


Name of Library	Fraser Coast Libraries	
Address	161 Old Maryborough Road, Pialba Q 4655	
Phone	(07) 41974223	
Contact Person/s	Karla Chisholm and Mark Shelton	

Title of project/innovation/initiative	Book a Librarian
Date Initiated	2010
Date completed	Ongoing

The issue/challenge

To assist library customers with technology related queries that may not be appropriate during a computer class environment.

Project details

Although this is not a new idea for many public libraries, the Book a Librarian Service evolved as an enhancement to the Basic Computer Classes.

We offer a range of 1.5 hour user education classes, covering topics such as Internet searching, basic computer, email, database, and web2.0. These are fairly basic courses, where generally only low-level keyboard and mouse skills are required, or in the case of the Basic Computer class, NO prior knowledge is required.

We found that many of the customers that attended our computer classes were at different levels of experience, skills and knowledge. For example, some customers had little or no experience using a mouse or a keyboard and other customers were quite computer savvy and were attending the classes to learn extra tips, tricks and shortcuts. This meant that two library staff members were required for the class – one to teach and the other to go around and assist customers to stay in sync with the tutor.

In the beginning customers with little or no computer experience would come in and be shown websites that would improve their mouse and keyboard skills, using the internet, researching with online databases, searching the catalogue and assistance with research topics.

As time progressed, many of these customers became “regulars” and as the customers’ confidence grew so did the complexity of their questions.

The Book a Librarian service was then offered to the class as extra one on one tutoring, to answer specific questions relating to patron’s individual needs.

Some of the topics we have assisted patrons with include:

Computer help:

- Keyboard and mouse lessons
- Operating system specific questions (e.g. XP vs Vista vs Windows7)

GPS devices:

- initial setup
- downloading and installing GPS control software and user manuals to laptops
- Map updating advice

eAudio:

- Connecting to the websites
- Setting up a user account
- Reserving titles
- Downloading parts or the whole books
- Saving to an MP3 device
- Removing the files

eReaders:

- Initial setup
- Accessing both paid and free download sites
- Downloading

Email:

- Configuration
- Attachments
- Exporting and importing mail and contacts

Images:

- Best practice resizing for printing vs email

Social Networking:

- Facebook
- Twitter

Over the last twelve months we have not been inundated with customers wanting one-on-one assistance, but our statistics are steady with approximately 10 customers per month. It is a challenge for us to make sure that the assistance given falls within the parameters of assisting patrons in their search for information. A number of customers have asked for computer laptop assistance, which can involve some troubleshooting of software issues. Care is taken that we don't become a "computer service" centre, and that our focus remains on information services.

These one-on-one classes have dove-tailed well with the more recent online self-paced tutorial classes offered by the State Library of Queensland, and also the Computerschool.net site which we have recently subscribed to for our members benefit.

Feedback from our patrons has been consistently positive. Many customers comment that we are able to solve their specific problem or query, and many are keen to come back for extra assistance.

The one-on-one service goes toward providing a resource-rich environment for our patrons, to empower them with as many options as possible to increase their information research skills.