



HRLC Technology Committee January 30, 2007 Minutes

Present: Rosalie Baker, Leigh Keller, Amy Kearns - Chair, Mary Martin - recorder, Ellen Osborne, Joanne Roukens, Valerie Smith, Kurt Wagner

Report on Strategic Planning Day

Small libraries are struggling to keep up with technology; heard that our open house was great but couldn't go; would like another open house; wish that Tech Committee would make house calls (pipe dream!) and wish HRLC could hire a tech person to do training, tech assistance and provide website design and maintenance/support.

Kurt asked if we should start meeting at libraries around the region and include their staff members in the meeting; they could feed us and we could tour their facility and talk with their staff about their technology needs and suggesting how to meet them. Could we also have a general meeting and invite people from all over the region?

Nancy Davis mentioned that library web sites stink. But so do our PACs. We need to converge our various tools and "brand" them all so users associate us with good technology that works.

** Policies restrict technology access at libraries ** -- how can we be hospitable to new technologies without necessarily needing to implement them?

Librarians are struggling to keep up with all the technology coming down the pike. Sponsored statewide webinars on various new technologies may be useful (could we point out the Sirsi webinars?)

Open House

Definitely something that we want to do again. Can we do it during the summer so we can get some school librarians?

Some ideas for the repeat open houses:

- n assistive technology. Could we ask someone from the NJ Lib for the Blind/Handicapped to come demo some technology?
- n JerseyCat
- n repeat some of the tables we had this time
- n IM reference – "here's how – if your policies are not restricting it. Here's why your policies might not be working for you."
- n Video games in the library – set up Guitar Hero in the corner and people can rock out when they need a break.
- n Children's AWE early literacy workstation demo – from AWE? Could we have another discount buying program? Both Rosalie & Mary have these at our library. AWE might be willing to send another test model for us to show at the meeting.
- n Include "quick training" opportunities – 15-minute "how to do it" sessions in the training lab. People can sign up for two or three of these slots when signing up for the Open House. (IM with your neighbor! Post an entry to a blog! Edit a wikipedia entry!)
- n Get started with technology planning; how to convince your administrators to reconsider policies that are technology-hostile; checklist for determining whether your library's policies are techno-friendly or techno-hostile
- n Five fun things you can do with your cell phone
- n LONELY LIBRARIAN online dating – have a station to visit Match.com



- n MAKE YOUR OWN LIBRARIAN TRADING CARD/READ POSTER (Could the region buy the ALA READ software to circulate/have at a workstation?) – take pix of them with a digital camera, then upload to computer and either print out for them, or email it to them.
- n Bizarre Features of the Internet: zefrank.com, making the BK chicken dance, etc...
- n Streaming video technology (Leigh/Kurt?)
- n Sirius satellite radio / GPS technology
- n Maps on the Internet: comparing directions from several different sites.
- n Emerging technologies – what is coming down the pike?

Scheduling the next Open House:

How to attract people?

- Feed them pizza / have door prizes / bill it as a Technology learning opportunity with networking opportunities
- Do it in July to attract school librarians – possible dates: Tues, Wed or Thur July 24-26. This Open House would be very similar in content to the one we did in October but we would be aiming to get a different crowd – the school librarians. Then we could do new content in November.
- Do it twice a year – in July and late November/early December? (or January) – would need a snow date. Maybe Thursday November 29 2007? With Thursday December 6th as snow date?
- Best case would be having a nice big meeting room plus a training lab—Parsippany?
- Is there enough material to do two open houses per year without undue burden on tech committee members?

Creating partnerships

If we took our meeting on the road every few times – meet at different libraries, maybe do a joint meeting with NJLA IT or another region's technology committee? – this might help create partnership opportunities between librarians.

We want to foster peoples' curiosity/interest in technology. Even if they don't consider themselves technology buffs.

Sharing our expertise – we are a resource to the HRLC community

We could put our names on the Tech Committee web page saying “if you want to know about Flickr here are some people who are willing to talk to you;” “if you want to know about NetLibrary...” etc.

If we reach the point when we can't handle the volume of traffic anymore, then we can find more people to handle the topic(s) that are high-volume.

