

**Media MashUp Formative Report  
Organizational Change Interviews with  
Professional Audience**

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## Introduction

Media MashUp is an IMLS funded project (Grant LG-07-08-0113<sup>1</sup>) to help libraries build capacity to offer computer-based programs for youth that help foster 21<sup>st</sup> Century literacy skills. Twenty first Century literacy skills include traditional literacy skills like reading and writing, but also encompass collaborative problem solving, and computer-based skills ([www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org)). As such, libraries and other institutions that help foster a literate public need to adapt to this new reality. Peppler and Kafai (2007) suggest that libraries and other informal learning environments are ideal settings for youth to develop these literacy skills. However, change can be difficult, and the necessary steps to affect change are not always apparent at first. In Game Studio (Nelson, 2008), a pilot version of this project, a number of unanticipated organizational barriers were identified that hindered implementation of this type of program in libraries.

These barriers included incompatibilities between the library setting and the teaching approach, difficulties in using traditional evaluation methods in library settings, and difficulties recruiting and maintaining youth participation (Nelson, 2008). Building on these findings, a significant part of the Media MashUp project is dedicated to developing a better understanding of the organizational change that needs to occur in libraries to adapt to the emerging paradigm of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy needs.

While the public audience for this grant is the youth who participate in the Media MashUp programs at these libraries, this report focuses on the professional audience of library staff from the participating libraries. The professional staff, who work at six different libraries around the country, gathered in Minneapolis, MN January 5-9, 2009 to attend the initial training workshop.

As a group the project staff discussed common barriers to implementing Media MashUp and other teen programs at their libraries. Additionally staff from each library discussed the particular barriers, and possible solutions, at their home institution with the project evaluators. The six library systems involved with this grant represent a diversity of library systems with a diversity of barriers and potential solutions with regard to implementing Media MashUp and other drop-in youth programs. This report details findings from the group discussion and interviews with project staff from individual libraries.

## Methodology

Organizational issues were first discussed as a group, then project staff from each library system were interviewed in teams to better detail the specific barriers and strategies for dealing with those barriers. The interviews were transcribed and then analyzed using an open-ended, iterative coding scheme. Codes are described below and representative passages are included from the interviews. In addition to looking at group as a whole, the library-specific concerns are addressed.

In this version of the report (for the eyes of PIs and evaluators directly involved with the project) library names are included in the settings section. In reports that will be shared with any other person, pseudonyms for the libraries and the project staff will be used.

## Setting

The six library systems involved in this project include urban, rural, and suburban systems that serve geographically and demographically diverse populations. Descriptions of each library system follow.

### *Columbia Public Library*

Columbia Public Library is located in a highly affluent 'bedroom community' outside of a major metropolitan center. Columbia has under 30,000 people, about 30% are under the age of 18 and about 10% are aged 10-14. The median household income is slightly over \$100,000 per year; only 2% of the general population and 2% of children live in poverty. Columbia's population is predominantly white (90%), Asian Americans make up most of the remainder of the population (8%).

Columbia Public Library has an adult services coordinator and a youth services coordinator who share responsibility for reference, website development, and programming staff. The library employs children's librarians, but does not have a dedicated teen librarian. The IMLS project staff are a youth services librarian and an adult reference librarian who works with teens and has website responsibilities. Columbia Public Library is the only library involved with the Media MashUp grant with only one branch.

### *Public Library of Ashton and South County*

The Public Library of Ashton and South County is a large suburban/urban library system serving a total population of just over 900,000. The median income of households in South County is a little over \$50,000, 11% of the general population and 15% of children live in poverty. About one quarter of the population are under the age of 18, and about 5% are between the ages of 10-14. The majority of adults in South County have high school diplomas or the equivalency and about one quarter of adults have college degrees. Two thirds of the population are white, about 30% are African American, and about 10% identify as Latino/a or Hispanic.

The Public Library of Ashton and South County is currently undergoing an organizational restructuring. As of the writing of this document, the library system has a teen services department and a children's services department. Currently there is no youth services coordinator at the senior management level. The staff involved in the Media MashUp project are a technology education librarian and a outreach education coordinator. The Public Library of Ashton and South County has about 25 branches.

### *Port City Public Library*

Port City Public Library serves an urban population of 570,000, 15% of the population is under 18 and 5% are between the ages of 10-14. The median household income in Port City is about \$53,000; 13% of the general population and 14% of children live in poverty. Educational attainment is high in Port City, 95% of adults have high school diplomas and about half of the adults have college degrees. About 10% African American, about 15% Asian American, about 70% of the population is white, and about 5% identify as Latino/a or Hispanic.

