

L-net Advisory Board Meeting: 4/29/11

Present: MaryKay Dahlgren (Telephone), Brett Lear, Stuart Levy, Lori Moore, Buzzy Nielsen (Telephone), Kim Read, Erin Sharwell, Perry Stokes (Telephone), Caleb Tucker-Raymond

Absent: Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen, Emily Papagni, Dale Vidmar, Lori Wamsley

Notes: Kim Read

#### I. Funding/LSTA funding update from MaryKay

- A. Funding cycle starts July 11, so we are finishing up our 2010 funding. Funding for 2011 will look the same as 2010. Additional funding for the Spanish language request is uncertain.
- B. 5 year plan- Occurs every five years, and next one is due soon. This covers broad priorities for LSTA funding. Next plan is due June 2012. Planning for this will start Fall 2011. MaryKay was not sure if there would be a steering committee for the new plan. The plan needs to come from the library community, and quite possible that there will be competing initiatives.
- C. Competitive grants-the area of LSTA funding that has decreased over time. These used to be at \$1,000,000, now at \$500,000.
- D. Future regarding LSTA funding- MaryKay thinks that at best that LSTA funds in 2012 will be flat. She recommended that we look at a long term plan to not be completely dependent on LSTA funds. There was some discussion around the idea of competitive pricing/database subscription model.

#### II. Website Migration

- A. Caleb explained the website migration, which happened because Lnet outgrew its cheap hosting service. A big reason this occurred was due to the increase in hits originating from Lnet local @ Lane Community College and OIT.
- B. The site moved to Amazon Elastic Cloud and is supported by Multnomah County staff. This was a time consuming process. Caleb thinks it is been faster for patrons.

#### III. Statistics

- A. Text: Text has overtaken email as a secondary virtual reference method. Text was promoted by Multnomah County, and Lori mentioned that Multnomah County is considering getting an app for texting (do I have this right?) Caleb mentioned the possibility of QR codes/business cards to hand out.
- B. Lnet local: Patrons are responding to connecting to their local libraries. PSU and Eugene libraries have all reference staff contributing to chat on their shifts.
- C. Widgets: Because the widgets look like an IM program, they are a much more effective way to reach patrons. Now that the website has migrated, Caleb can promote the widgets.
- D. Caleb said he needs to send stats to all of the library directors.

#### IV. Volunteers

- A. Emily provided an update regarding volunteers since the inception of expanding the volunteer program to include MLS students who do not have reference experience, but who have at least completed an ALA accredited library school reference course. The expanded volunteer program was announced in February.
- B. Numbers- Traditionally Lnet has had about 12 volunteers at a given time. We now have 25 and that should grow to 30 after the May training session. Volunteers are covering Monday-Friday 6-8 and some afternoon hours on Sunday. Lnet could save \$10,000 a year by not contracting for these high cost hours.
- C. Long term issues- Scheduling, getting support for covering volunteer shifts if a volunteer can't make their shift, transitory nature of volunteers, having enough mentors.
- D. Mentors- this is going well, but there are still not enough mentors. Lori would like to see mentoring become more a part of the process of being involved with Lnet.
- E. Can we commit to covering these hours with volunteers instead of contracting with After Dark?

#### V. After Dark

- A. Erin asked how many After Dark questions are really answerable and how many are actually questions that turn into email and cannot be answered in the middle of the night/can only be answered locally.

- B. After Dark patron comments have been more positive.
- C. Training for Ohio After Dark librarians went well and Caleb and Emily would like to be able to offer Oregon librarians the same training. Waiting on webinar software for this.

#### VI. Budget

- A. Summit- is paying for itself and may actually make some money. Excitement about the keynote speaker, Jessamyn West, was expressed.
- B. Discussion of After Dark hours was continued, and the questions was asked if emergency hours could be purchased from After Dark in conjunction with relying on volunteers to cover those specific hours.
- C. Lori asked if the possibility of MCL going to a district effect Caleb and Emily, and Caleb said no. The 5 year option levy is up next year.

#### VII. Renaming Lnet

- A. Caleb has formed a group to start the renaming process. Emily commented that the renaming was long overdue. An initial meeting was going to be scheduled and it would include a presentation by MCL's marketing/branding specialist. The renaming group would decide what the goal is, brainstorm names, and bring ideas out to the partner libraries for buy-in.

#### VIII. Recruiting new Advisory Board members

- A. Hoping to add a school library person to the Board.

#### IX. Brainstorm—what's important about Lnet/What does Lnet do? (in case we have funding difficulties in the future)

- A. Two specific goals: Serve patrons with online reference service and give Oregon libraries the skills and tools to provide the service.
- B. For first goal, we use open source chat software and pay for staff, maintenance, partnership with Ohio librarians, and Lnet website.
- C. For second goal, we provide the training, the Summit, full time partner support, and the volunteer program.
- D. Marketing to staff, patrons, liaisons
- E. Texting, email, chat
- F. Informally- explore technology for providing reference services.

- G. Administrative overhead, reports, advisory board
- H. Lnet gets people to love their libraries. What would a cut do to that love?
- I. A loved added value service, although not as loved by some, especially at MCL.
- J. We form relationships with patrons
- K. Patrons love their library more because of Lnet
- L. Lnet provides reference expertise that smaller libraries couldn't provide
- M. Lnet helps show that libraries are moving beyond bricks and mortar.
- N. Provides a community of librarians around the state.
- O. Meet people where they are and at their comfort level.
- P. Schools often have no librarian, so it's an opportunity for personal help.
- Q. Integrates teaching with reference and customer service.
- R. One-on-one is a very personal service, human connection or just information?
- S. Answering reference questions is our tool to accomplish these things.
- T. We would like to remain 24/7, but is there a breakdown of calls in the middle of the night? Could we cut down on the hours in the middle of the night?
- U. Talking up Lnet to directors AND frontline staff, advocacy, marketing.