Unconference Session: Future of NLS Network: Services & Libraries

Hosted by: Will Reed

Notes: Tracy Grimm

2015 Tri-Regional Conference

June 11, 2015

Attending:

Patrice Johnson - Illinois

Kate Stiles - Illinois

Maggie Ansty - Indiana

Christopher Boynton - Maine

Sue Chinault - Michigan

MaryBeth Wise - NLS

Richard Smith - NLS

Tracy Grimm - Ohio

Mark Lee - Pennsylvania

Donna Calvert - West Virginia

Linda Vincent - Wisconsin

Will Reed reported on the NLS Futures meeting that was held in Washington D.C. in April 2015.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify how NLS might need to evolve to provide service to patrons in the next 5 - 10 years.

* Services – more customized products like cartridges; new technologies like Wi-Fi; staffing, funding, UPS challenges
* Patrons – older, tech savvy, mobile, need staff with people skills, smaller sophisticated machines; increase programming from libraries
* Administrative – cuts to funding and services; staffing pulled and space shrinking
* Circulation systems – new paradigms for delivery system like DOD
* For NLS – more titles, more foreign language, national scope to reference services, direct download to machines, Support local production, partnerships with other organizations, promotion and outreach
* DOD – multiple titles on one personalized cartridge; locally produced and NLS retro titles available to readers nationally
* Local duplication – Staff skills, capability to provide, more access, delivery, peach cartridges
* Gutenberg demonstration- accessibility, staff acceptance
* New Machine – TTS, Braille reader, WIFI, podcast aggregator
* New utility software for BARD to manage and download, unzip, transfer items
* Braille e-readers
* Need to change NLS legislation

GROUP DISCUSSION

What is the vision of your library in the future? What are your concerns?

1. How many patrons will still need one book at a time? What percentage of patrons will still need these services? How can we predict if patrons will be more tech savvy, especially for those who have recently lost their sight?
   1. Magazine program could give good insight of patrons who will need help
   2. Survey to magazine on cartridge patrons for possible model of future services
   3. Survey those who have dropped magazine on cartridge service
2. Do we need more instructional materials?
   1. Some patrons will not get it even with more explanation
   2. Add a bookshelf button on player
3. Do we risk losing patrons by adding more technology to player?
   1. NLS can’t be responsible for “change of habit”
   2. Patrons dropped magazines due to change
4. Idea to completely customize patrons needs, from one book or more, standard patron set-up in automated circulation system.
5. Will staff need to be retrained in circulation process?
   1. Changing scope of job descriptions will have to add more technology skills
   2. Windows, Apple, Android, Twitter & Social Media, dramatically changing dynamic of staffing needs, need to be proactive
6. Is it possible to define Reader Advisor?
   1. Guidelines from NLS might need to be updated to help libraries justify hiring more quality & educated staff
   2. Many Reader Advisors do several different jobs
7. How do you envision the new player?
   1. Longer battery life
   2. Bookshelf button
   3. Wi-Fi
   4. One player, not two different models
   5. More accessible functions
   6. Program joystick
   7. IPad with BARD on it
   8. Hard to make a machine that is one size fits all
   9. Designing one machine that serves many different patron types is difficult
8. Additional suggestions for NLS
   1. Add new Regional Librarian training to orientation or conferences
   2. Provide a calendar with dates & guidelines for reports
   3. Create a mentor program for new Regional Librarians
   4. Website redesign