

Ask a Librarian Advisory Committee Meeting 7/28/06

Attendees:

Judy Born - Manatee Community College
Andrew Breidenbaugh - Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System
Geraldine Collins - Florida Gulf Coast University
Andrea Ginsky - Sarasota County Library System
Gregg Gronlund - Orange County Library System
Caryl Harris - Lake County Library System, Cooper Memorial Library
Sunita Kumari - St. Petersburg College
Dan Lhotka - State Library Liaison
Dani Lichtenberg - Palm Beach County Library System
Chad Mairn - St. Petersburg College
Peter Van Leeuwen - International College
Lucy Harrison – College Center for Library Automation
Jennifer Sullivan - Tampa Bay Library Consortium
Diana Sachs - Tampa Bay Library Consortium
Charlie Parker - Tampa Bay Library Consortium
Mark Flynn - State Library, Florida Electronic Library
Gary Johnson - College Center for Library Automation

Summary of Meeting:

In the past year, Ask a Librarian experienced many changes. Grant management was moved from CCLA to TBLC, a new manager, Diana Sachs-Silveira, joined the project, a successful software upgrade was performed, and several new large libraries joined the service. In light of these changes, the Ask a Librarian annual committee meeting focused on what the future of the project should look like.

In the next year, we will continue with aggressive marketing, expand the hours of availability, and evaluate the need for tutoring and/or an academic desk. The committee decided that current and alternative software programs should be evaluated in order to ensure that the demands of the service can be met, especially if a whiteboard is needed for tutoring services. The meeting, held on Ask a Librarian's third birthday, was a productive session that focused on the growth of the program and the positive steps being taken to continue that growth.

Welcome and Introductions (Charlie Parker)

Overview of Project Status (Diana)

- Vince left, restructuring, manager position moved to TBLC, CCLA's role
- **July 1st software update:** Enhanced features, customized homepage, stable co-browse, no pop-ups, statistics (older stats still available), Docutek responding to our requests
- **Budget:** Some money available to use for marketing.
- **Current Statistics:**
 - Stats are up double from last year at this time. The biggest jump occurred with the software upgrade. Lucy attributes to the new software enhancements, improved user friendly interface brings in more users, Gregg reports increased use, academics off anticipate increased use during school
 - Library users higher than non-identified
 - July user entry points—public high in summer, % users from each library type, want to get better info about who the user is (Age, etc.)
 - Queue logouts high, 1-5 minute wait 80% logged out, try to reduce logouts and wait times
- **Committee Discussion**
 - Geraldine: what to do if other librarian doesn't pick up, how to know if there are tech problems

- Charlie: how often does the machine refresh, can we make it faster?
 - Chad: wants status message to know when people are away
- **Summary of general information meetings**
The six of the eight planned meeting focused on marketing, usage, and software. Thus far, they have been very positive. A full summary will be released following the completion in 1-2 weeks.
 - **Re-gearing QA assurance group**
 - More local ownership by site coordinators nominating transcripts, new prices, Chad (others) need to get more staff involved first
 - Certificates needed for promotion at Community Colleges
 - Ideas for recognition:
 - An obvious item for desk display
 - Polo shirts, t-shirts or embroidered shirts, gift cards, Gale might donate, gift for person nominating also, credit for promotional items, make shirt for librarians to buy, mascot contest, iPods, something non-work related, drawing for best of year, get them to FLA, dramatic reading of transcript
 - Charlie—need more institutional recognition more reward for contributions
 - Fuller profile on our site for winner, make bigger deal about winner and program

Update on software and discussion of future software enhancements

- **Technical Fixes:** Librarian log checkboxes fixed, assigned fixed by October fix statistics to include search by patron log in for transcripts, generally easier to use
- **New Enhancement List (immediate, next year, long term) (Discussion by group) (Committee would like to review final list sent to Docutek)**
 - One-to-Many, librarian to customer and librarian to librarian,
 - More accessible by text messengers, phones
 - Chad: Google SMS service, huge market available
 - Andrew: what direction should we take with service, need to think where to go, how service would operate.
 - Judy: sub-committee to look at trends and new tech to decide if whole committee needs to know about it.
 - Geraldine: renewal by cell phone did not work, had to pay, trendy is not always best.
 - Andrew: AAL-lite, we don't always need it all
 - Sunita: blog, RSS more important now (Lucy: we already have it).
 - Public RSS feed? What would we put on it? Interesting questions, resources, would make service more visible
 - Geraldine: people don't come to service as online community, just want to ask a question
 - Judy: what about the knowledge base (interns working to update)
 - Charlie & Mark State Library knowledgebase gets 2 mil hits per year, questions pass through kb filter before connection to e-mail, high work load to review entries.
 - Other features: "Diana is typing" last message at 10:02:37, Library with librarian name
 - VOIP
 - whiteboard
 - Tech support, helpdesk software

Scheduling and Interns

- **Schedule:** Starting August 1. Ask a Librarian's new hours will be 10am-Midnight Sunday-Thursday and 10-5pm on Friday and Saturday. Interns will cover the night hours.
- Now open 84 hours a week
- Ask a Librarian hopes to open earlier in the early Fall. Currently working with libraries to get am coverage.
- **New Interns:** Michael, Kerri, Ashley, USF Library School students
- **When to Work:** Online scheduling system, much more efficient, streamlined, offers libraries options as to schedule format.

