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MLibrary 2.0

Create, share, and network

In early 2007, several members of the University of Michigan (UM) library administration attended a campus presentation by John Seeley Brown entitled “Learning Reconceived for the Networked Age.” Brown’s talk about learning as a social process prompted several internal discussions that led into topics related to Library 2.0 concepts. What is Library 2.0? Is it a philosophy? An invitation to users to participate in the creation, delivery, and assessment of library services? A new label to promote community learning? A model for engaging in change? A way to enable users to personalize library collections? These discussions in turn prompted the creation of a task force charged with planning a staff forum series to specifically focus on new directions for access and services with regard to issues such as Library 2.0, social networking, and the future of searching.

Planning

The planning task force decided to develop a forum series that would incorporate the very ideas that we were trying to showcase. We asked ourselves, “How can we provide the theoretical framework and practical skills that will enable us as an organization to begin incorporating these concepts into our services?” Words like *create*, *share*, and *network* surfaced over and over; we decided to embrace these ideas as we created a four-part forum series called “MLibrary 2.0.” The goal of the

series, held throughout summer 2007, was to generate library-wide enthusiasm for Library 2.0 concepts and technologies and give staff some basic grounding in those concepts and technologies.

The forum series consisted of a kickoff session with guest speakers on a variety of Web/Library 2.0 topics; a series of introductory hands-on workshops on Web 2.0 technologies taught by task force members; a second guest speaker session; and a capstone session. In addition, we encouraged participation by staff using the 43/23 Things concept (a self-paced tutorial concept in which participants learn new technologies by exploring and completing short tasks; in our case, we narrowed it down to 13 Things), with brief activities tied to the workshop topics.

For staff interested in working on in-depth projects, we created a MLibrary 2.0 Project



Design for promotional postcard.

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Blog where staff could post project ideas and look for projects to work on. We created a promotional Web site¹ and advertised the series to staff via announcements, newsletter items, and an attractive postcard. Support from library administration and senior managers was critical in generating enthusiasm among all levels of staff. We invited colleagues from campus and neighboring libraries (UM School of Information, UM Flint and Dearborn campuses, plus Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and Eastern Michigan University) to attend the speaker sessions and several from each institution attended.

An essential component of this series was to help library staff match their needs to the appropriate technology, not just teach the technology. We also felt it was important to use the technology ourselves to help promote the series. We created podcasts of the two lecture series, plus Flickr and Facebook groups to encourage sharing and networking.² The event Web site used embedded feeds from the committee's del.icio.us and Flickr accounts, and an aggregated RSS feed was created from the blogs so that there could be one central location to keep up with co-worker's blogs.³

MLibrary 2.0 Forum Series

Part One: MLibrary 2.0: The Future is Now

The kickoff session provided an overview of the major trends and issues that are emerging and shaping library services and resources. Peter Morville, president and founder of Semantic Studios, talked about "ambient findability," the way today's users find the information they need, and how libraries can better enable their users to interact with resources. Jessamyn West, creator of librarian.net, shared examples about how libraries are adopting and incorporating 2.0 trends into their services. Kristin Antelman, associate director for the Digital Library of North Carolina State University, led

us through an investigation about how libraries are adapting their OPACs to facilitate user interaction.

Part Two: Thursday Workshop Series

We held workshops over the summer to explore specific tools and resources. Each workshop concluded with a challenge to complete two tasks using the technology of that session and post it to the MLibrary 2.0 blog.

- **Blogs and RSS.** Attendees created and posted to their own blog, discovered how comments and blog posts could be linked to each other across blogs, and learned how to use RSS readers. The session also included discussion about how libraries and librarians are using blogs and RSS to connect to their patrons and each other.



Librarians play video games at MLibrary 2.0 gaming and social networking session. Photo by Shevon Desai.

- **Social Tagging: What is it and what does it have to do with the library?** Attendees

learned about the enormous potential of social tagging and RSS as a means for personal research, public sharing of resources, and promotion of library collections and services. Specific tools covered included del.icio.us and Flickr.

- **Do you social network?** This workshop introduced social networking sites, focusing on the two most popular: MySpace and Facebook. The session looked at the similarities and differences between them, explored their interfaces and features, and summarized the ways in which libraries are using social networking to extend their online presence.

- **Next Generation OPACs.** Attendees learned about new ideas for enhancing users' OPAC experience. Faceted browsing, social tagging, and blog models were discussed.

- **Podcasting and YouTube.** Attendees learned the basics of accessing and sharing user-created audio and video on the Web, including how to post simple podcasts and YouTube videos.

• **LibX and Zotero:** Firefox extensions for librarians and library patrons. Attendees learned how to use cutting-edge Firefox extensions to make the library a ubiquitous presence in patrons' lives. The extensions LibX and Zotero were discussed in depth.



Eli Neiburger, MLibrary 2.0 Forum Series speaker, and Paul Courant (Harvard University), at the gaming and social networking session. Photo by Suzanne Chapman.

