

librarian.net/talks/mlc2

Teaching Tech in libraries

what are we doing?



<http://www.wired.com/wired/issue/16-02>

notes:

<http://ramblinglibrarian.blogspot.com/2008/03/flickr-for-good-or-techsoup-maintaining.html>

<http://blogcoursedemo.blogspot.com/2007/07/links-for-moe-excel-fest-2007-13-july.html>

library geeks @ SXSWi



So, I just got back from SXSW. It was mostly techies with some techie librarians. This photo is actually from last year.

<http://flickr.com/photos/brian-fitzgerald/418686911/>

techie & in-jokes



These were the people who are building the web, 2.0 and otherwise. They have their own in jokes and culture. It became a joke, finding your friends... “have you seen my friend, he’s about six feet tall, square glasses, black hoodie, laptop bag... no?”

<http://flickr.com/photos/adactio/111845209/>

too much talking



We all talked to each other so much we lost our voices. But the one voice I never heard was the one that deals with libraries, and the digital divide, and all the people who are still learning to use computers as the advanced tools get sexier and more complicated. The opening remarks just presumed a level of savviness that we know everyone doesn't have, much less connectedness to even get that savvy. Developers admitted to not caring about accessibility, or people who were still on dial-up connections.

<http://flickr.com/photos/adactio/2328398499/>

returning home



I got home on Wednesday.

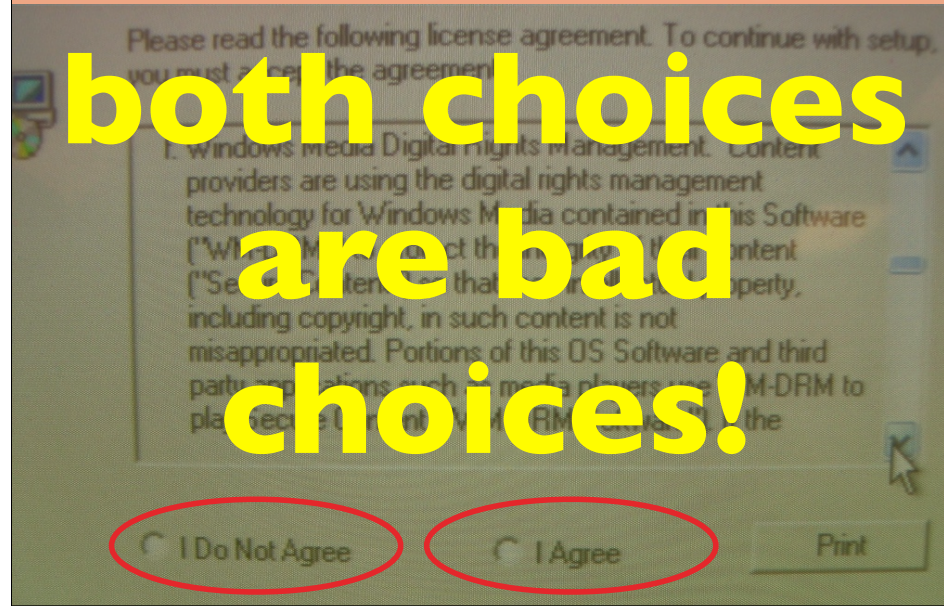
Thursday I went to my regular drop-in time where the 70+ year old moderator of my town meeting needed help opening attachments on his email and finding a way to backup his memoirs (he had disks, he had never heard of USB drives). He didn't know his own email address. Then I taught a "getting started with Excel" class in the evening for three people. They were all hoping to get better jobs with this new knowledge.

a good day



On a good day, I'm dealing with cheery interested people with well-functioning computers who are able to access the internet and mostly know what to do when they get there and just need me there to ask questions.

a suboptimal day



On a bad day I have to deal with software and hardware intalls on legacy systems without decent license codes. Computers that have not been maintained. Computers that have been treated badly. I agree to things I don't even tell the librarians about. I agree to things I don't even sometimes understand. I sign away rights and responsibilities. And I'm the expert!

**why is
this so
hard?**



If I don't know, who does know? And why is this so hard?

<http://icanhascheezburger.com/2007/01/16/you-make-kitty-scared/>

stakeholders...