The Port City Public Library has a youth services manager who resides in the Program and Services Development unit. The library has teen and children's services librarians at multiple locations. The IMLS project staff are teen services librarians. Port City Public Library has about 30 branches.

### *Winchester Public Library*

Winchester Public Library serves an urban population of about 650,000, children under the age of 18 make up about one quarter of the population and children aged 10-14 are 8% of the total population. About two thirds of the population of Winchester are African American, and the other third are white. The median household income is about \$35,000 per year, 20% of the general population and 35% of children live in poverty. Eighty percent of the adults in Winchester have high school diplomas or equivalency, and about one third of the adult residents are considered to low literacy.

The Winchester Public Library has an adult services coordinator and a youth services coordinator. The library employs children's librarians and adult librarians who share teen

responsibilities. The project staff from the Winchester Public Library are the youth services coordinator, an adult librarian and a library assistant. The adult librarian and the library assistant have dedicated responsibilities to teen services. There are about 20 branches in the Winchester Public Library.

#### *Foreston Public Library*

Foreston Public Library serves a large urban area of 1.5 million people, 25% of the population is under age 18 and 7% of the total population are aged 10-14. Median household income in this area is about \$35,000, 25% of the general population and 35% of children under 18 live in poverty. A little less than half of the population of Foreston is African American, and a little less than half are white, about 10% of the population identifies as Latino/a or Hispanic. About three quarters of the population have high school diplomas or equivalency, and about 20% of the adults have college degrees.

The Foreston Public Library employs teen and children's services librarians as well as a number of non-librarian staff who are responsible for much of the youth programming. The Media MashUp project staff are a teen outreach specialist and a program development coordinator. The teen outreach specialist is the only Media MashUp project staff who does not hold, or is not working towards a post-graduate degree in library sciences. The Foreston Public Library has about 55 branches.

#### *Lake County Library*

Lake County Library serves a suburban and urban population of approximately 1.1 million. About one quarter of the population in Lake County is under the age of 18 and about 5% are between the ages of 10-14. The median household income in Lake County is \$65,000, 11% of the total population and 15% of children under age 18 live below the poverty line. About 10% of the population is African American, 5% is Asian American, about 80% of the population is white, and about 5% identify as Latino/a or Hispanic. About 90% of adults have high school diplomas or equivalencies and about two fifths of the adults have college degrees.

Lake County Library has a youth services coordinator and employs teen and children's librarians. The project staff are both teen librarians. Lake County Library has about 40 branches.

#### *Note on organizational structure of participating libraries:*

The youth services coordinator positions at the Columbia and Winchester Libraries are senior management positions, and these coordinators report directly to the director and are on the senior management team. At the Ashton & South County, Port City, Foreston and Lake County libraries the youth services coordinators do not report directly to the director. Youth services coordinators are within the "library services" division at these libraries. Children's and teen librarians in Port City, Lake County and Ashton & South County libraries report to a library services manager, not to the youth services manager. However the outreach education librarian at Ashton & South County reports to the outreach manager. At Winchester and Columbia libraries the participating librarians report within adult services.

### **Barriers**

In order to better support the project staff involved with the Media MashUp grant, and with an eye toward expanding the program to other libraries, it is crucial to understand the barriers to implementation. Since there were a number of unforeseen barriers that arose in the pilot program, a significant portion of this grant is focused on addressing the barriers associated with this drop-in, computer-based youth programming in libraries.

Barriers were addressed as a group, and as individual libraries. In a group brainstorming session seven broad categories were developed with a number of examples (the full list with examples under each category is in the appendix). The categories of barriers include:

- Technical support
- Flexible program development and marketing
- Staff funding and allocation
- Equipment availability
- Teen investment
- Staff professional development
- Fear of change in profession

After developing this list of barriers, project staff from each library were interviewed to further explore individual barriers and current and potential solutions to overcome these barriers. While some of the barriers and solutions or strategies for overcoming these barriers are library specific, some of them cut across institutions. Each code is listed in bold with a brief description and one or two representative examples. Following the list of codes, each library system is examined individually with respect to their perceived barriers and their strategies and solutions for overcoming those barriers.

**Barriers – bureaucracy:** These barriers are related to rigid policies and procedures that make youth-appropriate, or technology-rich programming difficult. Most, but not all of these barriers are IT related.

