

ILA/ACRL Newsletter

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2009 Spring Conference Reports

Conference Planning Chair, Lisa McDaniels, opened the 2009 Spring Conference and then introduced Dr. Greg Schmitz, president of Hawkeye Community College.



During his welcome to the more than 100 conference attendees, Dr. Schmitz apologized for the sidewalk construction in front of Tama Hall, but acknowledged that while the cement was still wet someone might be tempted to leave their mark. Several ILA/ACRL members (whose names will not be mentioned) took the hint and now a reminder of the ILA/ACRL Spring Conference at HCC is permanently etched in "stone."

You'll find summaries and photos from the concurrent

sessions on the following pages. Links to available handouts or Power Points will be found on the ILA/ACRL website's 2009 Spring Conference schedule page.

(<http://www.iowaacrl.org/content/conference/2009/schedule>)

Keynote Address by Dr. Steven J. Bell

Designing the Future-proof Library: Here's How We Do It!

Steven J. Bell, Ed. D., Associate University Librarian for Research & Instructional Services,
Temple University



While describing what it means to "future-proof," Dr. Bell included several examples of companies that have thrived for decades and continue to have strong customer support. One of the common threads among companies, such as Eastman Kodak, is that they have focused not so much on their products, but on the user experience. Bell stated, "The experience is the product."

In order to maintain future relevance, libraries must engage in design thinking. Besides having the expected resources, libraries need to add value by creating meaningful experiences for patrons. To do that we need to understand who our patrons are, how they use the library and its resources (or how they would like to use them), and give them outstanding service.

Bell suggested ten steps to incorporate while future-proofing our libraries with improved user experiences (UX):

- Be creative/innovative (listen to your users)
- Go local (know your users)
- Engage your users where they're at (get away from the reference desk)
- Fix what is broken (a process, a service)
- Master adaptability (be ready to change...quickly)
- Keep up (what's the next big thing, social trend, technology)
- Create passionate users (it's all about the experience)
- Be a problem finder (be a proactive, future thinker)
- Build relationships (with your patrons - students, faculty, staff, & community)
- Know your core values

Related web sites include:

- Steven Bell's Keeping Up website - <http://www.stevenbell.info/keepup/>
- Design/UX section of Steven Bell's website - <http://stevenbell.info/design>
- Designing Better Libraries - <http://dbl.lishost.org>

Photo and Report by Judy Mitchell

Small-group brainstorming and discussion



Immediately after the keynote address, the audience met in small groups to brainstorm issues regarding future-proofing our libraries.

Photo by Dan Gall

Concurrent Session A

Marketing a New Brand

Jim Fisk, Librarian and Coordinator of Student Academic Support Services at Morningside College



Fisk showcased the results of local student course projects analyzing and strategizing marketing efforts for the Learning Center. Morningside's Learning Center is the result of a merger of the Library and the Academic Support Services Center, housed in a single facility and supporting student learning in a variety of ways. While the activities meshed together well, awareness of the new Learning Center and its services was slower to catch on. Jim Fisk worked with Dr. Pamela Mickelson, Professor of Economics and Business, to have students in two of her advertising classes study student and faculty perceptions of the Learning

Center and come up with options for marketing to these two groups.

The Summer 2008 class focused on student perceptions of the Learning Center for a survey research portion of the course, contacting students through email and Facebook. Although summer proved to be a tricky time to seek student feedback, results indicated an interest in

additional programs to be held in the Learning Center. The marketing plan based on survey results also presented a new Learning Center logo and recommended using giveaways or "flair" with the logo and the Learning Center name.

The Fall 2008 project assessed faculty views of the Learning Center and included a survey and focus groups. Faculty proved to be very attached to the "library" concept and brand, but did provide some usable suggestions for improvement such as additional online resources and more discipline-specific tutoring. New services and initiatives that came out of both projects include the addition of JSTOR collections, a noon performing arts series, additions to staff in Student Learning Services, and summer tech camps. Some student internships are planned involving further cooperation between the Learning Center and the Business Department.

