

LibraryCrunch

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

[« New Technology Challenges & Success: CIL2006 | Main | Paul Miller on Web 2.0 / Library 2.0 - CIL2006 »](#)

Take-Aways: Schmidt and Stephens CIL2006

On Tuesday I had the pleasure of sitting in on two pre-conference sessions. The first, Social Tools for Your Library by [Aaron Schmidt](#) of Thomas Ford Memorial Library, discussed the role that new social networking tools can play in reaching out to new and existing users in innovative ways.

Perhaps the greatest take-away from this session was a story Aaron recounted about an IM he had received via his library's IM reference account. A young girl asked about a book, inquiring as to its length and how long it would take to read. Aaron provided the information and went on to have a brief discussion about another book -- classical reader's advisory. The young girl's IM was flowery and full of the enthusiasm of youth -- lots of questions and very open in it's tone. The take-away, however, was when Aaron told us that several days later this young girl came into the library and, as it turned out, she was very shy and not at all talkative.

It's stories like this that remind me how important it is for us to provide our customers with as many possible channels to contact us as we can. Each channel has its strengths and weaknesses -- in-person, over the telephone, via email or IM... But our customers are all different and, as this case study illustrates, every customer has their own comfort-zone, and we need to do our best to provide them with that zone.

The other session I attended on Tuesday was [Michael Stephens'](#) Technology Planning for Libraries. This is a subject that interests me greatly, and my own presentation yesterday discussed some of the same issues. Michael's presentation touched upon some of the same things as Aaron's, namely the importance of meeting our users "on their turf". The significance of this cannot be stressed enough. Getting to our users instead of making them come to us will be one of the keys to our future success.

But if there was one take-away about technology planning from Michael's presentation, it was the role that staff buy-in plays in any plan's overall success. The need to listen to your staff, to involve them in training, the role that stories play, and, my personal favorite, the importance of transparency. Without all of these, any technology plan will face great difficulties. But without transparency, that plan -- along with so many other library efforts -- will fail. Staff, and often customers, must be brought into the process so that they know why we're doing things. They must be involved in the process -- planning, implementation, and review. Hide nothing.

Aaron and Michael had many other valuable things to say, and I'm very glad I was able to come in a day earlier this year in order to hear them both speak.

[cil2006Library 2.0](#)

Posted by Michael on March 23, 2006 10:21 AM | [Permalink](#)

➔ TrackBack

TrackBack URL for this entry:
<http://www.librarycrunch.com/mt/mt-tb.cgi/135>

➔ Post a comment

(If you haven't left a comment here before, you may need to be approved by the site owner before your comment will appear. Until then, it won't appear on the entry. Thanks for waiting.)

Name:

☐

Post