

Maximizing Your Electronic Resources- WiLS 2015 Regional Meetings

SLIDE 1: Meeting welcome slide

SLIDE 2: Title Slide

For this portion of the meeting, we'll be discussing three areas of focus that are important to getting the most out of your electronic resources: marketing your resources; educating users and staff and evaluating your resources. We'll talk about each of these areas in turn, providing an example illustrating each area and then share tips we've learned through our work with libraries and vendors. You'll have a chance to share your own examples and tips throughout and we'll have time after the presentation to develop one idea as a group. Our hope is that you can return to your library and put an idea into action right away that addresses one of the 4 areas we discuss today.

SLIDE 3: Marketing Header

Our first topic is marketing your resources. Obviously if your users don't know that your resources exist, they can't use them!

SLIDE 4: Marketing Example: UW-Oshkosh Polk Library

The Polk Library at UW-Oshkosh has developed a system for subject guides and course pages well-designed to put the most relevant resources in front of users.

Every subject has a guide with library resources broken down into categories such as "Research Databases", "Reference & Background" and "K-12 Education Materials". Library staff assign resources to each category and prioritizes which resources will be listed at the top of each section. Each page also includes a "Featured Database" section which will pull and display a database from deeper down the list, so that lesser used resources still get some spotlight time.

Finally, each page displays a randomly chosen film from their Films on Demand subscription pulled from a list of films in that discipline. The same underlying architecture can generate specific pages for each class in the subject, even if the faculty member hasn't already built one.

The strength of this system is its versatility and that it's designed specifically to promote the best resources while still making sure that everything else is also featured. Something similar could be done with the LibGuides product or your library's CMS.

SLIDE 5: Marketing example (continued)

Not only do they have great site for the library, they also embed library resources into the home page of some departments, getting the resources out in front of people who are already interested in the topic.

SLIDE 6: Marketing Tip 1-1: Put your resources in front of your users

Put your resources in front of your users. Group them together in a way that aids in their discoverability. Too often we find that resources are buried or hard to find.

SLIDE 7: Marketing Tip 1-2: Rotate!

Just like at the grocery store, you have to rotate your product. Make sure that sparsely used resources get some spotlight time too, even if it's not the "best in class."

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SLIDE 8: Marketing Tip 1-3 : Promote! Promote! Promote!

Promotion in library newsletters, through bookmarks, on websites and word-of-mouth increase database usage significantly and almost immediately. When promotion stops, database usage drops off.

Remember: you do not have to promote everything all the time...start small and ask us for help. Don't forget to cross-promote. Think of ways that you can promote the resources offered by community partners and get them to do the same for yours.

SLIDE 9: Marketing Tip 1-4: Work with a subject specialist

*Even if you don't have specific subject or departmental liaisons, odds are that you probably have a local expert on staff that really knows a lot about some of the subjects for which you have resources. They can be a great assets for making sure that not only do you **have** the right resources, but that you're **promoting** the right ones.*

SLIDE 10: Marketing Tip 1-5: Reach out to your vendor rep

Most library resource vendors are eager to help you to boost usage and promote their product. Reach out to your vendor rep to see what they can offer in terms of marketing support.

SLIDE 11: Marketing – What are you doing?

What are you doing, other examples of marketing and specific areas of need?

{Write down group suggestions on flip charts}

SLIDE 12: Educating Staff and Users

Our next area is education. To get the most out of your resources, you should make sure your staff know their way around the resources. In addition to making patrons aware of your resources, one of the most important steps to getting your resources used, is teaching patrons how to use them.

