LITA Forum 2008 Poster Session
Planting 2.0 Seeds in the Academic Library Community Garden

BACKGROUND

During the summer of 2007, the University Library at the University of Michigan engaged library staff in structured exercises to inform, provide training, and stimulate exploration of 2.0 technologies in their everyday work through a program entitled, 'MLibrary2.0 Series.' (See http://net.educause.edu/upload/presentations/MWRC08/SESS32/MLibrary20.pdf for a presentation on this series, given at EDUCAUSE.)

At the same time, a smaller group at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library set out to survey the library landscape for fertile ground in which 2.0 applications could thrive.

We found our group working in organic ways atypical of the standard process commonly found in library committees. Our activities forced us to grapple with administrative, technological and motivational issues.

GROUP CHARGE

Help explore and develop local 2.0 projects by:
- Supporting and encouraging staff to expand knowledge, skills and undertake projects of their own
- Within our own team and working with colleagues, identifying and executing several projects to be completed or well underway by Fall 2007
- Identifying longer-term or larger-scale collaborative projects where we might take a leadership role or contribute to across the library
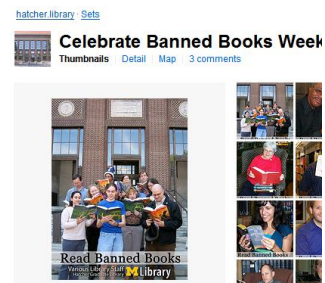- Identifying any additional resources needed to move things forward

Criteria for deciding on proof-of-concept projects:
- Perceived need
- Breadth of impact and scalability
- Sustainability
- Need to facilitate connections and communications with both our internal and external communities
- Balance between encouraging experimentation and navigating organizational constraints

PROJECTS

Flickr Exhibits

- Online photo exhibits highlighting library activities, events and staff.
- Group photo pool, encouraging connections amongst the library staff, patrons, and the community.
- **Banned Books exhibit:** **http://www.flickr.com/photos/hatchergraduatelibrary/sets/72157602113979751/**
- **Pre-Shelf Life of Library Materials exhibit:** **http://www.flickr.com/photos/alexis_medea/sets/72157601347637401**

Cross pollination: other libraries began using Flickr for marketing, sharing, exhibits, and events.
UM 2008 Commencement slideshow
http://www.flickr.com/photos/mlibrary/sets/72157604664539333/

Robust Subject Guides

- Adoption of SpringShare's LibGuides, an out-of-the-box commercial product that allows for robust, flexible and easily created subject guides.
http://guides.lib.umich.edu/

Cross pollination: LibGuides is being adopted across multiple libraries within the University Library system.

Collaborative Space for Collection Development

- Surveyed subject specialists to evaluate their communication needs.
- Compiled a list of application criteria based on needs.
- Evaluated 3 wiki applications.
- Created blog and space on internal course management system (no public URL available).

Cross pollination: Created wiki for sharing information amongst reference staff at multiple libraries; developed introduction to wikis workshop for faculty and staff.

Facebook Outreach Workshops

- Introductory workshops for both library staff and faculty demonstrating how Facebook can be utilized to connect with students, faculty and colleagues.

LESSONS LEARNED:

We discovered in our process and projects that there were three important areas to focus on in order to help our garden thrive: **Administrative**, **Technological** and **Motivational**.

Administrative
- Organizational support and commitment is critical.
- Library staff must acknowledge the value of experimentation even if no product is in sight.
- Honest, non-controlled communication across units and departments is important.

Technological
- Engage other knowledgeable staff; you don't have to know everything!
- Ask for help and tap other resources.
- Find the right tool for the task.
- Evaluate the technologies and the project needs.

Motivational:
- Be prepared for different levels of intensity and different periods of participation.
- Don't be discouraged by temporary environmental conditions - view exploratory work like R&D (research and development).
- Have courage to explore!
- Encourage members to become caretakers of ongoing projects and act as resources for colleagues.

Additional information can be found at:
http://plantingseedslita08.pbwiki.com

CONTACT US!

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