

## Conference Summary

March 29, 2006

Computers In Libraries 2006 – March 22-24, 2006, Washington, D.C.

This year's conference had the theme "Managing Digital: Innovations, Initiatives & Insights" and featured several interesting sessions in this vein. I'll highlight the sessions I attended. More in-depth discussion of the conference's sessions can be found at <http://www.infotodayblog.com/> and at <http://cil2006.pbwiki.com>. As presenters make their sessions available online, they can be found at <http://www.infotoday.com/cil2006/presentations/>

### Planning for a Handheld Mobile Future – Megan Fox, Simmons College

Megan delivered a whirlwind keynote address that showcased current and forthcoming handheld technologies and discussed their relevance to library operations. She said that there are 1.4 billion cell phones in use worldwide and over 7 billion text messages sent per month in the U.S. She discussed the oft referenced convergence of PDA functions (addressbook and calendar) with mobile phones, digital cameras, and the new 'ultra mobile' PCs such as Microsoft's 'Origami' (<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/umpc/default.msp>) which have the potential for putting it all together in one portable package. Megan showed how many popular web portals have made 'mobile versions' that are formatted to fit within mobile phone sized screens. She said that several library ILS vendors are releasing repackaged interfaces to meet the demand for mobile services. She said that both Innovative Interfaces and Endeavor (though not obvious in their documentation) have a mobile phone configured OPAC search capability. She discussed libraries that use smartphones as e-book readers and the use of shareware web sites like [tucows.com](http://tucows.com) to download mobile phone and handheld content such as reference material and e-books.

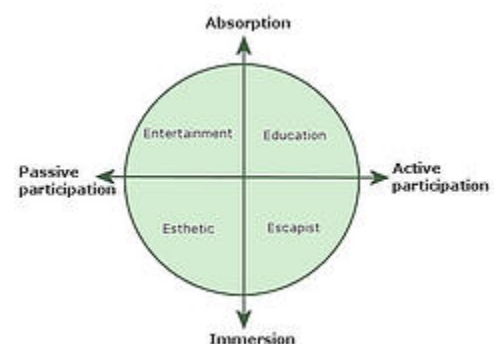
Megan characterized the use of mobile portals as 'presearch', or ready reference, saying that it was useful for quick lookup of facts. She said that libraries are experimenting with using mobile text messaging as a route for library notices and things such as new book announcements, SDI search results and so forth. She profiled Wake Forest University's "Mobile U" <http://mobileu.wfu.edu/> service and Montclair State University's personal safety service via wireless phones (<http://www.montclair.edu/pages/publications/news/newsrelease0306rave.html>)

Megan covered other topics such as use of iPods for delivery of library instruction and media content, museums and libraries using mobile devices for tutorials and tours, Sirsi and III using PDAs for circulation and inventory projects, and the increasing presence of services like Fandango for theater ticket purchase on mobile phones. She suggested that new financial models will emerge that leverage the use of mobile devices, such as free or very low cost hardware that rely on advertising or direct marketing to mobile users.

### The Basics of Web-Based Experience Planning – David King, Kansas City Public Library

David's presentation focused on renovation of his library's web page based on user experience design and the experience economy concept. He said that these concepts are detailed in Jesse James Garrett's book The Elements of User Experience: user-centered design for the web (our call number TK5105.888.G377 2003). He said that the planning stage consists of an ordered process of strategy, scope, structure, skeleton, and surfing that results in a visually attractive and useful web page. King discussed experience economy as outlined in Pine and Gilmore's book The Experience Economy: work is theatre & every business a stage (our call number HF5415.15.P56 1999). A good discussion of this can be found at <http://daweed.blogspot.com/2005/08/experience-realms.html> (David's blog) which provides insight on the types of experiences people have and how to maneuver this experience to your desired goal.

This concept is illustrated by Pine and Gilmore with the graphic at right. He said that the individual users' experience can be a blend of any of these elements. David distilled this discovery/research process into the following activities: ask questions of users, find trigger points (bad spots), improve the dinosaur parts of the site (or eliminate them), map a journey through the site, merit badge (create experiences). He said that focus groups are an important stage in the process and provide information about what users expect and the way they want the information to be structured.



