ILA/ACRL Newsletter   Other Partnerships

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ILA/ACRL Newsletter, vol. 23, no. 2, April 2013

Association of College and Research Libraries. Iowa Chapter

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Welcome to the April ILA/ACRL Newsletter. Enjoy the inspiration and the cautionary tales. Hope to see you at the Spring Conference. The Committee is organizing an amazing schedule.

Spring Conference – May 10, 2013 at Simpson College

Iowa Library Association / ACRL will hold their annual spring conference on Friday, May 10 at the Kent Campus Center on the Simpson College campus in Indianola, IA. This year's theme is Big Questions, Big Opportunities: Bringing Start-Up Culture to Libraries.

Morning sessions

We are excited to present our attendees with a keynote panel made up of Dorothea Salo (UW-Madison, and independent consultant specializing in research-data management, digital preservation and scholarly communication) and three Iowa entrepreneurs from OUTSIDE the library world. How have libraries helped them? What skills do they seek in new employees in the fast-changing start-up culture in which they navigate? Is there a skills gap and can academic librarians fill that gap? It's a rare look at the library world from the outside. Each panelist will host a roundtable session after the morning break.

Afternoon sessions

Something new we are trying this year is the area meet-ups held immediately after lunch and before the concurrent sessions. This is your chance to engage in further discussion on a hot topic of your choice. We'll have a sign-up sheet for you to suggest areas in which you are interested and you are free to attend any session you want. What is the burning topic on your campus right now? Stay tuned for more information.

After the meet-up session, you'll have the chance to hear from our colleagues about how they are meeting these big questions and big opportunities in their libraries. We'll have two concurrent sessions available for you to attend at 2 and 3 p.m.

Registration now open!

Registration is now open and conference fees are the same price as last year! Go to http://www.iowaacrl.org/content/conference/2013 to register and get more information about this year's conference. You can register right up to the day of the conference, but to guarantee lunch, you should register before May 6.

Thursday evening dine-arounds

If you'll be in the Des Moines area the night before the conference, we invite to join us for the Des Moines dine-arounds which will be held in various restaurants in downtown Des Moines at 6:30 p.m. This is your chance to do a little professional networking before the conference

begins. Most restaurants will accommodate up to a party of 8. Please sign up for the dine-around of your choice by April 30. For a description of the restaurants and a link to the Google Doc sign-up page (as well as lots of other conference info): http://libguides.simpson.edu/ilaacrl2013

Why You Should Attend

Because you didn't get to attend ACRL in Indianapolis.

Because you DID get to attend ACRL in Indianapolis and you can't WAIT to share your information and enthusiasm with the rest of your Iowa colleagues!

Because this is your one chance each year to see and visit with your colleagues at other sister colleges and universities.

Because you need some new and innovative ideas. See what's going on in the wider world and let those ideas incubate over the summer.

Start making plans to attend and we'll see you there!

PR/Marketing Award Report from Loras College

Times Square, airport departure boards, interactive kiosks, highway billboards—advertising everywhere has gone digital and this year, the Loras College Library attempted (albeit not altogether successfully) to catch this bright and shiny technological wave.


In October of 2011, the Loras College Library was awarded the Iowa ACRL Marketing Grant for the purchase of three monitors in order to enhance our marketing efforts. The idea for our grant proposal stemmed from another library's use of digital photo frames to display advertising. Intending to maximize the impact of this advertising method, we decided to use 22"

wall-mounted monitors with 8 GB mini USB memory flash drives containing flyers of library events, personnel, and general information.

The purpose of this marketing strategy was to increase student and faculty awareness of new and existing library programs, services and resources through the use of creative and dynamic media. We live in a digital age and as much as possible, the Library staff attempts to reduce our environmental footprint by going paperless and utilizing tools that can be reused and repurposed. It was hoped that using a digital media device to distribute what would traditionally be printed documents would increase awareness of Library programs thereby boosting attendance. Additionally this more dynamic advertising for services and resources would increase use and improve perceptions of the Library as a supportive and essential resource for students' and faculty's academic endeavors.