SLIDE 13: Staff Education Example: Know More blog - Jean Anderson SCLS

The Know More blog is the brainchild of Jean Anderson and Kerri Hilbelink of the SCLS. Its' focus is educating library staff members in various areas of Digital Literacy. Jean and Kerri both work with databases in different ways: Jean with training and Kerri with authentication and statistics. They collaborated on a training series in 2011 called the 12 Days of OverDrive and recognized a need for something similar with databases. This summer they facilitated a 12 week program for librarians to enhance and improve their SLP (Super Librarian Powers). They highlighted a variety of databases that included a brief summary of the database, what makes the database unique for users and searching tips & tricks. Both Jean and Kerri are firm believers in that when library staff know more about the resources in their libraries, more patrons will utilize them.

SLIDE 14: Education Tip 2-1: Know More Not Everything

Adults are need-based learners and your goal in training your staff is to teach a few key points of a database that the staff can then pass onto to patrons to get them into and using the database. Once a patron is in a database, if they like it, they will explore further on their own. You can make more in - depth webinars and training information available on your library website for patrons to self-educate. Focus on keeping your training simple.

SLIDE 15: Education Tip 2-2: Keep it Simple

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For both staff and patrons

Choose 2 or 3 points per database to share with and teach.

Limit your training to 1 or 2 databases per training.

Allow for hands-on time. A great way to get both staff and patrons into the databases is to ask follow-up search questions similar to an e-scavenger hunt. Make sure to follow-up with staff after training and schedule promotion of databases to patrons to coincide with staff training to keep it fresh in their minds.

Ex. Know More does an excellent job of providing a summary of databases and key points to emphasize.

Make your trainings applicable to your audience. Genealogy and business databases are two areas that patrons will teach themselves once they are given a cursory introduction. Many patrons are not aware of the databases in learning languages, creating resumes, consumer reviews that are available to them.

SLIDE 16: Education Tip 2-3: Reinforce Training with Written Documentation

Once you have completed training of a database, make sure to reinforce it with written documentation.

This does not have to be extensive; 2 to 3 key points, access information, step by step on how to do a simple search.

SLIDE 17: Education Example: Menasha Joint School District - Jennifer Peterson

Jennifer Peterson serves as the sole librarian for the Menasha Joint School District. She manages 6 elementary school media centers, 1 at the middle school and a newly resigned library media center at the high school. She is an early adopter of new electronic resources, having added School Download Library from OverDrive and a Flipster Magazine Collection in addition to her databases. A fundamental key to her success in getting students to use e-resources is to get the staff firmly on board with any new resource first.

SLIDE 18: Education Tip 2-4: Meet Users Where They Are

Jen visits every single classroom in each school to talk about what the library has to offer. She focuses on databases appropriate to the grades she is speaking to and has already introduced the resources to staff prior to visits. During registration and back-to school nights, she is promoting the library media center and resources. If you are able, get out into your community and bring the library to potential patrons. Examples we've heard from colleagues are going to Rotary or Kiwanis and promoting business databases. Superior PL has an auto club that was interested in auto databases. Devices make access outside of your library walls very easy. Consider having a staff member positioned near the public use computers at set times throughout the week to introduce users to databases.

SLIDE 19: Education Tip 2-5: Access Should be Easy

Jen makes sure every single staff member and student has an overdrive login. They are emailed at the beginning and end of the year to promote usage over the summer. Her library webpage is well-designed in that it is simple and free of clutter. There are links for the resources she wants to promote and the font is large and easy to read. Give you e-resources prime real estate on in-library computers, and on your library website. As my high school journalism teacher told me "Don't bury the lead..."

SLIDE 20: Education – What are you doing?

Does anyone have other tips or examples to share with the group?

{Write down group suggestions on flip charts}

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SLIDE 21: Evaluating Your Resources

Our next area is evaluating your resources. Periodic evaluation of the resources that you're spending so much money on is vital.

SLIDE 22: Resource Evaluation Example:

One way to evaluate your electronic resources is to turn raw data about its use into numbers you can evaluate and compare. Doing this is helpful because it can point out trends in use and cost. In this example they have calculated cost per use to determine their return on investment.

SLIDE 23: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-1: Infographics are an excellent way to communicate to stakeholders.