- “So it's a bureaucracy and, and to implement and change means you have to involve, either you have to do something completely independent, um, which then never becomes part of the system or you have to involve the bureaucracy and, and work your way through it and get not necessarily policy change, but procedural change.”
- “Everything [surrounding IT] is so regimented that it has to go through a panel of people to get approval.”

**Barriers – publicity:** These barriers deal with advertising Scratch and other youth programs in a manner that is simultaneously consistent with library policy and appropriate for youth programming

- “I mean we've got people to do it, um, like this other project that I'm doing and I finally just said I can't stand this. I, I cannot figure this system out, I'm gonna, and I gotta design student, she's going to do the flyers. I will go into Retro Graphics myself and print them and distribute 'em because I can't keep, I don't even understand how the schedule works and all the paperwork to submit so that you can get something done by our and that may just be me but by our marketing.”
- “I mean, 'cause when they come in, they come in to check their email or myspace or hang out with their friends. They're not lookin' at brochures. For the most part. Some folks might, but... I don't think, yeah, info dates is boring looking. I don't pick it up. So I mean, they wouldn't pick it up. It's blue and white. [sighs]”

**Barriers – scalability:** These barriers deal with issues of implementing Scratch in multiple branches and/or with staff who aren't a part of this IMLS grant.

- “And just really trying to roll out something like this system-wide, you know. I mean we can do what we can do at our own branch and his outreach, so he'll do the community, but really trying to get other people on board really takes some, you know finesse. Because every branch feels like they've got their own, umm, responsibilities and

programs and they're swamped with things, so it's kind of like how do you add one more thing to the pile?"

**Barriers – scheduling:** These barriers deal with scheduling Scratch programs so that they are at times that are convenient to youth as well as for staff and other patrons. We're just using our days off. [laughs] Yeah, we're just losing some time on our days off.

- “A thought I have is making sure staff get compensated and have enough time to do the programs. Like schedule-wise, for instance, I'm almost always at the reference desk. So I have to make sure that I can make sure that I can get away and not work too many hours, and get a sub and stuff like that.”

**Barriers – space:** Barriers dealing with finding appropriate space for running Scratch programs.

- “And if I could change, it'd probably be having a dedicated teen space that's integrated with the library as a whole so that when kids are coming in, like when these kids come, they don't, I mean, they wouldn't even have to be in the library if they're on the fourth floor, there's no books or anything around them, that's just kind of a space... This is, this is our space that we could go to. Um, and that's something we've been, we've just been working for ages to try and get done and supposedly when we build our new library.”
- “Well, we can also yank a room from anybody else 'cause we're staff. That's a nice thing.”

### **Barriers – staff attitudes**

These barriers relate to the attitudes of some staff. Attitudes include beliefs that teens do not belong in the library in the first place, that programs need to be linked to library collections, and that computer games are not related to literacy.

- “We do! We have a huge teen author series, we have Nikki Giovanni coming, we have a great teen program. It's just that the librarians don't run them. It's run by a programmer!”
- “I think that that that's really a big piece is for staff, all staff, to have an understanding of, of how teens operate, um, and that they're coming from assets not um oh they're this noisy bunch of kids who just come in and want to make out and you know.”

**Barriers – staffing:** These barriers deal with librarians or other staff finding time in their schedule to run programs or to support youth using the library.

- “There's really no dedicated, um, you know, teen coordinators, um, they're not a group that's, that's been made a priority. So, so we've been fortunate in terms of grants to provide program use for teens.”
- “It goes beyond that, we have what's weird rotation because we have to work weekends and so I'm not even at my library at the same time, the same day every week and so unless I can get my teen text squads scheduled into take care of things, that's another challenge for me because we don't have, I mean, because our staff is so small, like, we have to do all kinds of weird gyrations to...”

**Barriers – technical:** These barriers include problems dealing with rigid IT departments (also a bureaucratic obstacle), out-dated computers, the inability to use computers fully due to security issues, or not being able to install Scratch on computers. There is some overlap with the bureaucracy barriers.

- “Our policy is that you cannot, download anything onto the library's computer.”
- “One thing to make technology programs easier... I would say probably more, more computers.”

**Barriers – youth attendance:** These barriers include scheduling programs where youth don't attend, and the perceived fickleness of youth – indicating they're interested in a certain type of program, but then not attending.

- “Because a lot of times there's tons of kids in the library, but those are not necessarily the kids that come to my, the programs.”
- “It just comes down to how, you know, what teens will want to come. Like who. What age group. 'cause in the past I've had the more luck with slightly younger audience. But if you get too young, it's no longer really teens and so finding that cut off that's still within the scope of this project, but, or else finding a way to appeal to the older teens which a lot of the time comes back to illegal downloads.”