Academic Desk – status of taskforce (Chad Mairn)

- Taskforce evaluating the need of an Academic Desk within Ask a Librarian
- Group is contacting non-participant SUS libraries to see if desk would be effect recruitment tool
- **Committee Discussion**
 - Judy: more assignment based questions, not really research
 - Geraldine: more need for children's youth desk for homework help for academics who do not want to help kids.
 - Andrew—Training for working with younger users
 - Lucy: explanation of patron traffic routing
 - Andrew: Must have the patron roll over to other desk if librarian is unavailable
 - Could be used for better routing of patron traffic
 - General desk—everyone may have weaknesses
 - Online training, build your skills, other ways to route traffic to people who are experts in that subject
 - Need better age stats: kid, teen, college, adult (I am a: pick one – Elementary Student, Middle School, High School, College or Adult)
 - Need to do a transcript analysis – homework and young people.
 - Better training for librarians on working with youth (possible FLA program: Working with Special Populations)
 - Promoting the generalist role
 - Audit other states

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Ask a Librarian

Today is Ask a Librarian's 3rd birthday!

New Libraries and Training Report

- New Libraries: North Miami Public Library, St. Johns River Community College (rejoined), Maitland Public Library, Osceola County Public Library, Lee County, Jacksonville Public Library, University of Florida (not yet live).
- Trained: 226 Librarians at 23 training events.
- 6 more sessions this Summer and more training planned for the fall
- Training has been redesigned to reflect changes in new software version.
- **Committee Discussion:**
 - Tutorial for users, canned demos for presentations by librarians.
 - More advanced classes (FEL, databases)
 - Online Tutorials on what to expect (for users)
 - Staff tutorials and electronic version of AAL Checklist
 - Chad to send Jennifer simulator software

Marketing

- **Commercials:** 30 second AAL spot with customizable URLs
 - Scripts ready
 - For schools, government channels & streaming on the web
 - Goal to be ready by September
- **Customizing marketing materials**
 - Allow for local branding of AAL Marketing Materials
 - Logical next step with some libraries unable to use current marketing materials due to local government and library policies
- **Collateral:** Posters, Banners, Bookmarks, Pencils currently available to participating libraries.
- **Ads** in Community College and University Newspapers
- **K-12**
 - Ask a Librarian has a myspace page: myspace.com/askalibrarianfl
 - K12 Poster Distribution. Posters currently being sent to each school.

- FAME sponsor. With donate 1500 lanyards for participants.
- *Girls Get IT!* Working with Florida Girl Scouts program to promote Ask a Librarian.
- **Committee Discussion**
 - Need press release to announce new hours
 - Link on web site is the key
 - Advertise organizations where teachers gather (examples K12 Leadership Conference & Curriculum meetings) 30,000 new teachers each year in Florida. Need to reach them.
 - 74% of Floridians are online. 91% in HCPLC recent survey.
 - Use surveys to track advertising. More training on software possibilities.

Florida Electronic Library (Mark Flynn)

- Proud of success of Ask a Librarian as its funding-source.
- In adding schools to the Gale Databases, usage has tripled with 13 million searches in the past year
- New five year contract with Gale about to be signed.
- Adding new K-8 databases including LitFinder and a specialized 'Florida' database.
- Grant approved for this year.
- Online tutorials are being designed
- Usability study data being incorporated
- Need for more training

Future Direction & Open Floor

- "Blue skies" FEL budget for next year includes Florida tutoring element (Mark) Proposal:
 - Tutors like interns would be paid
 - Run with Ask a Librarian through same software
 - Software would have to have whiteboard (either Docutek or other vendor or a mixture).
- **Committee Discussion**
 - Andrew: With shift in service, a natural time to reevaluate the software.
 - Lucy: Florida Distance Learning, very supportive
 - Gregg: Libraries are already part of tutoring. Tutoring by appointment, with multi-sessions with same tutor and student.
 - Caryl: Online tutoring for GED
 - Dani: What is the business of tutoring? What issues are involved?
 - Sunita: What about sustainability?
 - Andrew: Librarians resentful at teachers being paid
 - Gregg: Already interaction between schools and libraries. Libraries do a lot of online instruction already. Ways to benefit each other.
 - Additional services help attract more students
 - Geraldine: Would users be able to choose, or would they accept transferring. Would transfer be seamless?
 - Andrew: What is the added value or are we attempting to recreate on the cheap?
 - Mark: Tutors can be well versed on Florida Curriculum standards
 - Dani: Should we meet with DOE to discuss partnering
 - Tie-in state standards assessment
 - Work with Distance Learning Consortium
 - Investigate: Web CT, Blackboard, SmarThinking, Tutor
 - Gregg: Subject area specialists, teacher approved resources
 - Judy: Future of AAL with children

Closing Remarks

- Will email committee for who wants to stay, who wants to leave committee.
- Committee will be more involved this year via mailing list
- Thank everyone