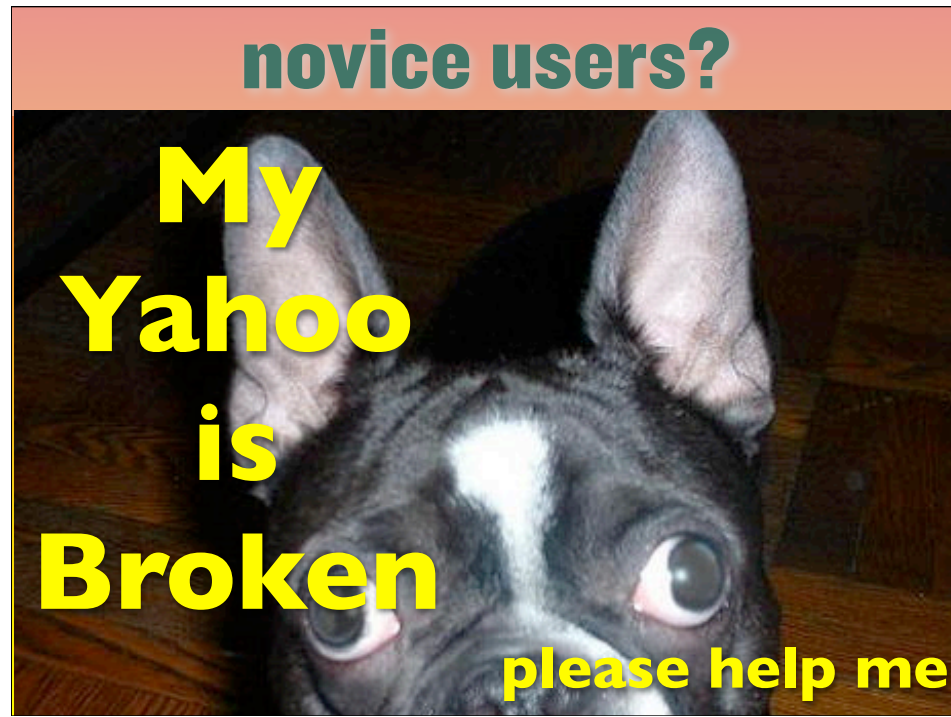
Part of the problem is all the people who have to work together on the technology on libraries problem. We call them stakeholders. This picture is supposed to be amusing.

working together...



And, all these people are part of the solution. Let's see how....

<http://flickr.com/photos/wwworks/1384952210/>



...read every word on a page and don't know which are important. They need terminology, need help navigating minefields, need to be kept safe while learning. [anecdote: ebay class]

<http://flickr.com/photos/nycgal/4074328/>

experienced users?



... want to be able to use library technology LIKE the computers they are used to. They have USB drives and iPods. They game. They were telling you about LOLbrarians before you knew about LOLcats. [anecdote: “who here knows what a rickroll is?”]



staff?

Hey, that's you!
Fear,
Uncertainty,
Doubt

Hey, that's you! You want to help people, right? What gets in your way? There's this concept called FUD... started by IBM in (according to wikipedia) "This implicit coercion was traditionally accomplished by promising that Good Things would happen to people who stuck with IBM, but Dark Shadows loomed over the future of competitors' equipment or software." We get it from people, we try not to pass it on [anecdote: ASIST talk "firefox causes viruses..."]

<http://flickr.com/photos/revjim5000/1492169438/>

non-profit helpers?



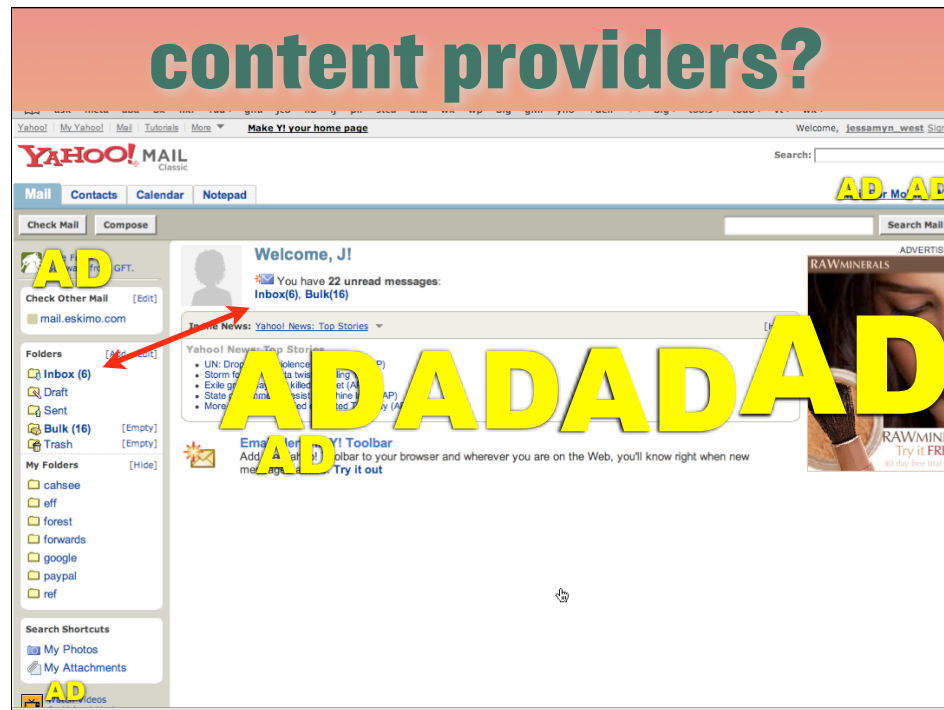
These people mean exceptionally well, but they're grant funded and follow the money not the communities. If you're lucky, their grants get renewed. [anecdote: MaintainIT cookbooks]

