

October 28, 2011

Present: Stephanie Chase, Erin Golub, Elsa Loftis, Sarah mead, Laurie Nordahl, Emily Papagni, Jenny Pedersen, Kim Read, Perry Stokes (via Skype), Caleb Tucker-Raymond, Dale Vidmar (via Skype)

Absent: Darci Hanning, Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen

L-net Advisory Board meeting

**1. Introductions**

- 2. History of L-net:** LINK program in decline in the 90's. Direct online service was recommended. OLA Vision 2010 + state task force of public and academic libraries. State library decided to create online service and Multnomah County came on board as the fiscal agent. LINK funds moved to the online service. Funding for L-net has doubled since then. Teams of staffers formed for decision making on issues like patron privacy, services, etc. Role of the board then changed to advise Emily and Caleb, not actually do the work that the teams were doing. Spring of 2004 formal evaluation and those recommendations were followed up on. Software has changed over the years. We share a server and after dark hours with Cleveland. Because of quality issues, we have started doing online training with Ohio staff to help them learn how to better serve our patrons. Virtual Reference Summit birthed in 2006. Locations have varied. Successful in building community among the L-net staffers. L-net went 24/7 sometime in 2003 or 2004. State library board held a large public meeting about this time where L-net had to prove it deserves public funding. Some members of the state library thought the funding should go elsewhere. A marketing team was formed. They concluded L-net should go to schools and market to kids. Use among kids increased significantly. During the school year, about half of the questions are coming from kids. More questions come from schools where they have librarians, like Beaverton School District. Not all staffers are experienced as youth librarians. Texting service as added a year ago. L-net Local- any Oregon library can use the software to host chat on their own and don't need to contribute to staffing L-net service. Many libraries do L-net Local AND contribute to staffing the service. The mission of L-net has moved from one central service to one that both provides the service and gives Oregon libraries the tools to provide virtual reference service on their own. L-net has about 36 volunteers who help staff the service and recently those volunteer hours are helping to decrease the cost of after dark coverage from Ohio.
- 3. Caleb and Emily:** Caleb works more in an external way: state, other libraries, technology. Emily work more internally: staff training and direct support to the variety of individuals providing the service. They work collaboratively and both report to Stephanie.
- 4. Advisory board role-**advise on what the service needs to be doing. Although Caleb and Emily have a supervisor (Stephanie), direction for the service comes from the advisory board and not so much from Multnomah County as the fiscal agent.
- 5. Brainstorm session:** what we like about L-net, what we want the service to be doing. Caleb creating a Google doc.

6. **Stats:** stats are up. Texting does not get much traffic, but it hasn't been promoted much. Part of Multnomah County's mobile app, so most are coming from Multnomah County. 18% of interactions we don't know what library/where they are coming from. It is possible to investigate more about where these 18% are coming from.
7. **Budget:** All of the costs for the Summit were recovered last year, so there is an expectation that we will duplicate that this year. Spanish language consultant expenses are temporary. Less money spent on afterdark next year because last year's contract was for 13 months. Perry pointed out that it would be helpful to LSTA if we shared this detailed budget with the state. It is public information, but providing it proactively may be an option. Caleb sends quarterly reports to the state about how the money is spent, and Caleb does not receive any feedback. Perry said these were not forwarded on to the LSTA council he serves on.
8. **L-net Local:** stats review.
9. **Marketing:** Not doing any currently and haven't had money in the budget to do marketing. Caleb has been to Tualatin, state library, and met with directors of community colleges. Telling the story of L-net, help supervisors find transcripts, pointing out the budget to library directors and supervisors.
10. **Spanish language consultant-**Don't want to just add Spanish. Two qualified proposals, and moving to oral interviews. Need to pay them before the end of this fiscal year. Matching up library districts with high Spanish speaking users with libraries that already have the infrastructure for outreach to Spanish speakers as ideal places for the consultant to target.
11. **Re-naming update:** meeting for several months, discussed what we like about L-net and what we want a new name to do, surveyed librarians via Libs-Or, surveyed patrons. A new name should describe what we do, not who we are, and be intuitive. Patrons use the words "help", "answers", and "librarian" to describe the service. Posting a job on a crowdsourcing site to generate new names, then a new logo, and possibly a website redesign.
12. **Summit team:** 10 people on the team this year. First meeting was in September and looked over attendees' feedback from the 2011 summit. Previous goals have been getting people together face to face, talking about virtual reference, and hearing great key speakers. Goals: building community and connecting, building virtual reference skills, how we deliver services, what is a library and what is a librarian. Very important to attendees that it is affordable and easy enough to get to. Last year registration fee was \$50, and likely to stay with that fee. Budget is \$5,000. Last year approached vendors and asked for funding. This money awarded scholarships for attendees. Goals for keynote: dynamic, engaging, knows libraries, and speaks to the gap in our knowledge. A lot of non-L-netters were there last year; the event is evolving. Possible keynotes: Dan Savage, Marilyn Johnson, Dana Boyd, Joe Janes, Chris Jordan, Mary Roach (an author). Lightning talks will be held again. Videotaping for online archive. Looking at possible coast locations.
13. **Quality team:** Notable transcript awards: on an irregular basis because it is time consuming. Rubric is used for evaluation: welcoming tone, reference interview, use authoritative resources, ask "have I answered your question?", and offer more help. Gives recognition to great quality service being provided and serves as a training tool. A surprise is given to awardees with a signed certificate and flowers, in front of other colleagues. Advertised on OLA hotline and Libs-