Photo and Report by Kris Stacy-Bates

Academic Library/IT Department Relations: IT Professionals Speak

Panelists:

- Thom Neith, Director, Communication & Information Systems, Hawkeye Community College
- Gary Wipperman, Director of Information Technology Services, Wartburg College
- John Wynstra, Library Information Systems Specialist & Associate Professor, UNI

Moderators:

- Jan Dellinger, Library Directory, Hawkeye Community College
- Jean Donham, College Librarian & Professor, Wartburg College



The panelists in this informative session are all IT professionals who work closely with libraries and librarians in their respective institutions and understand the importance of IT infrastructure to libraries. Responding both to questions submitted to them before the conference and questions from the audience, they shared their insights and perspectives on how to make the important relationships between librarians and IT folks work smoothly and effectively. Rather

than quote from individuals who frequently agreed with each other, here are my interpretations of their major themes.

Both IT and library staff need to have a clear understanding of what we're talking about. Explain acronyms or use language that both parties understand.

- Spend some time building relationships with the other department so you understand the pressures they are under and what their expectations are.
- Establish a good working relationship in non-critical times makes it easier to communicate and effectively work together in crises.
- Just as librarians need to do a reference interview to find out what our patrons really need, IT professionals often need to do a reference interview with librarians to solve the real problems.
- Try to provide helpful information about the problem and only classify things as critical when they really are critical.
- Philosophy of IT is different from the philosophy of library. IT wants to protect networks and make sure information and equipment stays safe. Libraries want to make things available as easily as possible. We need both philosophies.

Things to look for in the future: All panelists agreed that we'll see smaller budgets, higher demand for services and an increased need for bandwidth. They also agreed that the library catalog would undergo some fundamental changes, but agreed they didn't know yet what that would be.

Photo and Report by Dan Gall

Confronting the Gathering Cloud

Rachel Fleming, Collection Development Librarian at Central College



Fleming, through an overview of the history of library architecture, showed us that the library of today is more than just a repository of resources (print and online), but is a space that brings people together. People come to the libraries with different informational needs. She also introduced the concept of "cloud computing" and how this new concept is changing the way knowledge is being created.

Users are not just coming to the libraries to find the information they need, but they are also using collaborative software to create new knowledge with the information they gathered in the library. Librarians should be aware of these changes when

designing or redesigning library spaces. If collaboration is to be achieved, attention should be taken when design learning/collaborative spaces in the library. If this is overlooked libraries can become outdated.

Reported by Germano Streese

Futurecasting Libraries: Instant Messaging: A study in culture, technology, and services

Dan Coffey, Reference and Instruction Librarian and Instant Messaging Coordinator at Iowa State University Library; and Sarah Passonneau, Assistant to the Dean and Assessment Librarian at Iowa State University Library.



The central feature of Coffey and Passonneau's presentation on the use of Meebo, a browser based instant messaging program, as a next-generation reference tool was a rich collection and in-depth analysis of data.

Passonneau started with existing Meebo electronic reference usage statistics and, through a painstaking process of segmenting and coding, produced a set of data that will be used to validate the continued use of IM as a viable reference service and to justify a

move toward campus-wide promotion of the service.

Coffey presented on the implementation and use of the service and explained that Meebo was selected as the electronic reference tool of choice because it supports multiple IM services and is capable of receiving and sending text messages from/to patron cell phones.

Photo and Report by Leslie Ross

Concurrent Session B

Farzaneh's & Ruya's Excellent Adventures: Exploring Teaching & Learning Opportunities in Second Life

Susan A. Vega García, Associate Professor and Head of Instruction at Iowa State University Library; and Rano Marupova, Instructional Technology Specialist at Iowa State University Library



García and Marupova presented on their "first-life" experience exploring educational possibilities within the virtual world, Second Life. Second Life is an online, 3D, interactive, virtual reality program in which most of the content is user generated. With the able assistance of avatars Farzaneh and Ruya, the audience was able to explore virtual destinations, such as Alliance Virtual Library, Aldrich Chemistry Library, and a Smithsonian exhibit on Latino music.

García and Marupova demonstrated how Second Life has the potential to provide educational content as well as a virtual venue for students to meet, attend classes, and collaborate on projects. For educators, Second Life is chock-full of Professional Development opportunities like seminars and conferences. If you are looking for a great educational tool and a teaching/learning environment with the capacity to engage learners in novel ways, you may want to explore the virtual world of Second Life.