<http://flickr.com/photos/cambodia4kidsorg/166042354/>

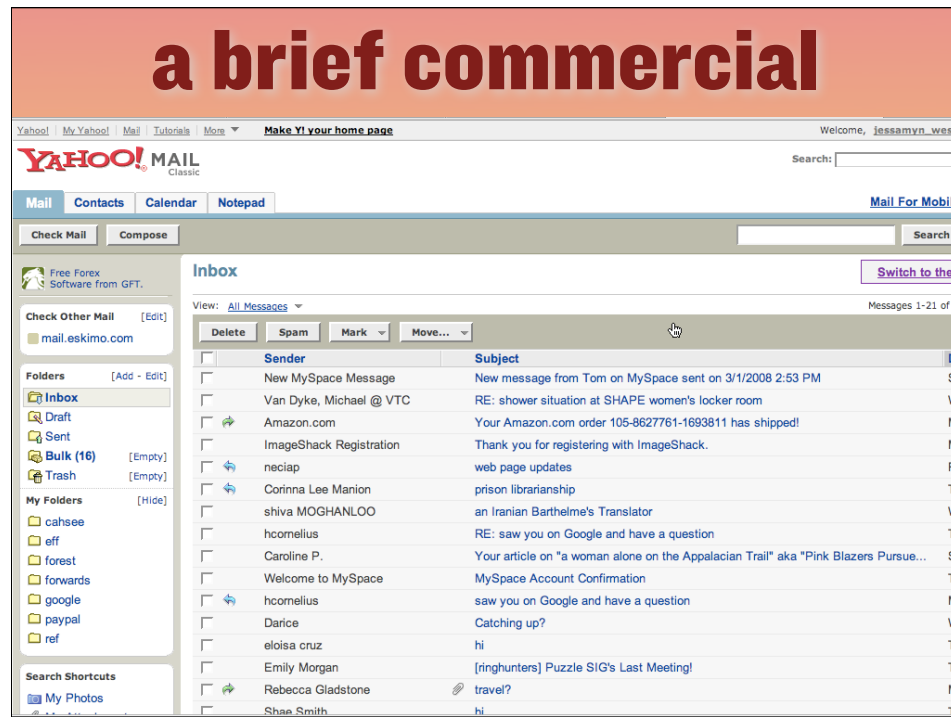
vendors?



Everyone likes the cute OLPC but it has few library applications. The Gates Foundation basically technologized Vermont, but dramatically underestimated libraries' ability to "catch on" and start their own technology programs when the GF left. Most of the libraries I work with are still using their original Gates machines. Two libraries that I know of in Vermont use Macs. How much do these vendors affect HOW we deliver services?



So let's look at WHAT we're teaching people to use. In my neck of the woods it's all about EMAIL. I used to teach email classes at the public library using a laptop/overhead and a whiteboard because it was the best way to get people to focus on the concepts and not the immediate tasks. Webmail may be free, but it's hard for many novice users to navigate. Where's the information? What do you mostly see?



Just a quick note. The last page was what Yahoo Mail looks like to an average user when they log in. The above screenshot is what it looks like to ME. I have adblocker installed on my firefox browser and I use two Greasemonkey scripts called Yahoo Mail Cleaner and another called Yahoo Mail Welcome Skipper

“what’s going on here?”

The image shows a screenshot of a MySpace profile page. At the top, there is a banner with the text "ARE YOU HEAVY OR HEALTHY?" and a "FREE Diet Profile" button. Below this is a table with columns for Height, Age 18-37, and Age Over 38. The table contains the following data:

Height	Age 18-37	Age Over 38
5'1"	100-133	122-145
5'2"	104-136	116-149
5'3"	100-142	121-152

A speech bubble with the text "why does Yahoo think I'm fat?" is overlaid on the page. The profile name is "Hello, jessamy". The page includes a profile picture, a mood section with "Mood: hungry", "Mood: indescribable", and "Mood: tired", and a "SEPHORA" advertisement. The date "Wednesday 27 February, 2008" is visible at the bottom of the page.

When people in libraries ask me about social software, often they’ve heard of MySpace or or Facebook. We look at these sites. For people who don’t spend a lot of time online, many of these sites are totally inscrutable to them. Michiganders may have heard me saying this part before, but I had one student log in to her email for the first time to see an ad like this one and ask me, sincerely, “why does Yahoo think I’m fat?”

remember?



