

Tech Advisory Meeting - 9/13/06

Present: Marcia Middleton(APL), Lorraine Smi(VOOR), Rawdon Cheng(UHLS), John Love(BETH), Mike Whitney(EGRN), Mike Sweeney (GUIL), Rob Carle(UHLS, notes)

Gates Survey

Rob asked the committee to review a draft of a survey he will send to member libraries. The survey is designed to assess training needs as they relate to the Gates technology grant.

The committee made the following recommendations to Rob:

- Identify who should participate in this survey. Some staff never interact with the public in the way described by the survey, and their responses will skew the results. For example, perhaps circulation and technical processing staff at large libraries should be excluded from participating in the survey. Rob stated that he is interested in hearing from everyone who has contact with the public, but they should identify their job function at the library. It was mentioned that volunteers who work with the library also participate in the survey.
- Identify who distributes the survey to the staff. Should survey be sent to Library Directors, or department supervisors? Rob said this would depend on the size of the library.
- Identify the name of the library to determine the demographics of the library's service area.
- Survey should include questions about media format. Patrons have many questions about media hardware (usb, read-write CD players), and software (Window's Media, Real Player).
- Rob should state the objectives of the Gates grant as an introduction to the survey.
- Survey should be available in electronic format.

UHLS Training Needs

In general, Rob asked the committee about training needs for staff at their libraries. The survey is an attempt to assess any gaps of knowledge that can be addressed by training provided by UHLS. Rob is seeking feedback for future training and he wants to help staff help patrons.

Training Website

Rob gave a brief presentation of his training website. He talked about the ease of using a wiki, and the use of both screencasts and text to deliver instructions. He asked the committee for feedback and any suggestions for additional instructions to be offered on the website. He also asked the committee to help promote the website for staff training.

Mike Whitney suggested instructions on how to use Item Group Editor to create reports. Rob pointed out that Item Editor instructions are on the website but that he is willing to add more screencasts. Rawdon asked how many people use Item Group Editor for reporting purposes? The committee responded that it is used in a variety of ways, and is heavily used by the technical processing staff.

Experimental Wiki

Rob then gave a brief demonstration of the Experimental Wiki, pointing to various links, and summarized by saying how useful wikis are as collaboration tools. At this point, Mike Sweeney expressed concern about using one username and password for all the new tools offered by UHLS (intranet, wikis, blogs, etc.). Marcia countered by empathizing with UHLS's need to strike a balance between making these resources accessible and the need to secure the UHLS network. She also pointed out that intranet information is semi-public and little harm comes from using a less secure password.

Mike Sweeney also commented on how UHLS wikis are disorganized and he would like to see this improve. In addition, he feels email is the best method for communicating or broadcasting any information from UHLS. He and the other committee members would like to have read-only access to Request Tracker.

Rob mentioned RSS as a service to alert patrons about new titles acquired by the new libraries. He used Kansas City Public Library as an example. Someone then asked "How many patrons use the new items link on our websites?" Generally, the committee feels it is used a lot. It was suggested we measure the hit rate on this link.

Rawdon said UHLS will investigate RSS service. If it is feasible, it will be provided to members. It will be up to the member libraries to implement the service.

Other questions asked at the meeting:

1. Mike Sweeney asked about additional memory on the Horizon server.
2. Can we use SSL to access My Account in the HIP?
3. Third party software. How does SirsiDynix address other company's access to patron account information? Example; LibraryElf
4. John Love asked about status of the mail server and specifically about email anti-virus software.
5. Marcia asked about free graphic editor software for public use.

Next meeting: 9:30 Oct. 11th at Bethlehem.

Agenda;

1. SSL and My Account
2. Mail server status report

3. Horizon server hardware upgrade status.
4. Third party software interaction with Horizon. Example, LibraryElf
5. Intranet security
6. Open source software
7. demo by John Love using google to search our online catalog