

MLA Ad Hoc Task Force Proposal: Missouri Emerging Technology Education & Training Group

I. Overview

Several “tech-minded” members of MLA have been discussing how to best bring emerging technologies education to Missouri libraries. The evolving vision involves the following components:

1. **Establishing an ad hoc MLA task force** with the stated purpose of:
 - Raising emerging technology awareness
 - Developing emerging technology educational resources
 - Providing emerging technology training sessions.
2. Initiating these goals during 2009-2010 will be accomplished in the following ways:
 - A **focus group session** at the MLA 2009 conference to gather input about which technologies libraries are most interested in learning about.
 - A **Learning 2.0 self-discovery program** similar to that developed by Helen Blowers/PLCMC and available under a Creative Commons License (<http://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.com/>) will be developed to address the technologies identified in the focus group. One or two “rounds” of the program will be offered in 2010.
 - Web resources developed for the Learning 2.0 program will serve as a core of information to develop an **emerging technology wiki** for www.molib.org.
 - If the Learning 2.0 program is well received, the ET² group may then develop and offer an **emerging technology pre- or post-conference for MLA 2010**.
3. If the 2009-2010 efforts are deemed successful, the program could continue, with advanced/updated Learning 2.0 programs, regular emerging technology pre/post conferences at MLA, and expanding web resources to serve state libraries.

II. Program Sponsorship

The program will be developed and delivered by the Missouri Library Association, and co-sponsored/underwritten by any other Missouri library organizations that are interested in participating (e.g., MASL, MOBIUS, Missouri State Library, etc.). Co-sponsorship will involve two core requirements:

- A modest contribution to cover the costs of the program (modest costs include: incentives, prizes, certificates)
- A commitment to promoting the educational opportunity to organizational members

Proposed program details follow.

III. Program Details

A. 2009 MLA Conference Focus Group Session

The focus group session is scheduled for **Thursday, October 8**, 9:45am-10: 45am at the 2009 MLA Annual Conference. The primary purpose of the session will be to elicit information regarding what emerging technologies are currently being used by libraries, what tools they are most curious about, and trends in use of emerging technologies in Missouri. This information will be analyzed to identify which technologies should be emphasized in a 2010 Learning 2.0 program. The focus group may additionally serve as a means for identifying other tech-minded individuals interested in developing and administering the program.

Focus group description (submitted and accepted to the 2009 MLA Conference Planning Committee):

“Tech-minded individuals around the state are discussing how to best bring emerging technologies education and training to Missouri libraries. This focus group session is an opportunity for you to provide input and feedback about the technologies you’re most interested in. In a twitter over Twitter? Wondering about widgets? Musing about Meebo? Come participate in the early formation of a group whose aims are to develop emerging technology training sessions and related educational resources for Missouri libraries. “

B. Learning 2.0 Self-Discovery Program

What is Learning 2.0 (aka “23 Things”)?

Learning 2.0 is an emerging technologies learning program developed by Helene Blowers, Technology Director of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County. Her program was loosely based upon [Stephen Abram's article 43 Things I \(or You\) Might Want To Do This Year \(Information Outlook - February 2006\)](#) and the Web site [43 Things](#).

The original Learning 2.0 program can be reviewed at **North Carolina** (the original): <http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/>. It is a revolutionary staff development learning concept centered on social collaboration tools. The program emphasizes self-discovery learning and exploration vs. formal training.

A Brief Survey of Learning 2.0 Programs

Available for adaptation under a Creative Commons license, hundreds of libraries and library organizations of every size and type have adapted the idea for own their staff. A sampling of adapted programs (in not particular order):

- Minnesota – the program was so well-received that they ran two “rounds” of their initial program, and developed a follow-up program in the second year:
 1. <http://23thingsonastick.blogspot.com/>
 2. <http://morethingsonastick.pbworks.com/>
- California - <http://schoollibrarylearning2.blogspot.com/>

- Missouri (MRRL) - <http://mrrlearning.blogspot.com/>
- Arizona: <http://bakersdozenarizona.wetpaint.com/?t=anon>
- Australia: <http://yarraplentyonlinelearning.blogspot.com/2006/09/learning-20-begins.html>

A complete list of links to all programs is available at <http://delicious.com/hblowers/learning2.0Libraries>.

