Virtual Participation Task Force Meeting

October 14, 2010

2:30 – 4:00 pm

In Attendance: Amanda Rust, Chad Curtis, David Oberhelman**,** Liorah Golomb and John Venecek,

Agenda:

1.   Review progress to date:

- Other ACRL Sections' virtual participation guidelines, plans, etc.

- Comparison of virtual meeting/conference calling platforms

2.   LES Virtual Participation Recommendations

- ACRL requirements (open meetings, etc.)

- Logistics: virtual only or hybrid virtual/face-to-face meetings?

- Platform recommendations?

- Timeline: Midwinter 2012?

- Changes to Governance Principles?

3. Next Steps

- Test out another meeting platform? (Schedule for November?)

- Draft recommendations to show LES Exec (December?)

- Meet at ALA MW (All Committees Meeting, Monday, 8:00-10:00)?

- Future steps: recommendations, testing, etc.

Discussion

Opened with some suggestions for possible virtual meeting platforms to consider. Among those mentioned were DimDim, Skype, Google Video, Fuze, Yugma, Vyew, Go to Meeting and Elluminate.

David wondered if any groups were using Second Life as an option. Chad mentioned that they have experimented with SL at NYU and there have been problems due to software requirements and user

comfort. Amanda pointed out that, as a benefit, participants can use avatars to give clues to when they are speaking, typing, thinking, etc.

There was a glitch in the chat at this point that left the discussion of SL unresolved.

Discussion then turned to how these platforms would work with ALA requirements for open meetings. The decision was made that we would need to test several of these platforms, and Amanda asked if it would be best to ask other LES committees to test them before Mid Winter and provide feedback.

There was some discussion about whether chat would suffice, and Chad suggested a discussion board as well. David pointed out that there is no guaranteed Internet access at MW, so that could make doing a live virtual meeting difficult.

There was an extended discussion about the cost of Internet access and experience others have had holding meetings with cell phones and other approaches (combinations of laptops, phones, etc).

David then turned the discussion to the possibility of holding a virtual meeting in the fall and making MW optional, or of making MW a hybrid live/virtual meeting. The general feeling was that hybrid might be the best option, but also the hardest.

It was also noted that it would be hard to make MW mandatory because of budget issues at many libraries, which again led to the idea of having some sort of virtual option for MW.

Chad suggested that adding audio to ALA Connect would solve all these problems and that we should lobby with other sections to make this improvement. He suggested that this would help them retain involvement at MW and David agreed suggesting that he thinks they will become more virtual in the future.

David next suggested the idea of a virtual unconference. "Join the LES Midwinter Online Social from 4-5pm" or something along those lines. Timing it to coincide with MW would give everyone the option of either a face to face or virtual meeting. Chad again suggested the idea of using Second Life to manage this and both David Amanda suggested recruiting people to serve as "bridges" (i.e. bloggers or texters who would report in real time).

The general consensus was that the group was leaning toward having a virtual meeting in the fall, and (if possible with internet access), hybrid at MW. Conversation then turned back to comparing features of different virtual meeting platforms and – after some discussion about whether it would be a good idea to have other LES committees run tests and report back – it was agreed that the VPTF would take on the task of selecting a few to test out prior to MW.

Amanda has also created a "technology metrics," which we can edit and continue to build as we test these platforms.

We decided to set up the exact dates and times of the tests via email and the meeting Adjourned.