Remember when Yahoo was just about the links. Few images, quick to download? [this is from 1996]



Now they've got a few irons in the fire, some dealing with cross-branding, some just flat out ads. You can still find the links at directory.yahoo.com. They changed. We have to change also.

bad news

- › **Novice users read every word**
- › **Novice users can't tell an ad from a non-ad**
- › **Novice users don't notice AJAX-y page changes**
- › **Dial-up users can't use gmail**
- › **Little incentive for usability & accessibility outside of lawsuits**
- › **Little incentive for fast-loading pages when you can say "we'll lose your business, that's okay..."**
- › **Flash intro pages make the puppy sad**



So, the people building the web don't have ease of use as their first mission anymore. We are trying to teach people about pages that are no longer really designed for them.

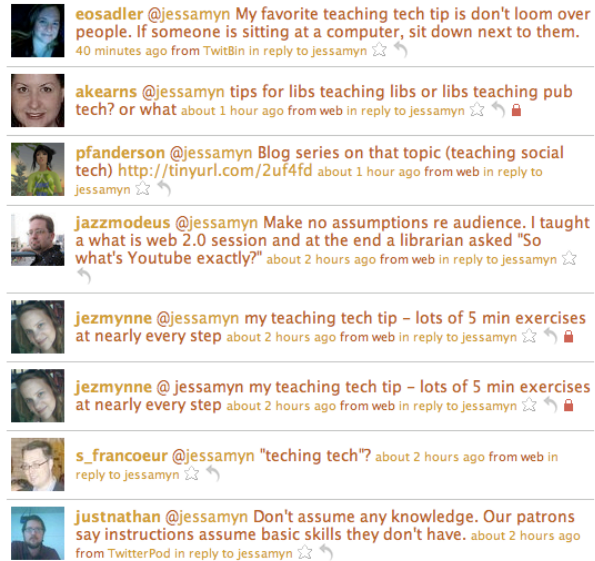
set expectations

The image shows a screenshot of the eBay website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Buy', 'Sell', 'My eBay', 'Community', and 'Help'. Below this, a user is logged in as 'lindsey.doyle!'. A search bar is visible, and a list of categories is shown on the left side. A large white speech bubble with a black outline is overlaid on the page, containing the text: 'ebay is hard to use but once you learn a few steps it can be worthwhile here's how to avoid pitfalls...'. The text is in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

**ebay is hard to use
but once you learn
a few steps
it can be worthwhile
here's how
to avoid pitfalls...**

Things like ebay are great, but require a LOT of steps for people to get started. Things like PayPal and email may be normal for some people and a lot of work for others. Once people know it's supposed to be a little complicated, or that you think it is too, they calm down some about not understanding it. A lot of technostress in my experience is thinking you SHOULD know something you don't, it's not about not knowing things.

use the force

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- The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter thread. At the top, the text "use the force" is written in a large, bold, teal font. Below this, there are seven replies to a tweet from @jessamyn. Each reply includes a small profile picture, the user's name and handle, and the text of their reply. The replies are as follows:
- eosadler @jessamyn** My favorite teaching tech tip is don't loom over people. If someone is sitting at a computer, sit down next to them. 40 minutes ago from TwitBin in reply to jessamyn
 - akearns @jessamyn** tips for libs teaching libs or libs teaching pub tech? or what about 1 hour ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - pfanderson @jessamyn** Blog series on that topic (teaching social tech) <http://tinyurl.com/2uf4fd> about 1 hour ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - jazzmodeus @jessamyn** Make no assumptions re audience. I taught a what is web 2.0 session and at the end a librarian asked "So what's Youtube exactly?" about 2 hours ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - jezmyne @jessamyn** my teaching tech tip – lots of 5 min exercises at nearly every step about 2 hours ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - jezmyne @jessamyn** my teaching tech tip – lots of 5 min exercises at nearly every step about 2 hours ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - s_francoeur @jessamyn** "teching tech"? about 2 hours ago from web in reply to jessamyn
 - justnathan @jessamyn** Don't assume any knowledge. Our patrons say instructions assume basic skills they don't have. about 2 hours ago from TwitterPod in reply to jessamyn

I put a note up on Twitter asking for tech tips to get my brain going and I heard from seven librarians in about an hour. There's a big network of people working on the same problems and not that many websites people need to master. Just teaching people how to Google an error message [and google is one thing that IS user friendly] can be an awakening.

text



While there should be no shame in saying “I don’t know” it’s not half as good an answer as “let’s figure it out...”

<http://flickr.com/photos/23905174@N00/2061329074/>

Thank you!