Against the Grain

2014

ATG Special Report: Some Thoughts on Polling at the Charleston Conference 2014

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routed to us that have errors in bibliographic, holdings, or item records. This has allowed us to move significantly more titles to storage and has given Cataloging more leeway to focus on projects requiring higher-level cataloging knowledge and skills.

American University Library's Processing Department is located in the Acquisitions Department, and the Processing Specialist has provided Cataloging Services staff and student assistants training to identify which materials that are moving to storage as part of this project need to be routed to her department for repair, and has trained staff on how to identify mold so that these materials can be isolated and appropriately handled.

Another way the two departments have collaborated has been with eBook cataloging. Over the past five years, we have shifted to purchasing more eBooks than print books. The Acquisitions department is responsible for ordering all eBooks that are one-time purchases (The Electronic Resource Management unit orders subscription eBook packages). Acquisitions has one dedicated staff member who handles the bulk of eBook ordering and importing of records. Initially, he would send a list of titles to Cataloging in order for them to review the records. That staff member suggested that since he was already in the MARC record changing the URL field, why couldn't he just check the record to make sure it was correct? Thus was born another collaborative effort. Cataloging developed an appropriate checklist and several staff members in Acquisitions were trained on using it. This collaboration has resulted in the elimination of the backlog of eBooks to be checked.

Onward

Often times in libraries, various units in Technical Services do not necessarily work together. These units may create their own silos and may not be involved with work other units are doing. At **American University Library**, the heads of the units in Technical Services have worked hard to foster the idea that we are one unit, working for the same cause — to provide the best access to the material for our users. It has been very useful for the Acquisitions unit to learn what the Cataloging unit looks for in a good record. This has provided us with a shared vocabulary and understanding. Cataloging staff have also been trained to work in the Acquisitions module of Voyager. This has helped in the demystification process for everyone. We can do this by collaborating on projects that get the materials out to the user in a timely manner. Our staff members have also been eager to learn new skills and to get a better understanding of what work is done in each unit, and how something Acquisitions does may impact the work in Cataloging and vice versa. One positive outcome has been an increased respect for work done in our units. 🐾

ATG Special Report — Some Thoughts on Polling at the Charleston Conference 2014

by **Erin Gallagher** (Electronic Resources & Serials Librarian, Olin Library, Rollins College, 1000 Holt Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789) <egallagher@rollins.edu>

A couple of years ago at the annual meeting of the **Florida Association of College and Research Libraries** (**FACRL**), I attended a presentation that included live audience polling. I now fail to remember the content of the presentation, but the interactive polling made a lasting impression. Such a lasting impression, in fact, that I have been looking for opportunities to use live polling in various facets of my life in academic librarianship. Library instruction sessions are a terrific venue for live polling. The students light up when asked to pull out their phones or turn on their computers. They enjoy responding anonymously to questions like "how does writing a research paper make you feel?" and seeing their responses pop up in cartoonish bubbles. They seem more willing to speak up, voice opinions, and ask questions when we have already broken the seal on interaction. And we end up feeling a bit more hip.

When brainstorming the details for our presentation proposal for the **Charleston Conference** this year (with co-presenter **Michelle Leonard**, **University of Florida**), we knew we wanted to do something that went beyond the Powerpoint. With so many competing sessions on our topic, use-driven acquisition, we had to stand out and offer our attendees something buzzworthy. Because our presentation focused on surveying the landscape of use-driven acquisition, live polling was an obvious fit.

In preparation for our session, we pinged a few listservs and asked for suggestions for polling tools. The most common answer was **Poll Everywhere**. Anyone can register and create a free account that allows for all the basic functions and up to 40 respondents. Paid plans offer more customization, a few bells and whistles, and an allowance for more respondents. We found their user guide and tutorial videos to be incredibly valuable, but there is no substitute for getting your hands dirty creating some test polls. For those of you who may want to incorporate live polling into your instruction sessions, meetings, or conference presentations, we are sharing some do's and don'ts based on our experience. Some relate specifically to Poll Everywhere, but we believe they're applicable to other scenarios.

Are you a first-time attendee of the Charleston Conference?

Do's:

- Give the audience options for responding. This could include text messaging, Web responding, Twitter, etc.

- Depending on the nature of your poll questions, give the audience a mix of open-ended and multiple-choice questions to keep things interesting and to collect a blend of quantitative and anecdotal data.

- Keep the questions and multiple-choice responses as concise and simple as possible. No one wants to spend a long time reading through a laundry list before responding.

- Practice makes perfect! My colleagues here at **Rollins College** were generous enough to attend a polling


What is your favorite presentation type?
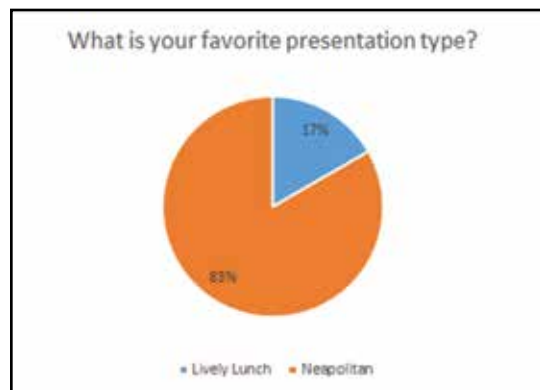
practice session before I went off to Charleston. It was beyond valuable to get their feedback and suggestions. It's also crucial to test out the mechanics of whichever polling tool you're using; it's better to work out the glitches in practice and with a group of colleagues or friends than during the presentation itself. Ask them to bring a variety of devices for responding.

