SENIOR TECH: THE NEXT GENERATION

Bringing Tech Learning to Seniors Where They Live

Brian Lind – Rochester Public Library
Library Technology Conference 2017
DROP IN CLASSES AT LIBRARY

- Last 4 years, 3 with Computer Lab
- 1 per month to 3 days a week
- Patrons bring their devices
- Ask any tech questions
Drop in classes at library

- Staffed by librarians & IT
- Typically 2-10 patrons per class
- Numbers were down
Barriers to current program

- Limited times during the week
- Transportation
- Parking
- Difficulty of devices transport
- Intimidated by coming to library
Tech Outreach: Bookbike Envy
LIMITED LIBRARY RESOURCES

• No extra staff
• No money for equipment, supplies
• Where could we hold classes off-site?
Existing Senior Resources

- Local Senior Center charges for membership/classes
- Community Ed won’t allow free classes
PILOT PROGRAM: BOLDLY GOING TO SENIOR RESIDENCES
UMR “Co-Lab’ Program

- 4-5 students per quarter
- Connect students to community
- Students self-select their project
UMR “CO-LAB” PROGRAM

Different projects
• Teaching classes at library
• Help with promotion
• Create curriculum

ROCHESTER
MISSION ONE:
GROUND WORK
UMR SHORTENED SUMMER SESSION

• Less time to get going
• Set up for next group in Fall
CONTACTING FACILITIES

• Called 10 facilities
• 4 facilities responded with interest
EXPLORING NEW TECH CONCEPTS

- Sent out Survey of topics
- Asked about facilities – room, computers, projector, etc.,
- Offered different types of classes
  - Single topic
  - Drop-in
  - Hands on iPad
“GENERATION TECH” IS BORN

- Branded and tagline with mission: “Where you can learn to stay connected to Family and Friends”
- Created posters for facilities to use for promotion
Google Drive for Collaboration
MISSION TWO: FIRST CLASSES
Training for UMR Students

- Guidelines for helping
- Helped staff existing drop-in classes
- eBook Training
- For topic-specific classes, dry run at the library first
- Accompanied students to first class
DESIGNING CLASSES

- Used GCF for topic-specific classes
- Created Resource Handouts for each class
- Brought existing Library basic handouts
  - Gmail
  - eBooks
- Promoted library drop in classes
BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN “GEN TECH”
SCHEDULING!

- Biggest challenge by far
- Students, facilities, library staff all have different schedules
TECHNICAL (AND OTHER) DIFFICULTIES

- WiFi – time to log in and get needed passwords
- Log into facility computers
- Directions/parking
- Early arrival helps a lot
THE FACILITY VARIATION PARADOX

• Some had better projection, presentation space
• Some of the Programs were presentations to groups, some 1-on-1
• Facility buy-in levels varied
  • Some people practically begging for us to come
  • Some more indifferent – not as communicative
• Creation of handouts
• Have flexibility – classes can be fluid
• Make sure they keep you in the loop
• Can’t assume they know all basic tech
**USING SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERS**

- Have to retrain, reschedule every quarter
- Can’t schedule until you know the schedules of students
- Gaps between groups, short session in the summer
QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

• It is okay that larger groups are served, smaller get ignored
• Is this sustainable?
• Is there another way or partnership that could help?
• Should the library be a program “broker”? 
Next Mission: Fall Re-launch

- Focus on fewer facilities
- Use a more collaborative model
- Look at supplemental volunteers to UMR students
- Schedule dates earlier (several months ahead)
How is it boldly going for you?

- What have you done?
- What has worked? Hasn’t?
- Plans for future?
- Surprises?
QUESTIONS ?
THANK YOU!

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