Laptop Librarian: Venturing Among the Masses

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Southeastern Louisiana University

LUC Conference ~ October 10, 2008
The Idea

- Mississippi State U Library 2.0 Summit, May 2007
- Michael Stevens
Similar Laptop Librarian Services

Macon State College
Tunxis Community College Library (Farmington, CT)
Utica College
West Virginia Health Science Librarian (Charleston)
Regent University (Virginia Beach)
Columbia College
University of Mississippi (School of Business)
Baylor University
University of Houston (Grad College of SW)
Patty, Laptop Librarian at The Byrd House Market
laptop, roving, on-location, on-the loose, or predator?
Gathering & Assembling Equipment

- Laptop Computer
- Signage
- Table/Tripod/Stand
- Clipboard, Stat Sheets & Pen
- “Wheels”
- Bag
- Documents: Campus Map, Writing Center Brochure, Registration Brochure
- Candy!
Selecting Locations

Desirable:
- Wireless Network Access
- Seating for Librarian
- High Traffic Area
- Comfortable (A/C & dry) Environment

Our Choices:
- Classroom Buildings
- Food Service Areas
- Student Union
- Registration/Other Admin Bldgs for Student Use
Obtaining Permissions & Setting Procedures

- Contact Building Supervisors
- Explain Program
- Obtain Permission
- Write Procedures
Scheduling the Service

• The First Week of Classes
• The Day Before the Semester Begins
• The Week Before Midterms
• Peak Student Activity Time (Mid-day)
• When Librarians Are Available

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## Our Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008 thus far August/September</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Questions</td>
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</tbody>
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Types of Questions

• Students
  – Directional
  – Registration

• Faculty
  – “Oh, by the way…”
  – “I meant to come by the library…”
Librarians’ Observations

• Windy; Blowing Papers Around

• Mixed Bag; Steady & Slow

• Students Appreciated the Sympathetic Ear; Librarian Presence

• Some Students Recognized Us from Library
Challenges to Laptop Librarianship

- Staffing
- Laptop Not Ready – Config Altered
- Wireless System Down
- Dead Zones
- Librarian Personality Differences
Opportunities with Laptop Librarianship

- Increased Outreach
- Increased Impression of Accessibility & Approachability
- Faculty Reaction
On the Plus Side...

- Minimal Effort & Cost for Start-up
- Fun for Librarians to Get Out
- Meeting the Students Where They are
Future of Our Laptop Librarian Outreach

- Dependent on Staffing
- New, part-time Outreach Librarian
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