Thursday's Session Highlights

Session #105: Meet RACER—An OCUL VCX Project Overview and Update

The Meet RACER session was literally an introduction to RACER and a status report on the project. RACER stands for Rapid Access to Collections by Electronic Requesting or, as I might call it, how to get the information you want electronically. RACER offers access to the catalogues of numerous Ontario universities (with more expected online in 2004) and includes ILL and document delivery options. Statistics for the first 6 months are exciting, with over 125,000 requests, 227,000 patron records and 8,582 "locations records". A French interface is expected to be active in 2004.

Session #106 -Sponsorship: Cultivating Corporate Partnerships

How to do it? Rod Lavery of SOLS addressed the difference between sponsorship and fund-raising, as well as corporate sponsorships and donations. Sponsorship is a marketing decision and has real market value. He pointed out that libraries must change their perspective BEFORE approaching a prospective sponsor. It is essential to identify exactly how the corporation will benefit from the proposed partnership and how it will tie into library objectives.

Taking these pertinent points a practical step further, Dr. Maureen Reznik illustrated how Oakville Public Library established corporate sponsorships with a case study that could be replicated. She went into detail on the aspects of "What can we do for you?" approach as well as vital follow–ups to preserve these partnerships.

From Windsor Public Library, John Rutherford addressed corporate sponsorship cultivation with examples featuring the Windsor Casino and McDonald's. The Casino could not donate to children's activities but were willing to sponsor an Adult Literacy Lab; MacDonald's was particularly concerned with exclusivity, willing to assist the library as long as other food chains or products were not involved.

Lavery also explained the importance of building a solid, lasting relationship with community corporate partners, altogether a most practical and enlightening session! *By Shelagh Harris, OLBA planner*

Session #110 – "Weapons of Mass Instruction"

Lisa Sloniowsi and Meta Sen-Roy from the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor shared their experiences with organizing a library "teach-in" during the 2003 Iraq war. The event was designed to reclaim the library as a space for engaged citizen debate, and shed light on the social, cultural and ethical issues surrounding the production and dissemination of information. A web-site of alternative and dissenting voices on the Iraq war developed in conjunction with this event. In small break-out sessions, participants exchanged ideas for planning similar events at their libraries.

Session #212- Magic of Metadata

Metadata has become a pervasive term in our industry, but it is is often shrouded in vague references to schemes and esoteric acronym or used as a 'management speak of the week.'

Dr. Howrath's session provided a clear concise overview of what Metadata is, and highlighted key schemes for information and library services. showed examples of how metadata is actually used to facilitate access to information. Further she extrapolated how they might be turned into potential projects.

The session concluded a discussion of decisions and factors which needed to be considered in beginning our own Metadata projects. While she encouraged us to start small, Dr Horwath certainly inspired us to think big.

Session #216: Teaching Information Literacy Skills

It was standing room only for Tom Adam and Stephan Beckhoff's session on teaching information literacy. One hundred and ten people attended the session and heard Adam and Beckhoff affirm the librarian's role as educator. Beckhoff, Learning Specialist at the London Health Sciences Centre provided attendees with a high-level overview of instructional design, the principles of adult education, and the inherent differences between print-based, computer-based and instructor-led training. Adam, a reference and instruction librarian at Western Libraries at UWO, showed how these educational theories and principles have been successfully applied in the information literacy program aimed at first year students at the University of Western Ontario. With an especially creative twist, Adam and Beckhoff ended their session with a game of Library Jeopardy, using a

mock version of the game to test attendees retention of what they had learned at the session. Eat your heart out Vanna!

Session #218 - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teacher-Librarians

Guided by Stephen Covey's best-selling book, Mark Kaminski and Rose Dodgson shared ideas for improving our effectiveness as educational leaders. As educational leaders we must take initiative by preparing realistic budgets, writing annual reports and planning regularly with our colleagues. The session emphasized the need to get involved in Learning Communities, whether at the departmental or school wide level, or by joining our local T-L Associations and OSLA. It is important for us to share, communicate and advocate with all of these communities. Perhaps most importantly, Rose and Mark pointed out the importance of Teacher Wellness, and stressed that our effectiveness as successful T-Ls depends on a healthy balance of job, family and friends, and outside interests (yes, there is Life outside of school).

Session 219 – Costs and Benefits of Virtual Reference

A packed room of attendees quickly found out that David Lankes wasn't about to bore them with economics or acronyms ...especially "TMTLA"s – Too Many Three Letter Acronyms! Hanging his talk on a number of "myths" about virtual reference, he argued that when analyzing the value of a service, the non-monetary costs and benefits are as critical as the monetary. The myths Lankes skewered included:
* Myth of names: There is nothing virtual about virtual reference. It is real reference in a digital environment. Note: it isn't digital reference