

IM What IM

Demystifying Virtual Communication
CARL-N IT Interest Group Workshop
August 25, 2006—San Jose, CA

Locke Morrisey

University of San Francisco

morrisey@usfca.edu

IM What IM...

- Background on USF
 - Approximately 7800 FTE at main campus plus 4 regional sites
 - 2/3 Undergraduate vs. 1/3 Graduate students
 - Private Jesuit Catholic University
 - Liberal arts as well as schools of Business, Education, Law, Nursing & Professional Studies
 - 2 libraries
 - Gleeson Library/Geschke Center
 - Zief Law Library

IM What IM...

- Background on Gleeson/Geschke
 - Dean plus 15 librarians on campus plus a part-time librarian at each regional campus
 - About half the campus librarians provide some kind of Reference service which includes:
 - E-mail Reference
 - Consortial 24/7 Virtual Reference (AJCU)
 - Reference by appointment
 - Phone & in person...

<http://www.usfca.edu/library/ask.html>

IM What IM...

- So why IM ?
 - Looking for a better way to reach our students
 - Declining numbers using other reference services
 - Hearing or speaking impaired students
 - Campus initiative to expand services by using new technologies
 - Low cost to implement
 - Not platform dependent (works on Macs and PCs)
 - Potential for high visibility/impact with minimal effort

IM what IM...

- Getting started...
 - Task force of 3 individuals (intern, new librarian, reference/technology librarian)
 - Literature Review (bibliography on CARL IT Web site)
 - **IM vs. Web-based Chat**
<http://libraryvoice.com/archives/2005/06/24/im-versus-web-based-chat/>
 - **IM'ers not digital reference chatters?**
http://blog.uwinnipeg.ca/schwagbag/archives/2005/05/imers_not_digital_2.html
 - **Web-based chat vs. instant messaging**
<http://www.oregonlibraries.net/staff/?p=178>
 - What kind of service level and how it is to be provided
 - Start off with a pilot project with librarians

IM what IM...

- Next steps for implementation...
 - Choose IM software (GAIM)
 - Set up Reference IM handles with different IM clients
 - Develop a marketing plan
 - Fliers, e-mail, word of mouth, instruction sessions
 - Provide training for librarians
 - Not just the mechanics but the culture of IM as well
 - You and your user may possibly be gender and culture blind

IM what IM...

- Issues needing to be resolved...
 - Who are you going to serve?
 - Do you separately staff for IM service?
 - If not, how do you handle multiple services (IM, in person, phone) at the same time?
 - Who is your primary responder to IM?
 - What kind of questions do you answer on IM?
 - What kind of security issues are there?
 - What DON'T you know about your patron?

IM what IM...

- Where are we today?
 - Feast or famine—3 IM's an hour to 3 a day
 - Librarians are pleased with the service they're providing
 - Moreover...patrons LOVE the new service
 - LibraryUSF: did my explanation make sense??
User: again, total. Thanks. I love this feature of USF!
 - "this is a really cool system i'm glad you guys have implemented thanks again"
 - -- "AIM... you'll never get rid of me now! ;)“
 - “Yeah!”

IM what IM...

- Where do we go from here?
 - Measure who is using our service
 - Create a user satisfaction survey
 - Ramp up publicity for Fall 2006!
 - What about the “teachable moment”?

Questions and discussion?