Despite the excellent potential the monitors possess for allowing us to reach a broader audience in new and dynamic ways, we ran into a significant number of technical and organizational challenges in getting the monitors operational. We still believe that the fundamental idea behind using this method for promoting the Library's resources and services is sound, and we hope that reading about the hurdles we faced will help others interested in this type of advertising avoid a similar experience.
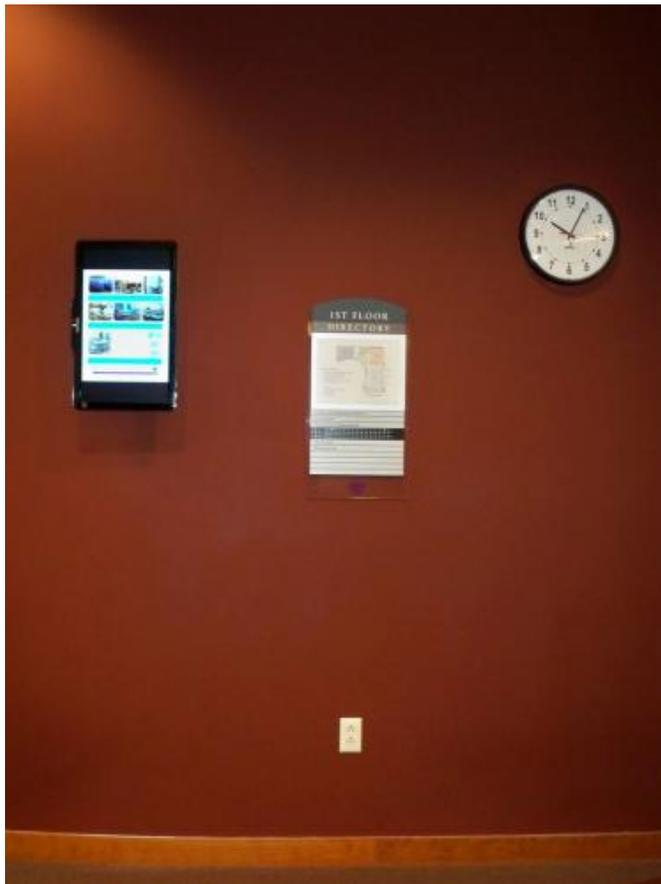
First, there was the challenge of coordinating the installation of the monitors. While we had a general idea of where we wanted to hang the monitors, we hadn't determined exact measurements in coordination with available wall space and electrical outlets. Additionally, while we ordered all three monitors from a website with generally accurate product descriptions and an excellent return policy (Amazon.com), we still had difficulty finding a mounting bracket to work with the largest of the monitors. After ordering three different brackets under the direction of our maintenance staff, we were informed by the same staff that the monitor did not even have the requisite holes on the back for mounting. This was an understandably frustrating experience. In addition, there were a variety of technical issues we had never considered that arose throughout the process, such as which direction the monitors would need to be hung in order to have the USB port at the top of the monitor (to prevent patrons from pulling out the mini USB drive).

After getting two of the monitors hung on the wall using mounting brackets, we then ran into a series of issues related to displaying our content. First there was the issue of converting Word documents to PDFs (in order to avoid distortion), and then converting the PDFs to JPEGs (a format the monitors would recognize). We were able to find a free program online for the second conversion task, and then needed to ensure proper rotation of the images in order to display in portrait orientation, since we hung the monitors vertically to mimic the orientation of the original Word document posters.

Our final challenge has been getting the content to display properly. While the monitors we purchased can indeed display images in a slideshow fashion, there is no setting to enable looping of the content, and so, since we didn't want to have to manually restart the slideshows every hour, we were forced to duplicate the 83 original 8 ½" by 11" JPEG images over and over. Determining the appropriate number of duplicate images was done by rough calculation and lots of trial and error, and there were additional challenges related to file naming conventions. Since File01, File02, and File03, when copied, are renamed File01-1, File02-1, and File03-1, they are sorted in such a way that the same image would be repeated over and over until the next original image is shown in duplicate (so, File01, File01-1, File02, File02-1, etc.). We were able to find another piece of naming software that alleviated this issue, but it was still a challenge. Finally, since these monitors are not connected to a computer hard drive and assumedly have relatively small processors of their own, they are easily overwhelmed by the amount of data on the mini USB drives necessary to keep the monitors running for 16+ hours, and initial daily startup can take as much as 10 minutes.

