

Response to Member's Council on the "Innovative Ideas" Sessions

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Ideas that challenge many of the basic concepts of delivering library services where set forth by Poul Erlandsen, Brenda Bailey-Hainer, Kate Nevins (for Lamar Veatch), Jamie LaRue and Dr. Klaus Ceynowa. The first four spoke to immediate needs for change and "Rethinking" while Dr. Ceynowa showed where the future could be taking us in three to five years.

A common thread in all these presentations is making library services user centric instead of library policies and library workflow centric. The first four ideas recognize that users' expectations for information access and delivery have changed radically and current library policies, workflows and service delivery interfaces often do not fit with these expectations.

The Rethinking Resource Sharing initiative focuses heavily on user controlled options replacing library policy control. Tying in with this the Danish home delivery service discussed by Poul Erlandsen did some myth debunking with librarians' fears that if we open our collections too widely we will lose the materials. Facts in Denmark show that home delivery has no higher loss rate than traditional ILL or circulation.

In a different response to user expectations PINES has created "a statewide 'borderless library' that eliminates geographic and socio-economic barriers . . ." with 16 million items circulated in FY2007. In this context circulation has taken on a much broader meaning which encompasses much of traditional ILL and harmonizes library policies across the state.

Jamie LaRue pointed to innovative ways that libraries must be able to present their collections and services to users ranging from mobile devices to paradigms for presenting information through mindmaps and use of album cover playlists.

In another somewhat radical departure from US historic library practice in delivering services the Rethinking Resource Sharing Manifesto states that libraries should "Offer service for a fee rather than refusing". In support of this concept Poul showed that while free services are most popular users will pay for the service.

All of these ideas challenge us as librarians to look at our mission and strategy in how we deliver information and services. OCLC's role must be to enable libraries to push the boundaries of information discovery and delivery by giving them the necessary tools to operate in today's environment.

OCLC has been responding to some of the concepts presented through several initiatives:

1. Putting discovery to delivery experience where the user is, e.g. Facebook, Google, Yahoo, learning management systems, blog sites, etc.
2. Giving the user options: drive to a library, ask for loan from another library, buy the item, view online whenever possible.
3. Becoming part of today's interactive information environment that brings value to the user beyond "traditional library services". This is being executed by building social functions into WorldCat.org which allow users to contribute to the aggregated knowledge of WorldCat and easily share and collaborate with others.
4. Pushing the envelope of library policies with the Montana home delivery pilot. During the pilot users have responded enthusiastically to this service with 96% stating they are satisfied (90% very satisfied) with the service and 93% willing to pay for service, up to \$5.00/item as well as showing support for subscription model.
5. Changing the way information is presented by introducing WorldCat Identities into the WorldCat.org search and discovery experience.
6. Trying new models: WorldCat Direct Pilot that Chip Nilges has reported on

In the coming year plans are laid to accelerate the exposure of library collections and services out to the Web and other information communities. First this will continue to be done by opening our systems up through services like the WorldCat API which has launched into pilot mode and a new Facebook citation widget to complement the current Facebook WorldCat widget. There will also be an emphasis on increased syndication of WorldCat into other search services that will give users seamless links back into library collections and services.

At the same time we will work with our own Programs and Research division, partners in the information marketplace and the community to explore new paradigms and models for information delivery. This will involve both how information is presented for user navigation and devices users want to consume information on.

As we look to the future we very much appreciate the fact that Dr. Ceynowa was able to share his time and knowledge on the library as video game in 3D. Thinking about innovative ideas such as this is very helpful to OCLC as an organization and has stimulated various new ideas. As stated in Dr. Ceynowa's presentation, we're looking at a timeframe of 3-5 years before concepts such as virtual worlds and massively multi-player educational gaming are fully adopted. That said this seems like the appropriate time to begin our initial investigations into opportunities for the library to participate in a 3D virtual world. OCLC will take a closer look at the various virtual worlds in existence today, such as Entropia, Forterra, Twinity and Second Life, to better understand how libraries can participate in such environments. We will also explore opportunities to potentially transform the library's digital services themselves into 3D web-based applications, such 3D books and training courses.