## Strategies and Solutions

The project staff in this program have come up with a number of creative ways to alleviate the barriers to implementing Media MashUp and other programs for youth. Some of these strategies are suggestions that have not yet been implemented, and others are strategies and solutions that have been implemented in the library systems.

**Strategies and Solutions – changing/adapting Scratch:** These solutions include suggestions to modify the scratch environment to make it easier to use in library situations. There was only one instance of this code, but given the number of IT related issues it might be a solution that resonates for other libraries.

- “If you could just get on it from Internet Explorer...It would solve the problem... Like maybe it wouldn't have all the capabilities, but they'd still be able to...That would make it a hundred percent simpler. There would've been no IT hurdles to overcome, I think, besides like spacing and that would've been a branch thing. That would've been a building thing versus and IT thing.”

**Strategies and Solutions – covert:** These strategies and solutions are ones that work, but do not adhere to proper library protocol, or are solutions people would not necessarily tell their superiors about, that do not strictly adhere to library policy.

- “Just ignore IT and do it. (laugh) Like hack the computers (giggle). Seriously, and my manager supports that, so (giggle). Umm, that is one option, I guess. Sometimes I do programs myself at other branches to get people, you know, interested and on board with it. It's just that there's one of me, you know, and a lot of other branches.”
- Interviewer: “So you, there's the info dates issues, and then there are, but you can do programming separately from that.” Respondent 1: “Yes because everybody just has to. Yeah it's policy that doesn't work. So everybody's working around it. Um, and it's policy that [sighs] if we had um library administrators in place then we could probably work on the policy. But we don't, we have city administrators in place who... haven't found it interesting enough.” Respondent 2: “So that's a good thing and not a good thing. The policy doesn't get changed so we end up doing de facto practice.” Respondent 3: “Which is actually almost easier now that.” Respondent 1: “But it's still not good corporate practice. And although we got a snotty comment of oh you're making your own brochures now?”

**Strategies and Solutions – creative staffing:** These solutions include staff working on weekends or other times when they're not normally scheduled, and creating comp time systems to manage staffing Scratch events at times when they would work for youth.

- “There are ways around that and actually they're cheap fixes [to staffing shortages] which is, is run a background check on whoever the volunteer is. They're bonified, you can do it. So, that's, it's, this is all doable and we're just gonna have to suck it up.”
- “We've put some things in place around teen programming that I think help us... we have, um, part-time outreach specialist who are responsible for doing teen programming and

College work study students... Librarians to have anything to do with them [teens, and teen programs].”

**Strategies and Solutions – other funding:** Solutions that relate to external funding including this IMLS grant to alleviate staffing issues

- “I’m sort of doubling up this project with the tech squad and so that I can use those sub-funds.”
- “We’ve been involved in grants and doing lots of positive youth development and I had staff development around that and we’ve continued to do it.”

**Strategies and Solutions – overt:** These are strategies and solutions that are in accordance with library policy and protocol.

- “I think that we’re also, we know a little bit about constructionism and Seymour Papert and so we’re able to make the arguments that this is a type of learning that is innovative and particularly effective for the 21st century for developing sorts of skills that we’re going to need to see in our kids. And, that’s something that our library board appreciates, as well as the administration. That’s something that the kids themselves as well appreciate.”
- “She [my manager] set the expectation from the top of the department down, so that was very helpful. So, with this type of thing I could go to her and say we are participating in the grant, we, you know, she could work with me to make sure the rest of the department was on board.”
- “They [marketing] made me a flyer, like a template, and I just kind of slap up the next month.”

**Strategies and Solutions – personal sacrifice:** These solutions are similar to creative staffing, but occur in situations where staff are part time and are working extra hours as a part of the IMLS grant.

- Respondent 1: “We’re just using our days off. [laughs]” Respondent 2: “Yeah, we’re just losing some time on our days off. So, which, you know, we were able to agree to put in for. Well and we think it’s really important to change a lot of that stuff on that board and how if we’re not willing...” Respondent 1: “To show them that that’s what has to happen if they want this to happen.”

**Strategies and Solutions – youth empowerment:** These strategies include involving youth to help implement successful youth programming. These include bringing youth to present at board meetings and involving youth as Scratch teachers.