### Digitizing & Creating New Collections – Sharon Carlson, Western Michigan University & Margaret Graham, Drexel University

Sharon presented the results of a project to digitize 1,000 pages of civil war diaries (8 volumes) using iTranscribe software to create indexing and authority control along with XML and custom metadata. The software transcribes, encodes, reviews and authorizes the inputted text. The codes are used to create indexes. The project made use of student workers to handle the manual scanning, encoding and reviewing parts of the process. They preserved the original diaries using archival storage and keep copies of the digitized work on special media and servers and in offsite storage. A blog discussion of Sharon's presentation is at <http://hurstassociates.blogspot.com/2006/03/cil2006-recreating-civil-war.html> .

Margaret discussed efforts at Drexel to build an open source digital library (LAMP platform) of about 25,000 pages of historical materials on the history of women physicians. Drexel was the first institution solely granting medical degrees to women and wanted to preserve the supporting texts in 1 terabyte of storage space. They elected to integrate materials from different collections and follow a non-hierarchical model. Unlike many archive projects they cataloged materials at the item level and used the term "series" to connect related items. Margaret said that they made use of one commercial product, Zoomify, a flash-based web viewer for the documents.

### **Enhancing Digital Work & Play** – Lee Rainie, Pew Internet & American Life Project

Lee's session linked with last week's Time Magazine cover story on the "[multitasking generation](#)" which concludes that while multi-tasking is essential and is a natural aspect of our neural and psychomotor toolkit, the glut of digital inputs now common especially among young people has become excessive. The Time article says that such excessive multitasking interferes with necessary human interactions, physical communication, and nonverbal contact that convey immense amounts of meaning and are missing in disembodied exchanges.

Lee outlined eight realities of Millennials, those born from 1982-2000:

1. A distinct cohort exhibiting generational behaviors: sheltered, confident, achieving, pressured, conventional, technology-embracing. They use less fixed-schedule media, rely on constant social communication via things like myspace.com, facebook.com, youtube.com and fark.com
2. Immersed in media and gadgets
3. Users of mobile technology. He said that if they don't have access to the technology they need they learn to love the technology they have and use it.
4. Internet plays a special role in their world. They remix and share content.
5. They are multitaskers and often live in a world of 'continuous, partial attention'
6. Sometimes unaware of the consequences of plagiarism, copyright violation, and overdisclosure of personal information online.
7. Their technological world will change drastically in the next ten years as computing power doubles every 18 months, communication rates double every 9 months, and storage capacities double every 12 months. RFID will become ubiquitous.
8. Their approach to learning and research will be shaped by the technologies available to them.

### **Cool Tools Update for Webmasters** – Darlene Fichter, University of Saskatchewan & Frank Cervone, Northwestern University

Darlene and Frank reviewed a long list of web gadgets and widgets that they find useful and notable. Here is a sample:

<https://addons.mozilla.org> Add-ons to Firefox – colored tabs for multiple web sessions, CSS editor, HTML validator.

<http://virdi-software.com/eyeonsite/> EyeOnSite site connectivity monitor that alerts you if a server goes down and allows remote control of servers.

<http://widgets.yahoo.com> A variety of desktop 'widgets' or mini-applications such as to-do lists, clocks, MP3 players and so forth are available here.

<http://www.exacttrend.com/eXactMapperL/> Creates a professional site map for web pages without writing code locally.

<http://rememberthemilk.com/> Online to-do list management and notification via email, IM or SMS.

<http://keepass.sourceforge.net/> Free, open-sources password manager. All passwords go into one database controlled by one master password. Secured by encrypted algorithms.

<http://www.snapfiles.com/Freeware/webpublish/fwflash.html> Wink - flash animation for instruction that allows you to record desktop action and application windows for demonstration and instruction sessions.

### **Catalogs/OPACs for the Future** – Roy Tennant, California Digital Library & Andrew Pace, NCSU Libraries

Roy always provides a forward thinking perspective, discarding that which many librarians hold sacrosanct, and providing a fresh perspective. His comments were limited, this time, to saying the term "OPAC" is archaic and reflects old library automation models and should be discarded. He deferred to Pace, an interface innovator, who has worked with others to bring a beautiful catalog search interface, inspired by commercial search tools, to reality. It's best just to try the thing yourself at <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/> . Note the results screen LC-based subject summary, functional sidebar for narrowing the search, clean layout, and style. Powered by [Endeca](#) a company that provides online retail interfaces for Walmart, Home Depot and other major players.