If we are getting the same questions over and over we can prepare a FAQ and email it to them (and/or post it on the tech committee web site)

HRLC Website redesign?

May not be organized in the best possible way

Could we pay someone to come in and redesign it?

Joanne would like ideas about what to do; what Web 2.0 tech could be included:

- should we have a blog with the latest news? (See Hillsdale Public Library; they integrated blog into home page so news shows up automatically on home page) Ann Arbor PL is another library whose web site is actually a blog. Once the blog is set up, then you are not restricted by special software – everyone can update it. This is very much Library 2.0. You



- won't be locked into a certain web site design but it will give you flexibility to edit and update. Perhaps it could be a wiki as well. Tech committee members could have permission to edit/add to the tech committee section without intervention from HRLC staff – easier on HRLC staff? Could it be a MySpace page? Could the HRLC tech committee create a mySpace page?
- Site needs to load fast and be functional (not flashy) and well organized. Should we have a slide show on the web site? Vote was probably no.
 - DarcyCam?
 - HRLC Listserv: are there discussions that could be handled not on the listserv but in another web 2.0 way? Perhaps a wiki? Or should we not take away the way they already know about how to communicate? Could there be a “surveys” listserv like BCCLS has, plus an “official” listserv that includes only announcements from Ellen/Joanne? But if we have more than one listserv will that mean that people will post the same message to all of them? If we have the official listserv then we can have it moderated so those messages all have to be vetted by an HRLC staff member.
 - Amy wonders if we could try GoogleGroups for discussions instead of the listserv. It could be moderated or not. It threads the topics so if you are not interested in a topic you can just ignore that thread. You subscribe to it one time, and can get it sent to your email account. Kurt asked if Amy could set up a group for the HRLC tech committee to try it out. She'll do this so we can try it out and play with it. (Q&A NJ uses Yahoo Groups so they can have a conversation behind the scenes while they are serving people.)
 - Before hiring someone to redesign web site, convene a focus group – for usability studies. Do people use the web site? What do people use the website for? Can they find what they need on the web site? This focus group is excellent use of Library 2.0, having your users involved in the process. No point in doing a website redesign if you don't have some ideas on how to make it serve peoples' needs better. Joanne doesn't want to make the web site redesign be a huge 12-month project but Kurt says it probably shouldn't take that long. Things like MySpace and Blogs emphasize content and the ease of updating over complex HTML coding and design. Often the things that we think are problems are not, or things we think are really obvious, are things that are actually problems. The focus group may not even need to meet in person. We could have them do a scavenger hunt and see if they can find the answers. Volunteers from the tech committee could sit next to them and observe what they are doing and get info on how we could improve it.

Resource Sharing

Kurt mentioned the Georgia Pines Open Library System initiative – they created their own “Evergreen” open-source free ILS system. They deployed in November '06 to over 250 public libraries in Georgia. It would've been over 50 million dollars, including servers/software/licensing to move to a new vendor-based system for entire state. This project itself cost them 1.5 million. Check out the PINES Evergreen catalog (sorry, not sure of the URL)

VALE has taken interest in this because of uncertainties in ILS market – Endeavor was recently purchased and Sirsi/dynix has also been purchased by a venture capital fund. Unhappiness with slowness of development, poor communication from vendors. VALE asked: Could we reduce our own costs with something like this? Could we have a more agile development team if they were local? Kurt is going to Georgia in March with the other members of the VALE committee to talk to the PINES people; they are writing a white paper. This could affect public libraries, school libraries as well as academic libraries. It has the potential to revolutionize the entire cost structure, plus a central library system could be offered to all libraries in New Jersey – sharing development costs, etc.



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Univ of Rochester currently has a Mellon grant to create an open source OPAC based on open source library code. This could be a stand-alone PAC that could sit on top of an ILS system – much improved over current vendor-offered PACs. Check out Endeca.com which is a front-end search mechanism design that can be transferred to the library world. NCSU.edu is using Endeca system as their library front end. Includes spell check, “People who searched for this also searched for that...” -- has a lot of Library 2.0 features.

In a recent Library Journal there is a great article on Evergreen and PINES. Kurt recommends it!

Next Meeting

Wednesday February 28th 2007
2:30 pm Denville office
Be there or be square.