

LibraryCrunch

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

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3 Degrees of Separation: Libraries, Technology, and Administration

I was having a brief IM conversation with [Michael Stephens](#) yesterday and we discussed the problem many librarians face when discussing Library 2.0 technologies with administrative staff – the issue of “hot” words such as blog and wiki, and how some administrators tune out whenever they hear such talk. Then, early this morning, I read [Jessamyn West's post](#) over on [Librarian.net](#) and saw that she was discussing something very similar, namely the problem of trying to sell a 2.0 idea to a 0.98 librarian. She linked to [Tinfoil+Racoon](#) and a post titled [Rejoicing and Crying over Upgrading to Library 2.0](#), which discussed the “in-house digital divide”. She concludes her piece by saying:

As much as I love learning about Library and Web 2.0 and finding ways to make technology work for patrons and colleagues, I'm not sure that many (most) libraries are ready to take even the baby steps suggested by Michael [Stephens].

This blog-trail fascinates me, and the idea that all of these people are thinking about the same very real issue means that these are all very valid concerns that need addressing. These discussions further my belief that “Library 2.0” is a transitional process through which all libraries will/must pass. Everyone’s beginning is relative, and one person’s 1.0 may look like another’s 0.5 or 1.5 – the point being that the starting point changes but the goal remains the same (see the [Wikipedia entry on Library 2.0](#) for a good idea of the goals).

Selling this goal should not require a technologically savvy library administration, although an understanding of technology can only help. What sells a Library 2.0 idea is its ROI, as Michael Stephens discusses in his [CPL Scholars in Residence presentation](#). The ROI, discussed in terms of circulation or walk-ins or web hits ([eyeballs, as Om calls them](#)) are what sells concepts to administration. The technology is the tool to achieve the goal, and it must fit into the plan in order to be considered. Again, [Stephens has been preaching](#) about this for a long time and his warnings are well heeded.

But how do we offer these tools to an administration that does not even want to hear such words as “blog” and “wiki” and “IM”? I do not believe I am exaggerating here – I have heard first-person accounts from fellow librarians about administrators saying such things as “I don’t ever want to hear the word blog”. This despite numerous trusted sources such as Harvard Business Review (2/2005 issue) and [Business Week](#) proclaiming the necessity, the requirement, for any company to have and use an internal (behind-the-firewall) blog and, in many circumstances, an external customer-focused blog.

I think the answer here is small steps. Look to those progressive libraries that are using such tools and use their successes as examples. If you’re lucky enough to be in one of those progressive libraries, please write about your success in journals and blogs, sharing statistics so that others can use your successful ROI to sell such ideas to our administration.

I’m anxious to hear more ideas for overcoming these hurdles.

Posted by Michael on November 29, 2005 03:45 PM | [Permalink](#)

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http://www.librarycrunch.com/2005/11/3_degrees_of_separation_librar.html Rochelle's post gave me so much to think about but poster work must come first. In the meantime, Mr. Casey of LibraryCrunch totally gets it! Please read and comment!... [\[Read More\]](#)

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» [Bridging a Different Kind of Divide](#) from The Shifted Librarian

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