

## **Report to LIBRAS Continuing Education Committee**

IACRL 2012 Conference, March 16, 2012, DoubleTree Hotel, Oak Brook Illinois

### **Submitted by:**

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Earlier this spring, I attend the IACRL 2012 Conference in Oak Brook. This year's theme was "adopt, adapt, accelerate" with a focus on innovative approaches to library work. The one day conference had a wide variety of programs for attendees to select from, including the mobile technology "revolution", assessment strategies, outreach, and students (both undergrads and library school interns). My focus was to attend programs that dealt with outreach efforts in marketing our library and engaging users (especially students) to use our resources which could be replicated at our institution with limited funding and staff resources.

One program I attended was entitled, "Putting the SHHHH! In Student Activities". Presenters were from both the Library and Student Affairs departments at the University of Illinois-Springfield campus. In this program, Sarah Sagman (Instruction Librarian) and Beth Hoag (Assistant Director of Student Life) discussed how they have collaborated in student outreach. The benefits for the Library, they explained, include breaking library stereotypes by providing opportunities to for non- library activities in the Library that were social and fun, as well as engaging students outside of the Library in their environment. For Student Affairs, connecting the co-curricular and academic environments provides a unique marketing opportunity. Librarians provide workshops for student leaders to become more knowledgeable of social media and other technology related topics.

They next discussed two projects that they collaborated on that were low cost and had a great payoff; National Gaming Day@ Your Library and the Haunted Library and discussed how both programs were carried out, providing budget and marketing strategies for both. Their suggestions for collaboration and effective marketing include:

1. Creating an effective pitch
2. Choosing an event that is already established on campus to volunteer for or cosponsor
3. Make it clear that the Library wishes to collaborate
4. Find the right person to approach
5. Make the project FUN.

The featured speaker at IACRL was Stephen Bell, Associate University Librarian for Research and Instructional Services at Temple University. He is also incoming ACRL Vice-President/President-Elect. The title of his talk was "Adopt a Design Approach to Accelerate Library Innovation", in line with the IACRL theme. His talk was in response to a presentation by marketing expert, Seth Godin in which Godin remarked that he didn't care about the future because of the constant change happening in the present. Bell makes a point that if libraries are not responsive to constant change that is going on, the result will ensure a "bleak future". According to Bell, "Higher Education needs to get its act together to keep up and be the bridge between change and innovation". He illustrated his point by showing clips from "The Deep Dive", a 1999 [Nightline program](#) (available on YouTube) featuring IDEO, a design firm in CA who was given a task: innovate the design of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century shopping cart in five days. The idea was total immersion in a problem needing improvement. The process:

1. Identify the problem
2. Conduct preliminary research on the product, how it is made and how it is used
3. Brainstorm solutions with a broad range of individuals and backgrounds
4. Create a prototype
5. Empathic design
6. Creation of prototype 2

For libraries, the Design Inquiry process would look at the following questions at problems or issues identified for change:

1. What is not working—what are the problems identified?
2. Who are the stakeholders involved?
3. Why are these needs/issues important?
4. What is the new solution?
5. What resources are needed to make the design better?
6. What changes are necessary?
7. What opportunities exist?

Bell suggests that, "if you can't reach everyone, aim for the passionate users; every decision we make affects how people experience the Library. Let's make sure we are creating improvements". We can do this by:

1. Listening to and observation of patron complaints, interactions and activities.
2. Breaking a few rules—we need to empower our library staff to come up with solutions
3. Keeping up with other disciplines that can adapted within work environment such as <http://www.innovationtools.com> and <http://www.ideaconnection.com>
4. Looking at problems with a "zoom-out" lens so that we are not so focused only on today's problem that we can't anticipate future issues
5. Finding your idea champion to support your desire for change
6. Looking for ideas of other designers—great designers steal from other designers

This was a great conference, and I am glad that I was able to attend. I only wish it had been longer—there were other programs I would like to have attended. I appreciate the LIBRAS Continuing Education Committee for approving funding for this conference. With our travel budget severely reduced, this support allowed me to attend a local conference I might not have been able to. Again, thank you!

Respectfully submitted on May 31, 2012.