

Statewide training program benefits from online content and trainer collaboration



Online learning tools extend training reach

Situation

In early 2010, trainers and training coordinators from the State Library of Kansas and Kansas' seven regional library systems began looking for a way to coordinate their efforts to develop a collaborative, statewide continuing education event on a topic of high value to the Kansas library community. The program "Everyday Ethics" grew out of these efforts and included a variety of training sessions focused on the ethics of library services: a national speaker who provided an overview of library ethics in a two-hour video conference session and seven supplemental webinars that focused on concrete applications of library ethics.

According to Cindi Hickey, Director of Library Development, "An essential criterion of the program was that it be available statewide, and to accommodate that goal a combination of desktop online sessions and video conferencing was employed. This was necessary because many Kansas library staff cannot travel for continuing education. Online tools enabled all interested library staff to participate in any or all of the webinars through either the live sessions or the program archives."

In fact, the program archives themselves have become a comprehensive collection of content used by library staff for asynchronous continuing education and by learning cohorts coupled with live discussion for staff development. This program was designed to benefit both librarians and library support staff, and the variety of formats used attracted staff from public, school, academic and special libraries.

Program goals

The goals of this training program, as defined for learners, included:

- Exploration of a topic that fit within the core competencies defined by the state's Library Administrators Certification Program at the level of the learners' choosing.

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- Opportunity to earn continuing education credit for attendance at either a live event or by viewing the program archives.

The goals of this training program, as defined for trainers and training coordinators, included:

- Selection of a topic that was both broad in scope and appeal that could be presented on both a macro and a micro level.
- Build a collection of content that could be sustained online for "just-in-time" access by future individual and group users through the WebJunction portal.
- A secondary goal for the state library was to provide the regional system consultants with training and practice using both WebJunction and the state library's webconferencing tool.

Implementation

As they designed the program, the training coordinators worked to specifically exploit all online learning systems and opportunities available: the WebJunction-Kansas portal, high-definition video conference equipment, the



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statewide library association annual conference and the Wimba classroom webconferencing tool. This blend of tools and programs was selected to provide choices in the learning environment: face-to-face at both the conference and the video conference and virtual via the videos and the live and archived webinars.

The video conference was specifically designed to incorporate local discussion and reporting back to the larger group. Learning materials were provided to the site facilitators and the participants prior to the video conference.

The webinars varied in presentation style but all offered the opportunity for the participants to ask questions and offered insights and comments both orally and through the chat area of the Wimba classroom.

Learners were encouraged to make their own program selections from the training array and attendance was voluntary unless required by the participants' employers. Future use of the training archives is completely at the discretion of the participant. Continuing education credits are granted by the state library based on a short essay provided by a participant that discusses new content encountered and how the information provided through the session will be useful in his/her daily job.

Successes

- Librarians in the state expressed appreciation for the learning opportunities, both live and archived.
- The training team planned together and then worked independently to develop the separate sessions.
- All members of the training team gained experience in both presenting their own virtual training and in working collaboratively to develop training content.
- The state library gained experience in coordinating content development and presentation on WebJunction.

Advice for others using this training approach

- Build a training team of people with diverse perspectives.
- Allow plenty of time for discussion and planning.
- Exploit the diverse skills of the training team to build the training elements and to train and support the training team as well as the participants.
- If building this program with a group that has not actively collaborated together before, build in team-building activities and some kind of training in collaboration.
- Although this training group did not offer webinar orientation (practice sessions in the webinar environment for participants) this added preparation is recommended.

TOOLS USED

- WebJunction-Kansas
- High-definition video conferencing equipment
- Wimba Classroom (webconferencing tool)

LINKS

WebJunction-Kansas: <http://ks.webjunction.org>

Everyday Ethics for Libraries: <http://ks.webjunction.org/742>

Core competencies & the Kansas Certification Program:
http://ks.webjunction.org/ks_continuing_education/

CONTACT

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