First Year Engineering Students Invading The Library: Integrating Outreach, Collaboration, and Information Literacy

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EVENT GOALS

- Establish and foster relationships with faculty, staff, and students in the science and engineering departments
- Familiarize our patrons with the services that are available through the libraries
- Promote a library atmosphere that is non-threatening and conducive to learning
- Make the libraries an integral part of a university-wide service

OUTPOST LAYOUT

Each station included a library staff member who explained the nature of the station for about 1-2 minutes. Each talk included some aspect of information literacy (eg. how to find articles) that connected with the Silk Road and the library services being discussed. Station layouts varied greatly...the Silk Station contained a Chinese wedding dress, while the Reference Desk was set up as an oasis with comfy chairs are around the desk and tea for attendees to sample. The food station had fortune cookies with library-related fortunes.

Most stations also contained informational posters that further informed attendees on the Silk Road and library services.

"Follow the Silk Road to Brill Science Library and IMC (Instructional Materials Center) was created as a fun method for Miami students/faculty/staff to become acquainted with our library. The Silk Road was chosen because it gave us an opportunity to partner with another University Center (The Hawighurst Center for Soviet and Post-Russian Studies), and provided grant funding, not money from the library budget.

The afternoon-long event transformed Brill into an ancient trading route of the Silk Road, featuring several posters with information on library services and aspects of this ancient trade. Stations included circulation services, silk gemsstones, innovations, reference services, food & spices, maps, IMC services, and the Silk Road Theater featuring faculty presentations.

Attendees arrived at a tent (yurt) posted outside the library where they received their passport to document their attendance at the outposts. Attendees were required to attend 5 stations and to fill out a short assessment. Completed passports were submitted to be eligible for prizes (IPods, gift certificates, university paraphernalia) and to document attendance for those who were required to attend or received extra credit for attending.

500 people visited the Science Library during the afternoon of September 23, 2009, with approximately 60% of the attendees Engineering and Computer Science majors. All of the first-year engineering computer science students were required to attend as part of an endeavor to infuse information literacy into the first-year engineering experience.

The event was a huge success, with those attending not only having a good time, but also learning more about the library in a laid-back and non-threatening environment. Plans for a 2009 orientation are currently underway.

The PASSPORT

MARTKETING

The following methods were utilized in publicizing the event:

- A unified logo for all documents (see below)
- A blog to keep users updated on the event: http://brillinthesilkroad.blogspot.com
- A countdown poster at the entrance of the library
- Partnership with faculty to require attendance or provide extra credit for students attending
- Small adverts placed in books at checkout
- Adverts in new faculty/grad student packets
- Press Releases (University Newspapers) Placement on University Calendar

You will discover that there are many other tools besides Google to accomplish good research.