Sometimes visualizations take the form of simple charts to illustrate how use has changed over time; sometimes they are more polished promotional pieces like this BadgerLink infographic. Visualizations are helpful because they can point out trends and patterns we would not see when looking at just the raw numbers. They can make it easier to compare information for multiple resources, and they can also help inform stakeholders about how resources are being used, which can in turn encourage support from these stakeholders.

Less information is better when creating infographics. When too much information is included, the results can be formulaic and overreaching rather than effective in conveying a message. Stick to a few nuggets that will be truly useful to your audience

SLIDE 24: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-2: Make sure you explain the criteria you use in the evaluation

When you undertake a process to evaluate your resources, the first step should be to determine WHAT you are evaluating on. Is it cost per use? Is it value to a specific community or department? Is it how it relates to your strategic initiatives or plan? Numbers should not be the only factor when evaluating a resource. Full text downloads and cost-per-use are important metrics for determining the value of a resource, but they aren't the only things to consider. There may be resources that have deceptively high costs-per-use, but are mission critical for a particular department or community segment. Be sure to take those factors into consideration when evaluating a product.

SLIDE 25: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-3: Understand outside factors

Understand that statistics can be affected by factors other than direct use. The way that an API or discovery layer interfaces with your resources can dramatically change your statistics. For example, when a patron logs into their account in some catalogs to view their holds and checkouts, it automatically pulls in their OverDrive circulation and holds....which is great! The problem is that, when a patron has not used OverDrive before, OverDrive believes this to be a new patron using the service and counts it as such. If you didn't know this, you would think that you had many more new patrons each month than you actually do.

SLIDE 26: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-4: Compare Apples to Apples

Whenever possible ensure that the usage stats that you're downloading and comparing are collected using the same protocols. Most vendors now use COUNTER compliant statistics gathering and reporting mechanisms. However, they usually have other methods as well, so be sure that you're using the same metrics for all of your resources.

SLIDE 27: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-5: Question numbers

There are two ways to think about questioning numbers:

- 1. Question numbers that are way out of line: If you are going along and suddenly see a spike or drop in any statistic, question it! It's possible that they are being impacted by those "outside factors" we talked about or the vendor has decided to count a certain statistic in a new way.*
- 2. Question what numbers MEAN: We know that many people use number of searches as a basis for evaluation and comparison. But what does that number actually mean? Well, it could mean a lot of use or it could mean that people are having to search multiple times to find information they are finding more easily in another database. As you choose your factors for evaluation, think about what the numbers you choose mean about patron behavior and success.*

SLIDE 28: Resource Evaluation Tip 3-6: Include Your Staff in Evaluation

Staff will naturally be invested in databases they have helped select. When trials are run, include staff in evaluation. Ex. Sun Prairie Public included database evaluations in the Ref Staff position descriptions so we would have time dedicated to review databases from SCLS.

SLIDE 29: Resource Evaluation – What are you doing?

Does anyone have other tips or examples to share with the group?

{Write down group suggestions on flip charts}

{Slide 30 – know more}

As we mentioned at the beginning, we want you to walk out of here today with a new idea and with a plan to implement that new idea. We have a template for you to complete that will hopefully take you down the path toward putting your idea into action. So, we're going to give you some time to complete that template for an idea that came up for you from the presentation – either an example or perhaps a new idea that the presentation sparked.

Before we do that, we're going to walk through an example, so that you'll feel comfortable filling out the template.

OK. So, let's start at the top of this template.

{Explain the template but don't have them worry about the tasks}. We won't worry about tasks right now. When you do your own – which you are going to do right now – you can do the tasks too.

So, we'll give you {figure out how much time you have} to complete this activity. Once you're done, you won't need to turn anything in, but we may ask for some volunteers to share a bit of what they plan to do if there is time.

{When time is up, ask for volunteers and allow them to speak}