community connect* with each other.
4. *Develop your own widgets* to make it easy for your community to copy-and-paste your promotions.

Slides and more information

- <http://syntheticlibrarian.com/widget/>