

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD
MARCH 13, 2013

CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR HAMILTON AND SENIOR STAFF

- Director Hamilton: During a meeting in the early part of FY13, Montgomery County Public libraries (MCPL) shared the Department's strategic plans with members of the Library Board and Library Advisory Committees. This is part two of the Strategic Plan process in which we share our current thinking and implementations with you. As the work is being done to accomplish goals of each plan, discussions are arising regarding brick and mortar services and virtual services and how these two roads are going to come together. I want you to be a part of that discussion. Tonight you will hear from our Virtual Services Manager, Mary Ellen Icaza and our Public Services Administrator for Facilities and Strategic Planning, Rita Gale.
- Mary Ellen Icaza (Virtual Services Manager): Virtual Services (VS) has changed a great deal over the past ten years. There are a lot of different services that are being offered and many tools that the staff is using.
 - Services include:
 - Website
 - ▲ The current branch pages will be refreshed to include information specific to the branch. There will also be space allocated for a blog if a branch elects to have one.
 - Downloadable audiobooks
 - Library Guides (Libguides)
 - 24/7 Ask Us Now Chat Service
 - Social Media – Facebook, Teen Facebook, Twitter
 - Apps for smartphones and tablets
 - Freegal
 - Calendar of Events
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - The Virtual Services team is comprised of four staff members who all began working on the information desk and have a strong interest in customer service. The VS team:
 - Has a good teamwork spirit
 - Possesses a strong interest in user experience
 - Has a sense of enthusiasm and curiosity to learn new things
 - Is working in a rapidly changing technology and social media landscape
 - Is juggling to provide many services across many different platforms
 - What's next:
 - Website conversion
 - Intranet Redesign
 - Mobile Library Site
 - Social Media Recommendations and Implementation
 - Ongoing evaluation of current and new technology and services
 - There are new tools and services to consider.
 - Blogger
 - KLOUT
 - Tumblr
 - Constant Contact
 - engageMontgomery
 - Pinterest
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- Developing a Virtual Services Strategy
 - Best practices and models
 - Data analytics
 - Processes and procedures – backup support
 - Online campaigns
 - Engagement with customers
 - Collaboration with partners (internal and external)
 - Increased reach

- Rita Gale (Public Services Administrator for Facilities and Branch Operations): To achieve its public service mission and maintain vital public library facilities over the next four years of the plan, five categories are recommended as the building framework to move the library system into the 21st Century.
 - All MCPL facilities will be evaluated according to an established timeframe and placed in the appropriate category:
 - Refresh
 - Renovate
 - Redesign and build a new library
 - Reach beyond our walls to deliver library services
 - Realize synergies: collaborate with partners and create co-location strategies to deliver library services
 - There are two different service models – brick and mortar and virtual. There is, and has been, much discussion about the future of brick and mortar libraries. Most agree that the role of public libraries is changing and they are becoming community connection hubs. This means space and content in the brick and mortar facilities.
 - With MCPL, the focus is going to be on Refresh, which is a new concept in our Facilities Plan. We will continue to plan major renovations, but it takes 25-30 years to get a facility renovated in the County. Technology and community needs are changing so rapidly that we cannot wait that long.
 - One of the concepts of doing a refresh is to keep our facilities at least on the cutting edge of what people are looking for, if not ahead.
 - Refresh means:
 - Creating flexible spaces and furniture
 - Open areas, with few permanent walls
 - Data and electric in multiple locations
 - Modular service desks instead of large single units
 - Staff that walk the facility and are not desk-bound
 - Finishes that match usage (tile versus carpet)
 - Modifying functions without rebuilding the entire facility
 - Four libraries a year will be reviewed for refreshing. The most critical elements that will help the facilities to look and operate more current will be identified.
 - The second aspect of the refresh is the creative and enhanced use of technology.
 - Hold lockers for after hours pickup of holds.
 - Self service
 - Mobile telephone for staff to staff use
 - Laptop/tablet internal use
 - Special seating/furniture to accommodate new technology
 - Maker space labs (providing resources for collaboration)
 - Defined spaces where users can find comfortable seating nooks to exchange info and learn face to face with others

- Three challenges
 - Technology that changes more rapidly than we can fund and implement
 - Making 21st century service delivery improvements in 20th century designed structures
 - Forecasting 21st century design elements six years before a building is constructed or renovated

