Victorian Public Library Staff Encouraged to Play

Who would have thought that within only one week, 1,000 public library staff would be signed up for an online learning program?

That's just what happened as public libraries across Victoria raced to sign up for the latest release of the Learning 2.0 program offered through Statewide Public Library Development Projects, a collaboration of the Victorian Public Library Network and the State Library of Victoria.

Enticed by 'Let's Play' kits sent out in early August, eager managers, training coordinators and CEOs were treated to a preview of the Learning 2.0 program at the official launch on 28 August 2007. Over 400 bags of 'Learning Thru Play — Learning 2.0' lollies were given out as a sweet temptation for staff to participate.

The Learning 2.0 program, originally designed by Helene Blowers, Public Services Technology Director for the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, has quickly spread across the world; libraries and even non-library organisations are logging on to the program.

It's not hard to see why Learning 2.0 has been so enthusiastically embraced. With the fast-paced emergence of new technologies, the program promises to revolutionise the way libraries interact with the public — positioning them to implement new technologies and providing staff with the skills and confidence to facilitate digital content creation by patrons and the libraries themselves.

Featuring nine weeks of hands-on activities, Learning 2.0 introduces participants to Web 2.0 tools including blogs, wikis, online image generators and other social networking technologies available on the internet.

The Statewide Public Library Development Project team has been pleasantly surprised by the response from Victorian public libraries, quickly working behind the scenes to produce 135 blogs for the 44 libraries participating in the program from 10 September 2007.

State Librarian, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, says 'The response to the Learning 2.0 program from public libraries has been astounding. One thousand staff skilling-up on Web 2.0 across the state simultaneously during September, October and November, is a huge achievement, a real leadership initiative for public libraries Australia-wide.'

Victorian public library staff participating in the program are in the running for weekly prizes including digital cameras, iPods, memory sticks and much more. Three lucky participants will also win a major prize at the program's completion.

The program will finish on 3 December, with a wrap-up event on 11 December 2007. For more information, visit the Public Libraries Blog @ <**http://publilibraries. blogspot.com/**>.

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Beyond the Hype: Web 2.0 — Brisbane 1–2 February 2008

Discussed and debated, it is asserted that Web 2.0 technology has the potential to transform libraries into Library 2.0. But how relevant and useful are these technologies? A coming symposium in Brisbane is out to explore and analyse the phenomenon.

Does Facebook only have face value? Is Second Life only for people who need to get a first life? Is social bookmarking truly all that del.icio.us? Is Skype just hype? Do RSS feeds mean Really Sexy Syndication? Is Twittering for the birds? Is the future forever in Beta mode or are we all becoming legends on our own laptops?

An ALIA symposium in Brisbane aims to go 'Beyond the Hype' and explore the reality of new technologies, the challenges and opportunities they pose. A joint venture of Quorum, <http://www. alia.org.au/groups/quorum/>, and Quill (ALIA Queensland Interlibrary Liaison newsletter at <http://www.alia.org.au/ groups/quill/>, the symposium runs from 1–2 February 2008 at the Queensland University of Technology at Gardens Point, Brisbane, in the city between the river and the botanical gardens.

It will give library and information professionals from across the industry, from across the country, from up and down the career ladder and at all knowledge levels the chance to learn more, get skilled up, network and better understand what Web 2.0 is about and what it can mean for them.

There will be workshops, posters, discussions, talks and social opportunities, a panel of experts and keynote speakers, including Christine MacKenzie from Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, who has introduced an online Learning 2.0 program to equip staff with the tools of emerging online technologies.

Calls for contributions and registrations will be out and open soon but until then, find out more and get involved by visiting our website <**http://beyondthehype. ning.com/**>, for Web 2.0 is about using technology to engage with others so you can be a part of the hype already!

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