In spite of all of this, we still feel that this marketing method is worth pursuing. The most important recommendation we could make to other libraries who would like to take on a similar project, is to purchase digital picture frames instead of computer or TV monitors. While we considered this avenue at the outset, we instead opted for computer monitors, assuming we would get more 'bang for our buck.' However, if presented with the opportunity to do this all over again, we would much prefer to spend more money and get one or two large digital photo frames, rather than deal with the amount of frustration and roadblocks we encountered over the last year.
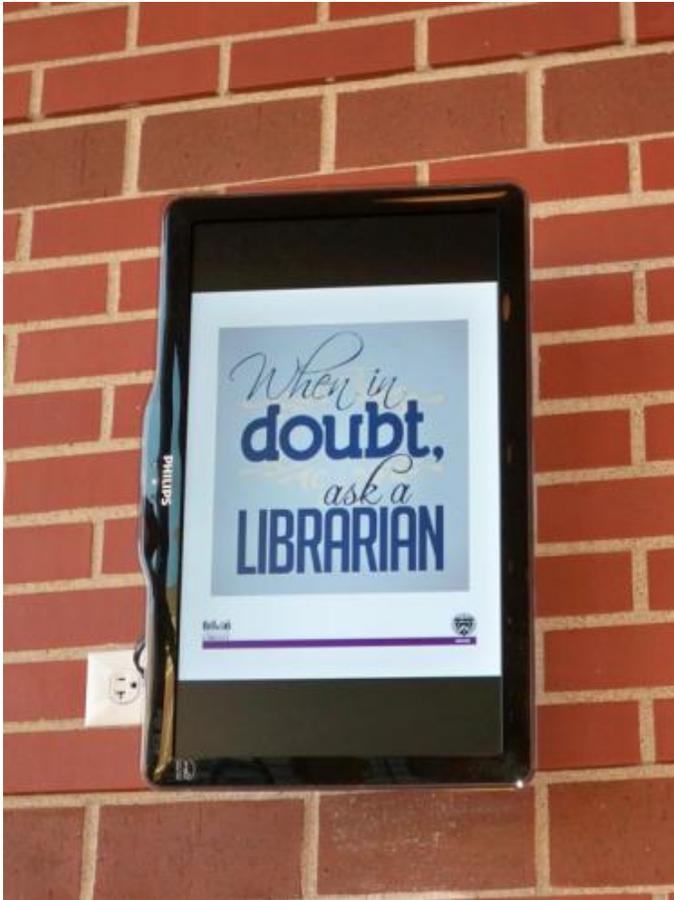
Despite these many challenges, we are very grateful to the Iowa ACRL for the generous gift of this marketing grant. These monitors allow us to increase student and faculty awareness of new and existing Library programs, services, and resources through a more dynamic and asynchronous medium. It is our hope that through increasing awareness, the monitors will assist us in our goals to boost attendance at events and connect users with needed resources and services.

Going forward we hope to branch out from recycled library posters to showcase student research, art and library-supported campus initiatives. Digital monitors would also provide a reusable, ongoing tool for more targeted public relations programs, such as Library YouTube contests and multimedia stations (with the use of Bluetooth headsets). Students would also be encouraged to participate in creating content that would be displayed on these monitors. This would serve a dual purpose of increasing student interaction as well as providing an opportunity to showcase the ways that the Library assisted in the creation of these projects through support for student research, librarian assistance, and study space.

Catching up with technology takes time, money, and as we have learned, careful consideration. While we do consider our project a success, we aren't Times Square. Nevertheless, our modest approximations still burn bright on the Library's walls, sharing news of our noble and often unsung efforts to stay connected with the campus. We

6

invite other libraries to borrow, adapt, and hopefully improve upon our initial attempt in a collective effort to gain the attention that all libraries deserve.

Transformations

All of us, and all of our libraries are going through transformations all the time. Some are more dramatic than others. This section of the newsletter seeks to highlight some of those changes. If you have transformations you'd like to share for future issues, please contact Mary Iber.

Adopting a Museum at UNI Library

Since July 1, 2012, the UNI Museums, previously part of the Division of Continuing Education & Special Programs, have been administered by Rod Library. Kate Martin has responsibility for administrative oversight of the Museums, which include the restored Marshall Center School located on campus. Her title recently was changed to Head, Collections and Museums to reflect this responsibility. At present, the Museums buildings are closed to the public although the collections are available to University faculty, staff and students. There have been several recent staff changes, including the retirement of Museums Director Sue Grosboll in December 2012. Searches for an Exhibits Preparator and a Curator will be conducted this spring. At this time, decisions are being made about the future structure of the Museums. The collections are being reviewed and arrangements made for the distribution of exhibits and storage space across campus. It is expected that some space in Rod Library will be devoted to Museums operations and exhibits over the next few years.

Work is underway on the processing and cataloging of a collection of Rural School Records collected from the AEAs by the previous Museums Director; these document the history of Iowa's one-room schools. This project is supported by an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. The collection currently is housed in the Library's Special Collections and University Archives.   Although it is not formally open, project staff are providing reference services.