Internet

Reflections on 2006

Susan Miles (s.miles@kingston.ac.uk)

RSS and Blogs: the highlights of 2006

At the start of the New Year it is customary to look back over the year just finished and to look forward to the coming year. Two trends of 2006 caught my imagination – RSS feeds and blogging.

The awareness and use of RSS feeds as a way to keep up to date has continued to gain ground. More and more websites and applications are using this technology to push updated information to users, and increasingly, users are able to reuse this information, either for themselves or in innovative ways. In addition to straightforward blog aggregators such as Bloglines, new services are appearing that enable the ordinary user to pull feeds together to create new Web pages. Examples of this include Suprglu (see how UKOLN used this for their Institutional Web Management Workshop[1] in June 2006) and Pageflakes (see how Phil Bradley used this to create a page of library related blogs[2]).

The rise of new blogs within the 'biblioblogging' community continues, whether created by individual librarians or by library systems. The PLCMC Library 2.0 program may well have contributed to this trend. The official program has now ended, with an impressive 222 out of 362 participants from the PLCMC system completing the program, and receiving an MP3 player. Since the program was created using Web 2.0 resources and was freely available to others, the idea of following along has spread around the world, with participants from other countries joining in. Other library systems are looking at how they can take the program and modify it for use within their own systems. Yarra Plenty Regional Library in Melbourne, Australia, has their own PLCMC-based training program up and running[3]. Library systems within the US who have created their own Learning 2.0 based programs include San José Public Library[4], CA; Palos Verdes Library District[5], CA and Loudoun County Public Library[6], VA.

The ripple effect of the PLCMC program can be illustrated by my own experiences last year. I followed along with the program, starting my own blog in the process. My chit-chat about my

---

[1] Institutional Web Management Workshop 2006 [online] Available at http://iwmw2006.suprglu.com/ [Accessed 7 January 2007]

[2] Librarian weblogs. Phil Bradley [online] Available at http://www.pageflakes.com/philipbradley.ashx?page=4541261 [Accessed 7 January 2007]

[3] Yarra plenty online learning [online] Available at http://www.yarraplentyonlinelearning.blogspot.com/ [Accessed 7 January 2007]

[4] SJPL and SJSU Learning 2.0 project [online] Available at http://sjlibrarylearning2about.blogspot.com/ [Accessed 7 January 2007]

[5] PVLD Learning 2.0 [online] Available at http://pvldlearning.blogspot.com/ [Accessed 7 January 2007]

[6] LCPL's Learning 2.0 [online] Available at http://learningatlcpl.blogspot.com/index.html [Accessed 7 January 2007]

experiences of the program led to a raising of awareness about blogs within the library system, and there is now a subscription to a blogging software package; currently, two work teams are using blogs to distribute snippets of news and knowledge.

As I took a quick tour around some of my favourite blogs in search of the New Year's resolutions of the great and the good of the information world, I discovered that a game of 'tag' is taking place instead. The 'tag' is to blog 'five things you didn't know about me'.

So take a guess at which individuals in the British biblioblogger community have:

- Walked the Thames Path (all 184 miles of it) twice
- Swum in every ocean
- A butter phobia
- Been a COBOL programmer

Finally, another success story from 2006. September saw the launch of RFID-based self services at Kingston University library for staff and students to check out, renew and return library items. It was initially implemented in a single library, and the take-up has been extraordinary, with 70% of all issues in that first week through the new self-service, a rate that hasn't dropped since then. This service is being rolled out to the remaining site libraries during 2007.