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Library Worker By Day, Blogger By Night

Using Blogs to Increase Visibility in Your Library

By Gwyneth Mibeck

Looking for a fun place to take your break? Don't move! The blogosphere is your ticket to knowledge as current as today's entry. Either an informed library worker sharing ideas with colleagues, or a speaker on behalf of a whole library system, bloggers and blogs are the latest technology to increase awareness among library users.

Before I attended the "Scholars in Residence" program at Chicago's Herald Washington Library Center last November, I thought blogs or "web logs," were written predominantly by teenagers expressing themselves through open-source technology. I was wrong. The phenomenal presentations given by Jenny Levine and Michael Stevens showcased amazing bloggers who have built digital doors to libraries.

Jenny Levine, author of "[The Shifted Librarian](#)" blog, and library blog expert, gives detailed notes from recent conferences. Extremely useful for individuals who are unable to attend but hope to be part of the conversation, her blog lets readers post on timely topics. Gaming in libraries, assessing the current state of library school education, and technological information are her most recent entries. You may also read her archive, dating as far back as 2002! Levine researches the latest blogs, and has created a reading list called a "blogroll". One example, "[Superpatron](#)," caters to user perceptions of libraries. A recent entry explains how some libraries provide interlibrary loan but will not let patrons request the same book if the home library owns a copy. These insights help library workers to understand users' changing needs.

Michael Stevens, author of the "[Tame the Web](#)" Blog, writes: "Libraries are using blogs to disseminate news, program information and more. In 2005, we saw the next wave of libraries using weblogs to interact with their users and communities. By enabling comments, allowing users to create accounts, and entering into discussions with them, we are taking communication and conversation to the next level."

What Levine and Stevens convey is functionality. News, dissemination of tacit and explicit knowledge through conference notes and researched web links, and room for reader response create an interactive atmosphere. If you are interested in one topic, the blogs are searchable.

One example of a specific library system's blog is the [Marin County Free Library](#). Events like the "Magic of Reading Magic Show" are highlighted as well as where to find tax paperwork. [LaGrange Park Public Library](#) gives blurbs about recently catalogued titles. Other library blogs show pictures of book covers, construction updates, or patron FAQ's. Since younger individuals are learning about blogs more quickly, libraries can market to an audience who knows all about blogging.

With innovators like Levine and Stevens, the library community has become excited about using this technology to promote visibility and importance, which you can become a part. All you need is a computer, creativity, and happiness knowing that your blog will reach out to hundreds of users and the world!

Resources

If you would like to create your own blog, InfoToday provides a how-to with links to resources: www.infotoday.com/MLS/nov03/fichter.shtml.

Michael Stevens' *Ten Things a New Blogging Librarian Should Do* can be found at:

www.tametheweb.com/ttwblog/archives/000255.html.

Index of current library blogs: www.libdex.com/weblogs.html.

“Scholars in Residence” Program, Chicago Public Library Herald Washington Library Center, November 2005:
www.chipublic.org/003cpl/scholars/scholars05.html.

Librarianship Is an Excellent Career!

Librarianship was on the list of “Excellent Careers for 2006” in an article by Marty Nemko, in the U.S. News & World Report, posted on January 5, 2006. Nemko says it’s an underrated career and predicts job growth for librarians in nontraditional settings. Other careers on the list are audiologists, pharmacists, personal coaches and landscape architects. He focuses on the unique and perhaps unknown features of the professions, presenting a balanced viewpoint of opportunities and disadvantages.

www.usnews.com/usnews/biztech/articles/060105/5careers_excellent.htm

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