Part Three: MLibrary 2.0: Gaming & Social Networking, A New Direction for Libraries

Eli Neiburger, information technology manager at Ann Arbor District Library (AADL), shared how libraries, including AADL, are transforming library interactions with users through the use of gaming technologies. Jane Blumenthal, UM director of the health sciences libraries, demonstrated how medical libraries are using SecondLife to extend their services. Lisa Hinchliffe, coordinator for information literacy services and instruction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, discussed ways to effect organizational change to prompt the use of 2.0 technologies and the value of social networking in assisting libraries in engaging with their users. The session concluded with time for attendees to *play* games in the AADL game room.

Part Four: Project Share: the Capstone Session
Staff members who worked on a 2.0 project over the summer were invited to demonstrate their work, and certificates were issued to those staff who completed the tasks associated with the 13 Things. Project examples include RSS feeds for new graphic novels in the library collection and a Google Library Map/Flickr mash-up.

Outcomes and assessment

While the long-term impact of MLibrary 2.0 is yet to be measured, it has motivated many

library staff to think about resources and services outside the traditional library box. Session evaluations were overwhelmingly positive and multiple sessions were not enough to meet the considerable demand.

Outcomes of the forum series include:

- The session on the next generation catalog motivated staff to create recommendations for future catalog

development relevant to Library 2.0.

- A photo essay of technical services, entitled the "Pre-Shelf Life of Library Materials," was created using Flickr.⁴
- The polling feature in Facebook was used to gather feedback from UM students about using the library.
- The Firefox extensions LibX and Zotero will be added to all our public workstations.
- A Google Maps/Flickr mashup was created to supplement the library's traditional list of library locations.⁵
- Several library staff are now active bloggers and users of del.icio.us, Facebook, and Flickr.
- And many more!

What's next?

As academic libraries think about their future and take active steps in shaping it, we need to use our strengths by leveraging them in contemporary ways. The result will be a hybrid approach that incorporates the value of experience and tried methods with the enthusiasm and possibilities of new technologies. The purpose of this series was not only to learn how to make a blog or put pictures on Flickr, but also to see the connections between services, users, and technologies. MLibrary 2.0 has spurred the organization to

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to the meeting with Leshner, as discussed above. Finally, a week or two after the Leshner meeting, ICOLC concluded its deliberations with the endorsement of the resolution by 62-library consortia. These cascading events, nicely interspersed by two-to-four weeks, were critical in building advocacy and visibility, but the timing was unplanned and just plain lucky.

Courageous leadership

I want to offer sincere and genuine recognition of the courageous leadership shown by Alan Leshner in this process. It is to Leshner's great credit that he was willing to reconsider a decision that he had supported and endorsed. As an administrator and leader, it is easy to become personally invested in decisions. However, upon hearing the voices and concerns of the library community (and, I believe, some of his membership representatives) it is a measure of Leshner's leadership and administrative courage that he did not react stubbornly and defensively. Rather, he reconsidered, initiated a reopening of discussions with JSTOR, and after renegotiations, reversed the original

decision. He deserves recognition as well as our admiration and thanks.

Conclusion

On the basis my experience, the successful advocacy effort with AAAS depended on commonality of values, personal commitment to the issue, reaching the AAAS membership, luck, and leadership. These factors led to the reversal of the decision to cease contributing new content from its premier journal, *Science*, to the JSTOR platform. Clearly, some of these characteristics are unique to the AAAS/JSTOR issue. It is interesting to think which factors could be applied—and which factors would be new—in a similar effort with a different nonprofit organization, such as the American Psychological Association, or even a for-profit publisher. The lessons of this initiative are useful and worth the careful consideration of the library community.

But in conclusion the final word must be this: after years of outrageous pricing schemes, intractable usage policies, inflexible licensing schemes, and Machiavellian mergers and consolidations, it was good to win one. ♪

("MLibrary2.0," continued from page 206)
think more openly and broadly about how users and staff work and encouraged thinking on a large scale about delivery of content and services. It has prompted us as a community to try new things and to see new possibilities. What's next? We don't know. We have only begun to create, share, and network!⁶

Notes

1. MLibrary 2.0 promotional Web site, www.lib.umich.edu/lib20/.
2. Flickr and Facebook groups to encourage sharing and networking, [flickr.com](http://flickr.com/groups/mlibrary2_0/)

[/groups/mlibrary2_0/](http://groups/mlibrary2_0/) and umichigan.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2825620230.

3. Aggregated RSS feed, www.lib.umich.edu/lib20/uberfeed.html.
4. "Pre-Shelf Life of Library Materials," www.flickr.com/photos/alexis_medea/sets/72157601347637401/.
5. Google Maps/Flickr mashup, www.lib.umich.edu/labs/maps/index.html.
6. Thanks to the task force members: Laurie Alexander (co-chair), Dave Carter (co-chair), Suzanne Chapman, Robyn Cleveland, Bill Dueber, Jake Glenn, Kat Hagedorn, Donna Hayward, Susan Hollar, Scott Martin, and Julie Weatherbee. ♪

("Challenging your students," continued from page 213)
creative. Develop a contest that encourages student creativity and that benefits your library to the greatest extent possible.

Note

1. Visit weblog.library.gatech.edu/news/2007/12/11/flash-in-the-pan-winner/ to see Georgia Tech Library's Flash in the Pan 2007 winner. ♪