OR. Mentoring program: Pairs new staffer with an experienced staffer for one-on-one feedback. Decided to start regular check ins with mentors. Redesign of volunteer program: 36 volunteers currently. Last year saw a big expansion. The requirement to have reference experience was taken away. We never have quite enough mentors. Expanding volunteer program was in part to reduce budget of AfterDark hours, and expect to save \$10,000 by doing this.

14. **Funding cycle**: next meeting we will discuss how much we want to ask for in next cycle. The state library has a LSTA council that reviews the statewide projects and competitive grants proposed and recommends how the library should spend money. The board of trustees makes the final decisions on spending. Caleb attends a lot of the state meetings. Cost recovery structure is in place, but nobody really likes it. Though, it creates literal buy-in.
15. **Difficult questions**: Seeing a wide variety in the way staffers are answers difficult questions, some that may involve illegal issues. Consistency is needed. Add a copyright legal disclaimer similar to the medical and legal disclaimers. Variations in questions of a technical nature and those of a legal nature. One guideline to give is to assume the best of the patron, and not assume that they have bad/illegal intentions. And to fall back on the tools of a reference interview. Also, the question can be put into follow up. Bit torrent: not necessarily a copyright infringement, although it is well known to be a source for copyright infringed material. Bit torrent can also use the copyright disclaimer and a warning about viruses. Porn question is an opportunity to one, do a reference interview, and two, offer things like erotica even though we don't collect for porn. How to handle requests for porn websites? How to best support librarians. Bring difficult questions to the summit? Put into the training that there can be a subtle difference between inappropriate questions and difficult/uncomfortable questions. Is there a legal concern if the patron is a minor asking for pornographic material? Intellectual freedom issues. Emily to create a copyright disclaimer.
16. **Giving answers or guiding to answers**: differences occur here and there is some flexibility. We can't assume everyone is a student and youth librarians are trained to guide. Best practice has been to provide a resource, then say, "I found this by ....". Or asking, "Would you like me to show you how I found this?" "I can't do your homework for you".
17. **Catastrophe planning**: What would happen if our funds were cut? Caleb presented a document that coordinated budget with priorities of L-net and the tasks and % of job that Emily and Caleb actually do. AfterDark hours stand out as a logical place to cut if L-net receives a cut in funding. Multnomah County is facing a permanent tax district or 5 year levy in May, and if it doesn't pass, Multnomah County will cut about 60-70% of its budget. It could affect who is working for L-net. Dale offered that sometimes when big cuts are faced, cutting services makes a point to funding agencies what the effect of the budget cuts really is in terms of service.
18. **Technology issues**: Create a committee for help?
19. **New Chair and Future meeting times**: Elsa will be chair for the year and Sarah will be back-up if there's an issue when Elsa is on maternity leave. Elsa will send out Doodle poll to finalize dates and times for first three 2012 meetings.
20. **Priorities**: Marketing and best practices. Plan marketing now, but wait for new name. Can market to libraries. Best practices: informal meetings? Blog postings? Wiki? Afterdark:

quality/money=value concerns. Not as much of a priority as marketing for this year. Volunteer might bid for a local after-hours system.