- “I think it resonates with the kids to a certain extent and we’ve been able to recruit them to help mentor one another, as a matter of fact, some of our Scratch programs are actually being run by members of our prior cohorts. We have kids who put together hand-outs. Who put together Power Point presentations and get together once a month as a club and plan gaming events, and I’ve had a couple who’ve gone out with me into library systems workshops and helped teach other librarians how to use Scratch. I had one just in November go out with me to the state school library association meeting and we offered a three-hour preconference workshop. He did much better than I did, I think, at that workshop at presenting Scratch.”
- “I mean, we’ve already got teen programming scheduled, we’ve already got teens who are coming and we have wireless network that can have the software downloaded.”



## **Library Specific Barriers and Solutions**

### *Columbia Public Library*

The Columbia Public Library seems well situated to adapt to the needs of today's youth. Columbia is a special case, they are a single branch library system situated in a highly affluent and highly educated community. In such a small system there is less bureaucracy than in larger systems, and fewer financial constraints than other less affluent communities. They had the fewest barriers to implementation and the greatest number of strategies and solutions. Columbia's barriers include not having a dedicated teen librarian, having only a few computers with internet access in the children's section, and ensuring that staff get compensated for their time. Their programs have been so successful that a large number of teenaged boys have begun to spend large amounts of time at the library and are spending lots of time in the staff areas. While the project staff (staff running Media MashUp) do not see this as a problem, other librarians do, so it has become a bit of a problem. The youth in Columbia are enthusiastic about the programming going on at the library, and are telling their friends. Word-of-mouth marketing has been so successful here that programs fill up far in advance and formal advertising is not a major concern.

One solution they have implemented to alleviate the perception that this is a problem is creating a teen advisory board that interacts with the library board. Opening the lines of communication between the teens and the library board has been a way to help the system adapt to the changes. They have been able to link participation in programs like Media MashUp with greater participation by teens.

The librarians at Columbia have also used learning theory specifically constructionism, the work of Seymour Papert and the work of Friedrich Froebel to help convince the library administration of the worth of this type of program for youth. They are the only library to talk about using this tactic and it seems to be successful.

### *Public Library of Ashton & South County*

The Public Library of Ashton and South County is a large library system that is currently undergoing a restructuring, so some of their current situation may change as a result of their restructuring. The project staff from Ashton/South face challenges of a changing profession in the face of staff who are reticent to change. They stated that about half the staff thinks that programs must have a direct connection to the collection and have a reading list that ties to the program, while the other half is supportive of self-directed, drop-in programming. Along the same lines, they suggested that the system needs to hire staff who have the appropriate skills (technology-wise) and are interested in working with teens. Another barrier they face is that as somewhat junior staff, they do not have the authority to get other staff members to do things. Although the project staff from Ashton/South have found some resistance from other staff toward implementing this kind of program, they feel that they have institutional support at high levels.

Like many other libraries they have IT issues that they fear could prevent system-wide implementation of Scratch or other programs. Their solution is to subvert the system, hack the computers and do it anyway. Managers support this strategy because the wait time for IT to get things done is unacceptable. Another computer related issue is the lack of computers available for teen programming. Many libraries in this system only have one set of public computers, so staff are unwilling to give up the public computers for youth workshops.

Unlike the other library systems involved in this project, one of the project staff is an outreach specialist who runs and organizes programs off-site. These off-site programs occur at juvenile correctional facilities, schools, community centers, festivals, etc. The project staff feel that without some sort of connection with curriculum that they will not go far offering "Scratch" to schools or other sites. Not that it might not be a useful program, but that without some sort of

introduction or prior relationship in place it will be difficult to do Scratch programs. While at a library youth may just 'drop-in' this isn't the case with off-site programming.

As with some of the other library systems, doing Scratch programming through this IMLS grant allows them to accomplish things they might not be able to do otherwise. The grant funding gives the project staff the cache to get things done around the library.

The outreach department at this library purchased a set of laptops about a year and a half ago that are dedicated to mobile youth programming activities. The outreach manager and the youth outreach manager were responding to requests from staff as well as members of the community in purchasing these laptops.

Unlike some other library systems where project staff are required to adhere to rigid marketing guidelines, the project staff at this library are able to make use of social networking sites to advertise upcoming Scratch programs. As the project staff point out, youth are looking at Facebook and MySpace, not the printed brochure mailed out to the community. There are few if any restrictions or guidelines as to what project staff can post to their social networking pages.

Additionally, these staff feel free to try out new things, and don't feel pressure to have 'enough' youth attend a program for it to be considered cost effective. There is an attitude at this library system that they need to try things out to figure out what times, settings and marketing mechanisms will work best to reach the youth audiences.

