

L-Net Advisory Board

July 29th, 2011

In attendance: Stephanie Chase, Buzzy Nielsen, Stuart Levy, Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen, Lori Moore, Emily Papagni, Kim Read, Erin Sharwell, Caleb Tucker-Raymond.

On the phone: Darci Hanning and Dale Vidmar

Not in attendance: Perry Stokes and Lori Wamsley

Advisory board member news:

- Buzzy is now Director of the Hood River Library District. Hood River Library is now and L-net partner library, and has 2 people staffing L-net now.
- Hillsboro has iPad 2s at the reference desk. They are talking about having L-net at the reference desk if there is an iPad app available.
- Welcome to Stephanie Chase. Starting August 1st Stephanie is the interim Reference, Adult Services and Programming Coordinator for Multnomah County Library. She is also Caleb and Emily's boss.

Virtual Reference Summit Review:

- 6th VR Summit was June 10th in The Dalles.
- Keynote speaker Jessamyn West was very well received.
- For the first time there was cost recovery from the conference, plus a modest gain that will be used toward next year's budget.
- Some possible contributing factors to the cost recovery:
 - A clear expectation of cost recovery
 - Location change
 - Change in registration cost based on the continuing Education survey results
 - More aggressive marketing
 - Big name keynote speaker
- Emily Ford put together a storify for the conference: <http://storify.com/l1brar1an/oregon-virtual-reference-summit-2011>
- Videos are available: <http://www.oregonlibraries.net/summit/2011/program>
- There were 5 students from a local middle school that came and gave in person feedback. This was very well received. Video is not available due to lack of video permission slips from parents.

Mentoring:

- The L-net Quality team began a mentoring program 2 years ago. This opened the door for L-net to expand the volunteer program to include people who had completed coursework (towards an MLS or equivalent), but may not have reference experience yet, starting in Spring of 2011. These volunteers are paired with a mentor to provide support.

- More mentors are needed to cover all the new volunteers.
- The quality team is looking for ways to support the mentors:
 - Time limit on terms, or times periodic check ins.
 - Mentors/ mentees make progress reports after contact.
 - Some “place” for mentors to go for co support
 - Reminders to mentors and supervisors at partner libraries about viewing transcripts.
 - Formalize guidelines/ rules
 - Checklists
 - Do these X# of things as a mentor
 - Make structure available to mentees too
 - Mentor trainings/ meetings (mentor/ mentee after hours gathering at VR summit?)
- Quality team is working on notable transcripts
- Biggest challenge is still having enough mentors!

Renaming L-net:

- A survey of 194 Library staff was reviewed at the last meeting
- Following up with a Patron survey on the entrance point of the L-net patron page. So far there are two responses. It was recommended that the survey be placed on multiple places on the website to get more responses.
- Patron feedback describes the service using the word help and helpful – these are words not used by library staff.
- The suggestion was made to try focus groups to get more patron feedback.

Statistics:

- Caleb put a restriction into the software to keep patrons from entering their questions more than once. This sends them a message to please wait. When we switched servers to keep from having crashes we moved to a slower server. On the patron side it looked like the question was not getting through, so there were many patrons sending duplicate questions. In the month of May, these duplicate questions equaled 16% of the monthly stats.
- Discarding the duplicate question stats, growth between 2009-10 and 2010-11 is too small to count. This is a change from the past few years of approx. 8% growth.
- It is difficult to count statistics from school libraries as most students will identify their local public library.
- Academic patron use up 11%
- Un-assigned patrons up 27% (these could be out of state users, or we were otherwise unable to identify a library patron uses)
- Public library patron use is down 13%
- School library patrons are down 33%
- Caleb placed a control on the system to only allow 3 from an ip range every 15 minutes to help traffic levels during school visits.

- There are drops in Beaverton school district and Willsonville schools.
 - The board speculated if this has to do with recent cuts in library and librarian funding in the school systems.
- Drops in numbers could be due in part to lack of marketing, and an expected plateau in growth.
- Suggestion made to put a buffer on out of state or unrecognized zip codes to redirect them to other similar services that may be in their area.
- Caleb will collect data on out of state use and report to the board
- TXT service is still a trickle. It is growing for libraries that have their own keyword.

Budget (the following assumes continued level of state support that was promised in 2011-12 fy):

- \$7K is not assigned yet
 - Suggestion made to use this as a marketing budget for when the new name/ logo are done.
- There has been some cost savings from using the after dark service less and relying more on increased volunteers.
 - We have been using volunteers for the last several months to cover some of our high-cost evening and Sunday hours. But we've still had afterdark librarians logged in as back-up. Beginning September 1, we'll cut some of those hours and use volunteers exclusively for select evening and Sunday shifts. That's when we'll see the cost savings begin. We anticipate that it will be \$10,000 per year.

Other news:

Other states/ trends –

- NC has a new platform and has hired their own after-hours staff, though they are not 24/7. It may be possible to partner with them in the future
- NJ state service was cut, but protests have ended in a temporary reprieve.

New Libraries:

- Hood River
- Oregon College of Arts and Crafts
- Birthingway college of midwifery

Is there a trend in small libraries joining? Is this a way they are using to connect?

Underused experts:

- NW Naturopathic College
- Oregon College of Oriental Medicine

Ballot measures:

Multnomah county library will not be placing a levee or library district measure on the fall ballot. Speculation is that there will be a higher response rate if it waits until the Spring 2012 primaries. If nothing happens by next FY there will be a 65% budget cut to the libraries in the county.

Board membership:

- Board decided to make the common practice of a 2 year term with an optional third year the rule
- The meeting schedule will also be amended to accommodate 4 meetings a year instead of the stated 3.
- The board discussed and decided who new members will be. Kim will contact the applicants.

Brainstorming review:

A review of the brainstorming of what is good about L-net was done. The board worked on answering the question, "What is most important from the list?" These were divided into outcomes and outputs.

Outcomes

- Public Service, online
- Builds relationships with patrons where they are and in an environment they are comfortable in.
- Makes people love their library
- Librarians and patrons make personal connections with each other.

Infrastructure

- Provides infrastructure for statewide and local services. If L-net went away libraries would not be able to provide the same level of service on their own.
- Training and staff development
- Administrative vehicle
- Builds community intrinsically among librarians staffing the service. i.e VR summit
- Addresses imbalance of resources among Oregon libraries
- One-on-one service

Things L-net does that are valuable but less important than the above

- Explores new technologies and models for providing reference service
- 24/7 service

Things from our brainstorming list that didn't come up in this brief discussion but may still be important

- Marketing to staff, libraries and patrons
- L-net helps show that libraries are moving beyond bricks and mortar
- Integrates teaching with reference and customer service

Next meeting: Plan to discuss quality issues in how some types of questions are answered. i.e. intellectual property and copyright.