Photo and Report by Leslie Ross

Embedded in the Future: Integrating Library Tools in Students' Online Research Environments

Julia Bauder, Data Services Librarian, Grinnell College; and Elizabeth Rodrigues, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Grinnell College



Embedding simple discovery and help tools in course management systems and Web sites such as Google Scholar makes library collections and services more visible and accessible to users. Julia and Liz demonstrated how to implement three free tools that place library resources in our students' preferred Web environments: database search widgets that can be added to course management sites, subject guides, and Facebook; LibX, a browser toolbar that gives students direct access to library resources without having to go to the library Web site; and a pop-out chat reference tool.

For a helpful guide to using and installing these tools, please see: Links and Downloads from "Embedded in the Future": <http://www.lib.grinnell.edu/general/newhomepage/ilaacrllinks.html>

Photo and Report by Phil Jones

The Perpetual Question: Future-proofing Library Experience for the First College Year
Beth McMahon, Reference & Instruction Librarian, Central College; and Cyndi Boertje,
Tutoring Coordinator, Central College



McMahon and Boertje presented Central College's new peer-teaching model that portrays the library as a relevant and meaningful part of academic life to the first-year students that come to Central. Students arrive at Colleges and Universities with the idea that they are able to gather all the information they need by themselves, and that Librarians are obsolete. Using peer-teachers this model emphasizes the notion that skills learned in this one semester

course will resonate throughout the student's academic life.

The course also establishes closer links between information literacy and writing. The use of peer-teachers also models, to first-year students, the notion of scholarly inquiry and the possibility of academic achievement, since peer-teachers, together with librarians, are responsible for teaching some of the content of the classes. Since the library component of this one semester class is embedded in the curriculum of the class, peer-teachers also collaborate with the faculty teaching these classes. Again this interaction with faculty models, for first-year students, how collaboration can be achieved.

Photo and Report by Germano Streese

Giving Distance Users What They Want

Dan Gall, Coordinator of Library Services for Distance Education, University of Iowa; and Amy Paulus, Head of Access Services, University of Iowa



The University of Iowa Libraries' recent efforts to survey and assist distance learners were presented by Dan Gall and Amy Paulus. Distance education in several formats is offered by the University of Iowa through the Center for Credit Programs in the Division of Continuing Education. The goal of the survey, conducted from June to September 2008, was to determine how best to provide services to a distributed population. Questions focused on the areas of students' Internet connection options, preferences for getting materials, and preferences for means of

requesting and receiving help. 222 of about 2000 students responded to the survey, most located in urban counties in Iowa, with some in rural counties and other states.

Nearly half (44.5%) of the respondents replied that they did most of their research and information gathering for courses at home, with work (20.5%) and public library (19.0%) locations being fairly popular as well. Internet connection methods used were faster than expected on average (though Dan noted this may reflect some response bias as the survey itself was sent electronically). 79.6% of respondents use cable/DSL, with just 5.0% using dialup. There was interest in both synchronous (telephone or chat/IM) and asynchronous (email) methods for contacting librarians. The most popular responses for learning about how to use library resources were short online tutorials (28.0%) and visits by a librarian to a location where a face-to-face component of the course was held (27.7%). Students expressed a desire to avoid snail mail delivery of materials whenever possible.

Delivery of articles to distance education users has taken different formats over the years. In 1997, the methods used were mailing and faxing. Once electronic delivery began in 2002, that quickly became the most popular, and the last request from this user group to have an item faxed was in 2005. Since 2006 and the implementation of the ILLiad system, all articles have been delivered electronically. Connecting the SFX link resolver for article access to Interlibrary Loan has made this easier. Books are delivered to the students through UPS-both books owned by

Iowa and those borrowed through Interlibrary Loan. The University of Iowa's electronic access to course reserves through ICON (Iowa Courses Online Network) is set up the same way for distance courses as for local courses. Future services under development or consideration include integrating book delivery requests with the online catalog, adding streaming video content to ICON, and implementing screen sharing systems to aid in providing help to distance users.

Photo and Report by Kris Stacy-Bates

Concurrent Session C

How to Design and Implement Web Usability Testing

Nicholas Wyant, PhD student in Information Science, University of Iowa



Librarians often do not understand how patrons actually navigate around their library's web site. Therefore, Wyant stated that usability testing (UT) is a helpful tool to design web pages that are more usable by non-librarians. He also suggested that instead of giving the task to a committee, having a primary researcher is more effective. Wyant emphasized not trying to test everything, but to keep the UT simple and focused. And, he noted that performance declines after eight questions/tasks.