A select list of links from Stephen Abrams can be found at http://stephenslighthouse.sirsidynix.com/archives/2008/02/the_23_things_1.html

Program Outcomes

Helene Blower, the original developer of Learning 2.0, identified the top 4 outcomes and impacts of the program in an exit survey (<http://www.slideshare.net/hblowers/learning-20-23-things-survey-findings>):

1. Increased knowledge and comfort with social media/2.0 tools
2. Increased confidence in one's own ability as a competent learner
3. Teambuilding among co-workers
4. New and improved enhancements to customer services

What Sort of Technologies Are Covered?

Programs can be tailored to meet the particular emerging technology interests and needs of participating libraries, and can be adapted to include new technologies as they debut. Minnesota, for example, included the following technologies in their original "23 Things on a Stick" (<http://23thingsonastick.blogspot.com/>) program:

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|---------------------------------|--|
| • Blogs | • Librarything (productivity tools) |
| • 2.0 and libraries | • Minnesota resources |
| • RSS | • Youtube (podcasts/videos) |
| • Flickr (photosharing/editing) | • Facebook and MySpace (social networking) |
| • Wikis (collaboration) | • Staying current |
| • Delicious (tagging) | |

The program was so successful that they created a follow-up program, dubbed "More Things on a Stick" (<http://morethingsonastick.pbworks.com/>). This program included such topics as:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------|
| • Ning | • Cloud computing |
| • Twitter | • Screencasting |
| • Maps | • More... |
| • Mashups | |

How Does It Work?

Briefly:

1. The program is **open to all MO library staff** regardless of position and status (full or part time)
2. **Individuals are in charge of their own learning.** The facilitators have identified the exploration activities for participants to do over the course of the program, but they decide when to do them, the amount of time they spend and the depth of their exploration. Each of the “23 Things” can take as little as an hour or as much more time they have to give.
3. The program is managed via a **program blog**. Each week begins with a brief explanation of a new Web 2.0 topic or tool, followed by a numbered list of activities related to the tool. Some topics may be supported with podcasts or other multimedia tutorials.
4. **The emphasis is on self-discovery and fun.** Participants are steadily introduced to emerging technology tools in an informal way that allows them to explore, experiment with, and think about creative ways to use them in their own library.
5. Participation is documented via **individual blogs**, which participants set up and maintain as their first activity (“Thing 1”). They blog about their discoveries and the learning process throughout the program. Blog posts should be a minimum of 100-125 words.
6. Some participants may already be familiar with certain technologies. An added **“Challenge section”** to some of the Things helps participants stretch their knowledge through independent exploration.
7. Because the program is self-directed, participants are encouraged to interact with each other via the program blog to share questions, answers, and discoveries. **The program facilitators do not provide training or individual support.** To help participants support each other, statewide programs tend to be clustered regionally (e.g., Minnesota clustered their program based on “multitype” library groups).
8. **Lengths of programs and number of “Things”** vary, from 8-23 weeks, and 15-23 things. Each participant who completes all “23 Things” on the list and blogs about each one by the program completion date receives a modest **completion “prize”** (e.g., flash drives). They are additionally **eligible for a drawing** for a more substantial prize (e.g., MP3 player). Other incentive ideas used by libraries include **printed certificates of completion and/or continuing education credit.**

For more program details, visit the FAQ sections of individual Learning 2.0 sites.

C. Emerging Technology Wiki

Resources developed for the Learning 2.0 program will serve as starter content for a dedicated wiki for all things 2.0 and beyond. The wiki be organized by technology/tool, will be open to contribution by all MLA members, and will be directly linked to the MLA website. Additional content could include:

- Links to additional educational web resources for various technologies

- Showcase of how technologies have been implemented across MO libraries.
- Contact information for individuals willing to provide guidance/support on implementing particular technologies.

D. Technology Pre-or Post-Conference for MLA 2010

If the focus group session, Learning 2.0 program, and wiki are well-received by Missouri libraries, the ET² group facilitators may consider developing a pre- or post-conference dedicated to emerging technology training for the 2010 MLA Conference. This could become an annual event, but that may be getting a bit ahead of ourselves...☺

IV. Program Facilitators

One or two additional facilitators are needed and desired. Current program leaders are:

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