

Welcome to my first *ITAL* president's column. Each president only gets a year to do these columns, so expectations must be low all around. My hope is to stimulate some thinking and conversation that results in LITA members' ideas being exchanged and to create real opportunities to implement those ideas.

My first column I thought I would keep short and sweet, and discuss just a few of the ideas that have been rattling around in my head since the 2007 Midwinter LITA Town Meeting, which have been enhanced by a number of discussions among librarians over the last six months. With any luck, these thoughts might have some bearing on what any of those ideas could mean to our organization.

First off, I don't think I can express how weird this whole presidential appellation is to me. I am extremely proud to be associated with LITA, and honored and surprised at being elected. I come from a consortia environment and an extremely flat organization. Solving problems is often a matter of throwing all the parties in a room together and hashing it out until solutions are arrived at. I've been a training librarian for quite a while now, and pragmatic approaches to problem solving are my central focus. I'm a consortia wrangler, a trainer, and a technology pusher, and I hope my approach is, and will be, to listen hard and then see what can be accomplished. So in my own way, I find being president kind of on the embarrassing side. It's like not knowing what to do with your hands when you're speaking in public.

At the LITA Town Meeting (<http://litablog.org/2007/06/17/lita-town-meeting-2007-report/>) it was pretty obvious that members want community in all its various forms, face-to-face in multiple venues and online in multiple venues. It's also pretty obvious from the

studies done by Pew Internet and American Life and by OCLC that our users, and in particular our younger users, really want community. The Web 2.0 and the Library 2.0 movements are responses to that desire. As a somewhat flippant observation, we spent a generation educating our kids to work in groups, and now we shouldn't be surprised that they want to work and play in groups. Many of us work effectively in collaborative groups everyday. We find it exciting, productive, and even fun. It's an environment that we would like to create for our patrons, in-house and virtually. It's what we would like to see in our association.

Having been to every single Top Tech Trends program and listened to the LITA trendsters, one theme that often comes up is that complaining about the systems our vendors deliver can at times be pointless, because they simply deliver what we ask for. There is of course a corollary to this. Once a system is in the marketplace, adding functionality often becomes centered around the low-hanging fruit. As a fictitious example, a vendor might easily add the ability to change the colors of the display to the patron, but adding a shelf list browse might take serious coding to create. So through discussions and RFP, we ask for and get the pretty colors while the browsing function waits, a form of procrastination. So then does innovation come only when all the low-hanging fruit has finally been plucked, and there's nothing else to procrastinate on?

As social organizations, libraries, ALA, LITA and other groups, it appears that we have plucked all the low-hanging fruit of Web 1.0. E-mail and static Web pages have been done to death. As a pragmatist, what concerns me most is implementation. What delivery systems should and can we adopt and develop to fulfill the promise of services we'd like? Can we ensure that barriers to participation are either eliminated or so low as to include everyone? I like to think that Web 2.0 is innovation toward mirroring how we personally want to work and play and how we want our social structures to perform. So how can we make LITA mirror how we want to work and play? I do know it's not just making everything a wiki.

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