### *Port City Public Library*

According to the Port City librarians IT, youth buy-in, and staffing are the major barriers to successful implementation of Scratch and other youth programming. They point out that staffing is not a problem for them because it is covered by the grant, but that they will have problems implementing Scratch programming at other branches because of other demands on staff time. All librarians in Port City are required to spend half of their time at work at the public reference desk, and if they do run programs they must find substitutes for the reference desk. There are many part time staff employed at the Port City Libraries, including the project staff. They have elected to work extra hours, including on the weekends to accommodate the requirements of this grant. Their reasons for offering Scratch programs on the weekends are twofold, one they think it is the best time for the youth, and two they believe it is the best time to monopolize the public computers.

The IT problems at Port City are multi-faceted. The librarians note the irony of this, since Port City is nationally known as a computer-rich, technologically-savvy city. There are no laptops available for programs or computers dedicated for teen use, and the computers are severely restricted. One of the librarians is not even permitted to download programs, or upload pictures onto her work computer because she is not a manager. Both librarians expressed their anger at the situation. Not only are computers restricted, the approval process for new software takes a long time. At the time of the interview Scratch was only permitted to be loaded on computers in a certain room that must be reserved. This means that youth who come to a program cannot come back to the library on their own to work on the project independently. The librarians note that most of the youth in their neighborhood who come to the library to use the computers do not have computer access at home. Because of their computer situation, the Port City project staff would appreciate a web-based version of Scratch that would circumvent many of the downloading restrictions in place in many libraries across the country. This would not have to be a full version of Scratch, but they argue that it would be better than nothing and it would make Scratch available in many more locations.

As with the project staff from many other branches, the Port City librarians are concerned that they will not be able to get youth to attend Scratch workshops consistently. They opined that January is a difficult time to start a program for youth, suggesting a schedule that coincided with the school year would be more conducive to regular attendance.

Unlike some of the other library systems involved in the grant, the Port City librarians have fairly flexible marketing requirements and can get a program advertised with only a few weeks notice. They have a template from the marketing department that they can use to do their own marketing, and are not required to use the template. One of their chief marketing strategies is through the schools. The project staff believe that teacher buy-in is crucial to getting youth to attend programs at the library.

The project staff champion their youth services coordinator for making their participation in Media MashUp possible. The organizational structure in the Port City Library system allows individual managers to innovate and try new things. The youth services coordinator had the power to ensure that there were at least some computers with Scratch because she was personally interested in the project. Yet, they caution that these accommodations are a special case for the duration of the project. The project staff still worry about the longevity of the project and the ability to distribute the project system wide without more external funding.

### *Winchester Public Library*

Three project staff from the Winchester Public Library attended the January workshop, the youth services coordinator, a librarian and a library assistant. The staff believe that they face all of the barriers discussed in the group session, but that these barriers are not necessarily major impediments to their work. Their major concern is with their IT help desk (or “help” desk as they put it), and the feasibility of downloading the necessary software. The library used to have their own IT department, but it recently was subsumed by the city’s IT department, and the project staff are a bit concerned about what is going to happen. Specifically, they are concerned about what will happen to the laptops that were recently purchased for teen programming using external grant funding. Just before leaving to attend the workshop they found city barcodes on the computers, indicating that the city now considered these computers ‘theirs’. While the project staff admit that the pens on their desks are city property, they are concerned that these computers bought with a grant specifically for teen technology camp and other youth programs will be subsumed by the city for other purposes. The youth services director firmly indicated that the computers will stay for dedicated to youth programming, but seems a bit worried that this may involve some conflict. In the past the project staff were able to update and download programs onto these computers themselves, but worry that they will not be able to once they are formatted to the city’s specifications. Although they prefer the freedom of having control of the computers, they note that better virus protections would be a benefit to having the city control the computers.

The other main concern for the project staff at Winchester Library is marketing. Official marketing at Winchester Library has a long lead-time, so many programs are not listed in their brochures. Although there is flexibility to market and run programs that are not in the official brochure, these efforts are supposed to be marketed through the library’s marketing department. However, because there is only one person for all 19 branches who is officially authorized to make flyers, one of the project staff often makes flyers for the youth programs. The other project staff appreciate her work, but others in the library system have made some disparaging comments about the situation. The project staff recognize that it is not ideal to subvert the system, but there is no other way to advertise their programs. Another marketing issue at the Winchester Library the project staff expressed about the traditional marketing approach does not appeal to youth. One of the project staff mentioned that the brochure is boring and unappealing, and another quipped that he didn’t even really know what the brochure was. They also suggested that even if they do advertise something in the marketing brochure that youth express interest, by the time the program is presented six months later that the youth are no longer interested.

