

LibraryCrunch

Bringing You A "Library 2.0" Perspective, by Michael Casey

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Your IT Department, Buy-In, and Team Work

There has been a significant amount of discussion on some of my favorite blogs recently about getting along effectively with your IT department, and I want to add a recommendation from my own little world. As chair of my library system's Emerging Technology committee, I made it a point to choose two IT staffers to serve on this six person committee. The charge of the committee is to examine both new technologies and technologies that may be new to the library world (though they are used in other areas). Many of the products and services we examine are in early beta stages, or they are only being used by a small handful of institutions. Effectively evaluating these products requires several things, including an open mind, an ability to think beyond the library's current boundaries and structure, and an understanding of how things will ultimately work (or play) together.

All of the members of my team are either young in age or new to the field of library science, and all bring with them some expertise or strong interest in an area of technology that I am lacking. The IT team members bring with them two very important attributes -- a wealth of understanding regarding technology in general, and a firm knowledge of the library's current technology structure. Having this knowledge allows them to picture how the product being examined will eventually fit into the library's technology infrastructure.

Having IT staffers on the team does something else, too -- it puts the IT department on notice that things do change, and that the library's technology will always need to change. Having IT on board for this part of the process ensures early buy-in, a much easier job selling the idea when it comes to the budget, and it eliminates the sometimes difficult job of selling the new product or service to the IT department -- since they are a part of the process from the earliest stages they are integral players and have an interest in seeing the initiative succeed.

Posted by Michael on November 22, 2005 10:50 PM | [Permalink](#)

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Great post Michael. Having IT staff who really understand what the library is trying to accomplish really does help. And better than just consulting IT staff, you're including them in the planning process.

Posted by: Laura Savastinuk | [November 22, 2005 11:30 PM](#)

Michael - This is great stuff. Every library system should have an emerging technology committee.

Posted by: Michael Stephens | [November 23, 2005 08:14 AM](#)

Michael-

That's the best way to get it done. Us young IT guys are very open to how we can make IT work for libraries.

I'm hooked now and will be going for my MLS later this year.

Posted by: [Chris Deweese](#) | [November 23, 2005 12:16 PM](#)

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