• Plan for interactive dialogue with your audience. Once the results start rolling in, the discussion will flow, so presenters will need to act as both moderators and facilitators.

• Start with an open-ended "test" question before getting into the meat of your presentation. This will allow everyone to test out the response mechanics and can act as an icebreaker. We asked, "where is everyone from?"

• Select questions that could be deemed controversial or debatable. These will be more likely to provoke lively discussion.
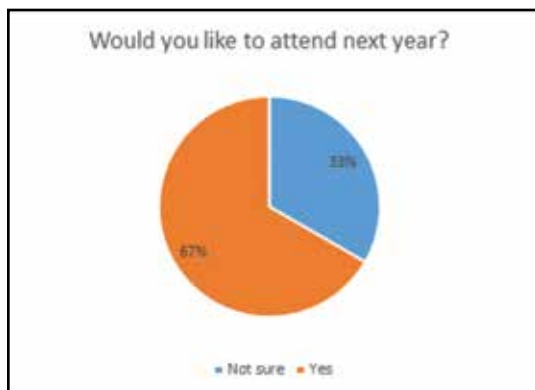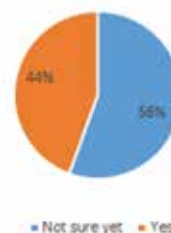
Don'ts:

• Plan for too many questions. We had a 45 minute session and planned for 9 questions. We ended up speeding through the last few because they spurred such terrific, expansive discussion.

• Wait until the day of your presentation to test out the functionality in real time. The polls may display differently to your audience than they displayed in creation mode.

• Be surprised if one or more attendees has issues with responding. In any scenario in which we're relying on technology, anything can (and probably will) go wrong for at least one person in your audience. If you have the ability to do some quick troubleshooting, go for it, but don't let your presentation be derailed by temperamental devices. If someone is having trouble responding digitally, ask them to speak out.

Utilizing live polling in a conference presentation setting requires you to wear a variety of hats. This kind of presentation must be dynamic, fast-paced, well-organized, and presented by those who are confident in engaging an audience for an extended period of time. Presenters will go beyond information sharing and will need to prompt their audience for input, ask follow-up questions, solicit alternative viewpoints, provide clarification on questions and answers, quickly summarize audience responses, encourage networking, and ultimately know when to move on to the next question. Active participation is fun and stimulating, but there must be an element of learning.

Our biggest takeaway from live polling at the **Charleston Conference** was that this will greatly change the dynamic of the traditional "session." Instead of the usual format of "let me tell you about what we did at our library and then you ask questions if we have time" (and there's nothing wrong with this format), live polling puts the power into the hands of the audience. The session becomes something more like "tell us what you did/think/feel and then let's discuss immediately." The most valuable and memorable presentations I've attended in my admittedly short five years in the profession have been those that engage the audience in the discussion *throughout*, instead of in a rush for questions at the end. Our polling sessions were not the most well-attended of the conference, but we saw more connections made, tough questions asked and answered, and commiseration over shared struggles than we saw in others. Contributing to a body of knowledge is empowering in a way that absorbing information is not. Not all presentations or instruction sessions will be appropriate for live polling, but we are absolutely sold. In an era when Powerpoint seems to be going the way of the VCR, why not shake things up a bit? 🐟

*Author's Note: To participate in the survey questions from this session, and to view updated results from online participants, visit the ATG NewsChannel at **http://www.against-the-grain.com/2014/12/poll-a-palooza/**. — EG*

@Brunning: People & Technology

At the Only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

by **Dennis Brunning** (Director, The Design School Library, Arizona State University) <dennis.brunning@gmail.com>

Guide for the Perplexed:
Where Books Gather

How awesome that one of our storage centers might be located in an industrial area by a river. We could then say, in honesty, truth, and a smile, that our books "gather by the river." An even better image would be storage built above, around, a stream. Architects, in higher end design, love this — and we could say, "and a river runs through it."

Unfortunately, lame humor cannot cope with the sadness the trend toward off-site storage evokes. Call librarians gatekeepers, out of need we were; what we kept safe, sound, dry, and within reach warranted gatekeeping.

Not any longer. Stack locations are often "off-site." Storage solutions are library conversations. Check out my pal **Jeff Carrico's** presentation. With **Emory University** librarians **Lars Meyer** and **Charles Spornick** held a great session at the **Charleston Conference** on a partnership in building a **Harvard**-style off-site storage for all of **Georgia Tech's** print collection and a million or so books from **Emory**.

It's a great plan that lays out putting all **Georgia Tech** books in storage plus one million **Emory** titles as well. Knowing **Jeff** and his colleagues, I can't imagine anything but an exemplary execution. It's fascinating to listen to how books are boxed by size and placed in "cubes" which rest on pallets. Cooled to a constant fifty degrees. A true academic **Amazon**.

And with its completion and startup, one more storage location will join the ever-growing directory of such facilities off-loading the print book to somewhere else.

Besides giving us a new meaning of "cool books," permanent irrevocable book storage also ushers us into a flipped vision of **Ray Bradbury's** *Fahrenheit 451*. **Bradbury** depicts a world where it wasn't Big Brother so much as Little Sister who through technology and mass exploitation relieved a stressed society from its intellectual toil. Of course, the book was old school, a relic of the past, and