- **Comments/Questions/Ideas**
 - Montgomery County Public Libraries Among Top 100 Libraries to Follow on Twitter (March 13, 2013 press release).
 - MCPL's KLOUT score is 58. KLOUT provides social media analytics that measure a user's influence across a social network such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. The average score is 40 out of 100.
 - Could the lab at Rockville Memorial Library have a quick way to download e-books?
 - Consider collaborations/partnerships with various sectors as a quick way to get information out to the community especially seniors.
 - MCPL has a Senior and Disability Steering Committee that has partnered with other organizations and actively seeks to enter into partnerships and collaborations that benefit all parties.
 - ▲ MCPL's collaborations/partnerships include the Social Security Administration, the National Mental Health Association, and the Department of Health and Human Services.
 - BookMyne is an app that is available for the Android phone.
 - The placement of the social media on the Library's homepage seems redundant. This space could be used for something else.
 - Regarding the list of social media tools that MCPL is looking into, why not conduct a poll using Facebook or Twitter to see what people are interested in using?
 - Many of these tools are free, and can easily be taken down if it is found that they are under utilized. Some people who might use Pinterest, for example, may not use Facebook or Twitter. We do not want to miss any of our audiences or potential audiences.
 - Does MCPL have a policy regarding the use of free and paid applications?
 - Is there collaboration with the school system for the use of e-books and databases?
 - The vendors will not allow MCPL to share databases with the school system.
 - There is a representative from MCPS, Andrea Christman, who sits on the Library Board. The Board is in the process of adding someone from Montgomery College.
 - MCPL is considering makerspace. Staff has been sent to makerspace workshops. Makerspace is a community-operated physical space where people with common interests, often in computers, technology, science, digital art or electronic art, can meet, socialize and/or collaborate.
 - Determine how to use new technologies to get new LAC members, capture different demographics, etc.
 - There is WiFi service in all MCPL branches. If there is difficulty in accessing the WiFi, the branch manager should be notified. The branch manager will then contact the manager of Technology Management.
 - Most of the creative and enhanced use of technology items will be incorporated in the new Silver Spring and Wheaton libraries. Some of these items will be in the newly renovated Gaithersburg and Olney facilities.

- MCPL was congratulated on the amount of thinking that went into the plan. The County should be educated on what the libraries are doing.
 - Vivian Yao, Council Legislative Analyst, is in attendance. She has worked with MCPL as we told our story and presented our plans to the Health and Human Services Committee of the County Council.
 - It is important, that our advocates and community members tell MCPL’s story. This can be done at Council hearings and other venues.
 - MCPL’s story is told through the branch tours and Snapshot Day events in which the Council members are invited to participate.
 - Participants were asked to share any other ideas on how to tell MCPL’s story.
- Collection Management, Delivery of Services and Funding will be topics for future conversations.
- An LAC member applauded the director and staff for what they are doing and stated that this knowledge was gained by being an LAC member. The general public is not aware of what MCPL does. Word needs to be gotten out through the press. There are people who currently do not use the library, but would if they were aware of all that is offered.
- MCPL has hired five Outreach staff who have begun visiting in the communities.
- It was suggested that there be a monthly “What’s New in the Library” to highlight new services, upgrades, etc.
- Maybe use old stereotypes about libraries to show that they have evolved.
- Community input is important during the branch tours. The tours show the good and bad about each branch.
- One of the most interesting things was the “Did You Know” that was presented by Director Hamilton at an FOLMC meeting. This document lists all the things that one can do via MCPL. This would be great to put in the Gazette.
- It is important for MCPL to connect to the communities. There are nearly one million residents in the county, and only approximately 700,000 have library cards.
- MCPL will take the ideas from this meeting and begin work to get the word out. Participants were asked to provide feedback if improvements were noticed and where.

Twitter Lingo

(Mary Ellen Icaza)

- A place for sharing information as it happens, and for connecting with others in real time.
- Changing the way the world communicates, 140 characters at a time – text, photos, video
- **Tweet** – a Twitter single update of 140 characters or less.
- **Followers** – someone who subscribes to your tweets.
- **Retweet or “RT”** – taking a tweet from one user and posting it yourself, automatically crediting the source, so that all of your followers can see the tweet.
- **Trending Topics (TTs)** – “Trending Topics” lists a range of subjects which many users across Twitter are talking about simultaneously.
- **Hashtag - #** makes a certain word easily searchable.
- **Direct Message (DM)** – a message sent to a specific individual.