Assessment of Biomedical and Science Librarian E-science Learner and User Needs to Develop an E-science Web Portal and Support Library and Institutional E-science Initiatives and Collaborations

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INTRODUCTION
The Lamar Soutter Library of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the New England Regional Medical Library have been awarded funding for the development of an interactive e-Science web portal that will integrate e-Science resources, content development and instructional tools, and a social networking and discussion forum for librarians.

As part of the development of this portal initiative, the research team conducted surveys to biomedical and science librarians in New England for input that will help us focus and align the portal with e-Science user needs and web 2.0 preferences, and get an idea of how many biomedical and science libraries and librarians are currently participating in e-Science endeavors.

METHODS
- The investigating team received feedback from an e-Science Symposium and workshop.
- The small investigating team researched and developed questions.
- The small investigating team then created a survey using SurveyMonkey.
- A small group of medical librarians then tested the survey.
- Based on the feedback from the testing, the survey was revised.
- The survey was then administered to science and medical librarians. After three weeks, the responses were collected and analyzed.

RESULTS

Do you provide E-Science related library services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General e-science distribution list</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLC Directors</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors of New England Regional Libraries</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected members of BLC biology listserv</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected members of BLC chemistry listserv</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected NER members</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys returned</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>168</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E-Science definition provided to survey recipients:

- E-Science describes the collaboration among computationally intensive science disciplines that create immense data sets that are "captured, transported, stored, organized, accessed, mixed, visualized, and interpreted in order to extract knowledge" ...

- The e-Science role for librarians is characterized by interdisciplinary research collaboration and the collection, organization, and management of data.

Research Question: What are the biomedical and science librarian e-Science web portal user needs and web 2.0 preferences in order to support the development and strengthening of libraries' e-Science initiatives and collaborations?

DISCUSSION

Preliminary results reveal a small yet significant number of diverse biomedical and science libraries actively engaged or actively pursuing e-Science collaborations within and outside of their institutions and a large number interested in such collaborations and endeavors. These results indicate librarians have urgent needs for online scientific content, especially informatics related, data tools’ tutorials and support, web 2.0 tools to facilitate the exchange of e-Science knowledge and experience among colleagues, and e-Science-related continuing education and professional development. In addition and important to note, the results indicate a significant need for and lack of awareness of online e-Science resources.

CONCLUSION

Biomedical and science librarians need an interactive e-Science web portal that integrates e-Science web resources and web 2.0 instructional tools and a forum for librarians.

Additional areas for future research include identifying and examining the specific types of e-Science collaborations and endeavors among biomedical and scientific institutions and their libraries and librarians, and studying the future effectiveness and/or impact of the web portal and its resources and web 2.0 tools on these collaborations and endeavors.

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