Staffing is another concern at Winchester Library, where they have one third of the staff they had in 2005. According to the project staff they're down to a skeleton crew, so most librarians are required to spend most of their time at the reference desk with little time to run and develop programs. They note that even going to the bathroom is a challenge because they cannot leave their posts. One solution that Winchester Library has offered is hiring non-librarians to run programs, or use volunteers. Although volunteers are a viable option, they must be willing to commit and to complete background checks. The youth services coordinator commented that nurturing their volunteer base will be crucial to their ability to offer the programs they want to offer.

Space is another barrier at Winchester Library, as it is at many of the participating libraries. There is a space they can use that used to be a café, but it is located near a bookstore in the branch, and there is often a lot of traffic. Interestingly, the project staff mentioned that they have the power to take a room that others are using if the other people are not library staff. The also suggested that their library is in a modern building with lots of metal and doesn't feel very cozy.

The project staff from Winchester Library have had problems finding a time that works for the youth to offer programs. They have been trying to find a good time for four or five years with little success. However on further discussion the youth services coordinator suggested that maybe the problem is that they need to change their strategy and try having open programming every day from 2:30 PM – 7 PM and see when works best for the youth. One of the other staff members suggested that they just need a consistent time and then youth will know what to expect. They admitted that they hadn't had a program in a while, and that Scratch is a bit different than bringing in a guest speaker. They could just schedule their non-reference time as Scratch programming on a regular basis to find out when works best for the youth.

The strategies already employed by the Winchester project staff include do-it-yourself covert marketing of programs, and having teen computers from other grants. Other solutions that they are interested in implementing include building volunteer capacity, and being more aggressive in offering programming to find a time that works for the youth. They also suggested that providing food would be helpful.

### *Foreston Public Library*

Foreston project staff are a teen outreach specialist and a program services coordinator. This library system is unique among the participating libraries in that one of the project staff is not a librarian, but an outreach specialist. Like many of the other library systems, Foreston has a policy that prevents library staff from downloading programs on their computers. The project staff need to go through the IT department in order to get anything onto their computers. However they point out that their IT department is amenable to doing what they want to do, so it is not as big a problem as it is for other libraries. They also have a wireless internet system throughout the library so youth can download things that way.

Foreston also has marketing issues, and the staff often resort to do-it-yourself marketing – hiring a student intern or bringing things to a local print shop. Additionally, they have a mailing list with teachers and youth on it to get the word out. They also rely on advertising in small local newspapers.

Persistent youth attendance is a concern for the program services coordinator, but the teen outreach specialist is confident that she can get youth to come back to Scratch programs. The teen outreach specialist noted that the youth who attend programs are not the same youth who use the library for more traditional uses like taking out books. She commented that some of the youth who come to programs do not even have library cards. The project staff suggested that having a dedicated youth space within the library would be helpful. They commented that there is a space for youth programming, but it's not in the library proper, and it's not dedicated to youth. For example there is no place for youth to come when there isn't a formal program to

work on Scratch. However, they have implemented “Teen Tuesday” when there is always something going on for youth on Tuesdays. Youth know that there will be space and food at Foreston Library on Tuesday afternoons, and a group of regulars and semi-regulars have been coming.

As other project staff from other libraries have noted, growing Scratch programming beyond the one branch covered by the grant is going to be difficult. Without the external grant funding the project staff at Foreston worry that the project won’t become a regular part of programming throughout the many branches of the Foreston Library system.

Foreston is in a unique situation, in that they have a strong youth outreach program that brings in well-known authors and holds youth empowerment summits that are well attended, but these programs do not involve librarians. The project staff quipped that they couldn’t imagine the librarians they know participating in these programs. The outreach specialist added that she feels like her job is different from many of her colleagues and that many are unaware of what she is doing. The staff note that while no one complains when youth come in to do research (i.e. use libraries in a traditional way) and never attend a program, but if youth come in to do gaming programs but don’t take out books that these same librarians think there is a problem.

Foreston Library has a strong teen programming group of outreach specialists and college student interns who provide much of the programming offered for youth. Having non-librarians run programs has been a successful model for Foreston Libraries where each branch has only two librarians. They have also partnered with a local informal science education institution on grants that has helped secure the funding and resources they need for successful youth programming.