Tips Wyant shared include:

- Recruit from outside the library (do not use student employees)
- Maximum of 10 participants for each question set
- Keep participants relaxed (this is not a "test" - you need their help and feedback)
- Offer a beverage
- Librarian needs to dress casually (keep participants relaxed)
- Give participant one question/task at a time (not a list)
- Keep recording equipment hidden as much as possible (but be sure they understand that they will be recorded)
- Screen capture (such as Snag-It) and audio works best
- Give incentive (perhaps a \$10 gift card to the bookstore)

Before analyzing data, compile "expert paths" - the most efficient way to get to a page or find specific information on the web site. This will form a baseline for comparing the steps taken by the participants. Other information can be collected from the participants, by asking for example:

- How often they use the library web site
- What online applications/resources/web sites do they use
- What they think could be done to improve the library's web site

The time and money spent on usability testing will go a long way in making sure library web sites are user friendly.

Photo and Report by Judy Mitchell

Stacks after Dark: What Really Happens When the Boss is gone for the Day?

Kathy Parsons, Head, Stacks and Media Department, Iowa State University



To answer the question raised by her session's title, Kathy Parsons presented an overview of student employee training as well as an analysis of task sheets and incident reports the ISU library uses to monitor these workers' activities. The ISU Library is the largest student employer on campus, the only building open at night, and serves 6,000 patrons a day, so things do happen.

Kathy's conclusion is that student employees respond very well to the array of everyday work situations-and some of these circumstances are quite serious, others are quite humorous.

Photo and Report by Phil Jones

Preparing Non-Science Majors for a Future of Evaluating Science

Mary Iber, Consulting Librarian for the Health Sciences, Cornell College



This hands-on presentation showed techniques from the Cornell College class Mary Iber developed in conjunction with a physics professor. The idea of the class is to teach scientific inquiry through popular film and fiction - for example, using the jury scenes in *12 Angry Men* to teach about evaluating conflicting evidence. The hands-on portion of the session, based on an assignment from the class, asked participants to evaluate scientific information from the Internet and classify it using the following scheme:

- Valid: most scientists agree with the thesis and evidence
- Speculative: most scientists agree with the theory but there is not enough testing to be conclusive
- Controversial: not enough evidence or multiple theories
- Uninformed: non-expert opinion, but not malicious
- Misrepresented: ignores some evidence or misrepresents facts
- Invalid: most scientists disagree with thesis

The categories allow non-scientists to make useful quick judgments about scientific information and emphasize that there is not always one absolute answer to scientific questions.

Photo and Report by Dan Gall

Back to the Future: How Rethinking the Desk Can Revive Reference Service in the New Millennium

Kim Babcock Mashek, Information Literacy Librarian, Wartburg College and Kari Weaver, Information Literacy Librarian, Wartburg College



What does your Reference Desk say about your library? This was the question that Kim Babcock Mashek and Kari Weaver posed to the group attending this session.

Librarians at Wartburg were noticing a decline in the use of the Reference Desk and wanted to see what changes could enhance the use of it. After analyzing several models of how a reference desk should look and function, the decision of simply

rearrange the seating place of the Reference Librarian was made. Clearing the Reference Desk of irrelevant information, and not just repositioning, made the reference desk much more approachable. Librarians, that before were "hidden" behind a monitor, now, are "the face of the library". What this experience shows is that minor changes in the configuration of a working space can have a positive outcome. Changing the seating arrangement and adding some chairs made the Reference Desk much more approachable, the librarian more visible, and as consequence, the quality of the reference interactions also increased.

What was learned by the Librarians involved in this change?

- Minor changes can have big effects
- Approachability is fundamental for a successful transaction at the Reference Desk
- Signs should be user-friendly and serve a purpose
- Different desks lead to different interactions

Photo and Report by Germano Streese

Photos from the Pre-Conference Social and the noon luncheon Business Meeting

Mary Wegner and Steven Bell visit with ILA/ACRL members at the pre-conference social on Thursday evening.

(Photo by Mary Iber)



ILA/ACRL President Brett Cloyd speaking at the Business Meeting luncheon.

(Photo by Mary Iber)



Mary Wegner shared updates from the State Library of Iowa.
(Photo by Judy Mitchell)



ILA President Ellen Neuhaus greeted the conference attendees.
(Photo by Judy Mitchell)

