

Increased Technology Pilot Project Recommendations

There were many 'best' aspects of this project and very few 'worst'.

- We have become very dependant on the two-way radios in all aspects of library work. They have become vital in our communication. They are particularly necessary for security purposes. They have become a tool in constant use.
- We also have become very dependant on the PDA's. The PDA's have given us instant access to building calendar, documents, internet, contact lists, and many other items we need and use on a regular basis.
- The roving reference project has become a new way of life. It really helps in a time when we are stretched for staff with a higher volume of business than we have ever seen. Staff can have off desk time and yet still be available instantly.

I would say the 'worst' aspect of this project is for all staff to get used to a new way of doing things. That is not necessarily a bad thing, just something that took more work.

- Breaking old habits and forming new ones has been the most challenging part of this project. Staff at all levels have had to learn new ways to do things and that is always a challenge.
- We have found that we could not reach high enough. There are many technologies that we discovered would be great in a library system. Many should be explored (e.g. web2.0, blogging, podcasts, videocasts and text messaging). I think there will always be more we could do. Maybe it is worth making a new position or section for this type of exploration of new technologies and the feasibility for their use in libraries.

Recommended for All Branches

- Two-way radios should be purchased for all libraries. Each person capable of being Supervisor In Charge of the Building and each service desk should have one. In larger branches, probably the secretary, building security, and custodians should all have one as well. Radios are a second best choice. Vocera or a like technology would be much better. With two-way radios, everyone in the building knows what is being said. With Vocera, you can direct a comment to one person. You can also transfer phone calls to Vocera. If it is not possible to purchase Vocera or like technology, radios are a must for every branch.
- All branches should be able to go mobile with PDA's for supervisors. We have found it to be an invaluable help to be able to have information accessible where we are, at any given moment.
- All branches should make use of the roving reference concept. This just makes sense in a time where we are downsizing staff. It also gives the opportunity to help the customer where they are. For example, if a customer wants a book on training puppies and the reference staff on desk is busy, a circ. staff will call for reference help for, "a customer who needs something on training puppies." An available reference staff member will then respond over radio to say, "send the customer toward the 600's and I'll meet them there." They can meet the customer and look

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up details on their PDA about what is available and even place holds on items in the stacks without ever going to the desk.

- Not considered with this project but still a necessity is to have a staff accessible scanner at every library. With scanners installed on public access computers, it is hard for branch staff to gain access for branch needs. We are becoming more dependant on scanners to transmit information and have not provided easy access for a fairly inexpensive technology.
- All branches should offer local area fax services to customers. We have not been able to institute this yet. It would be a service we could offer at no cost to the library.
- Flat screen monitors for advertising programs and services are also a great thing for branches of all sizes. Branch staff would create the Powerpoint file and keep it up to date.

Recommended for Small Branches

- Laptop computers would be a huge help with smaller branches that have a limited amount of public access computers. They provide a huge service to customers who may have to wait long periods of time for a computer reservation.
- Laptops are a big help when offering classes. Branches that do not have computer labs but offer computer classes have to rely on public access computers for those classes. With a laptop lab, those classes can be moved out of the public area and off of public access computers.

Recommended for Larger Branches

- Items listed under small branches apply here too.
- Video gaming technology (e.g. DDR) is a wonderful way to get teens and people of all ages interested in what happens at the library.
- Any building with a meeting room should have an AV projection system and sound system.
- Larger branches should be taking classes on the road for outreach. This is where the laptop lab is a necessity. YS librarians can take a 'library databases' class to the schools for teachers as well as for the children. Laptop and portable projector should be used in talks to community groups about library services and programs.

Recommended for Regionals & Main

- All the above goes as well for the regional and main libraries. Regionals have enough public access computers to meet the needs of the public. Laptops would be more useful for outreach rather than for in house use in these locations.
- In my opinion, Main Library and the Regionals should be exploring technologies such as web 2.0, blogging, podcasts of programs and classes and using text messaging to reach new segments of the population.

The future?

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We have seen a great increase in statistics over the last 6 months. This is in part due to the Increased Technology Pilot Project. Our patron count has increased by 4,000-6,000 per month. The library is a much busier place than it used to be. Because of this, staff have become busier and much more efficient. Technology has been a great help in this. While I understand that budget cuts may severely limit what can be done in the near future, I also realize (largely due to being involved in this pilot project) that technology can help do much more with less.

- Many of these technologies should be instituted as soon as possible without further pilot projects. Staff need to be more mobile and more efficient and these technologies can help make that happen.
- The next pilot project should involve a larger library who can really expand on what we have done. A lot more could be done as far as outreach using these technologies. Also much more could be done with gaming in the library.
- In conjunction with the above listed, another pilot project should be undertaken to use some of the other technologies available. Web 2.0, blogging, texting are all ways to reach a portion of the population never reached by traditional library services. Podcasts and videocasts could be the ultimate way to offer library programming with less staff.