### *Lake County Library*

The project staff perceive a number of barriers to successful implementation of youth programming. One of the librarians works at a small community branch where staffing is a major concern. At her branch librarians hours are not the same from week to week, and she is concerned that she will not be able to offer Scratch workshops consistently as a result. Other barriers she identified as a result of working at a small branch are the lack of a dedicated teen space, and not having time in her schedule to do programming. She contrasts this with the children’s librarian who has programming time (story time) built into her schedule. She relies on outside grant support, this grant and another grant, to allow her to do the youth programming she wants to do, and has recruited a group of youth volunteers to run some of the Scratch programming that she is unable to run. The other librarian from Lake County works at a larger library where she does have a dedicated teen space, but also feels that youth programming is often considered ‘extra’ and not part of the core responsibilities of youth librarians. She noted that even with the space and the technology, there is still the same number of librarians to do more work. Both expressed concern that the lack of a set schedule will make it hard to get repeat involvement from youth.

Another barrier the Lake County librarians noted is the lack of laptop computers at most branches, and that public computers are highly restricted and have old versions of Scratch. Even some of the laptops available for program use have older versions of Scratch and Picasa. This adds another level of worries when setting up for Scratch programs – will the computers have the right software. The librarians can download new software onto the laptops, but every time IT loads a new or updated disk image they re-load the old versions of Scratch. Although Scratch is loaded on all of the public computers in Lake County libraries, the librarians observed, that few if any youth are spontaneously opening Scratch and exploring the program.

One concern the Lake County libraries have is with offering programs that are appealing to teenaged youth. They found that the older youth want to use music and other media content that has been illegally downloaded, and the library cannot support this activity. The librarians

worry that the Scratch program is better suited for younger youth, but that the grant is targeting the older youth.

Poverty related issues present barriers at the small branch library that were not mentioned by project staff from other libraries. This library is located near a HUD housing development and the population is highly mobile. Additionally, some mothers who cannot afford child care, or are concerned for the safety of their children instruct them to stick near the librarian and not to talk to other youth. Other youth can suddenly lose their means to get to the library as their parent's job schedule changes.

Some branches of the Lake County Library system have rigid publicity rules that inhibit youth programming. While some librarians are free to do programs that are not listed in published brochures (as long as some marketing happens) others are not permitted to run programs that do not make the brochure.

The Lake County librarians expressed appreciation for this workshop as a time to talk with other library professionals facing the same challenges. They feel overcommitted in their jobs, and appreciate the time the workshop provided for professional development and personal growth. Yet they are concerned that they will not have enough time to keep up with everything that they should do to make youth programming all it has the potential to be.

The strategies employed by the Lake County librarians include writing grants for external funding to support youth programming, and having a set of laptops at their branches that are dedicated for youth use.

## **Conclusions**

The organizational barriers that hinder libraries from offering drop-in computer-based programs for youth are multifaceted. Some of the perceived barriers pertain to the current iteration of Media MashUp, while others pertain to the wider use of Scratch throughout the library system. Some of the barriers that crosscut a number of the institutions included rules and regulations surrounding technology use, lack of dedicated space for youth, official marketing policies and procedures, youth buy-in, and other staff responsibilities competing for time. In addition to these barriers, funding for staff time beyond the scope of this grant is a major concern for many of the project staff.

Marketing is an interesting barrier. Most project staff mentioned marketing as a problem, but many staff had developed strategies to get around marketing barriers. One main problem with marketing is that the lead time is too long so most project staff resort to doing their own marketing by making their own flyers or using social networking sites. However some of the staff noted that this is against official library policy and that some have received disparaging comments from other staff.

Many project staff were quick to point out that Media MashUp is a special case because of the grant funding. For example at one library where the project staff are part time employees they are using the grant funding to pay for them to work extra hours that would not be possible without the grant funding. Many of the project staff noted that a significant portion of their time is devoted to working at the reference desk, making programming difficult.

One barrier that was discussed in the large group session was about staff attitudes and fear of change in the profession, yet in terms of this project it did not seem to be a major barrier. Some staff noted that librarians who are not interested in computer-based teen programming just are not involved. Others suggested that it was a generational thing, and those with a more traditional view of libraries will retire soon.

These barriers and strategies will be monitored at key points throughout the course of the Media MashUp project. At Columbia library having successful computer-based youth programs helped convince other staff of the value of such programs. The success of the initial programming at Columbia has created successful word-of-mouth marketing for their youth

programs. It will be interesting to see if these sorts of change occur at the other participating libraries throughout the course of the Media MashUp project.

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