

Digital photo frames – on the spot promotion

Digital Photo Frames are an increasingly popular way of sharing and displaying photos, but Coffs Harbour City Library has recently taken the idea one step further, using the compact professional image display as a promotional tool within the library.

While flyers, newsletters, noticeboard displays, and now e-news all provide valuable opportunities, we live in a very visual world, where our message can be easily overshadowed and lost.

Thanks to NSW Public Libraries Learning 2.0 program, it was with increased awareness that we approached the promotion of our children's Summer Reading Club for 2009/2010, looking for a visual display to catch the attention of not only the children, but also their parents.

We had chosen the Wild West as our interpretation of the *Read on the wild side!* theme, and staff member Amanda Williams created a PowerPoint presentation, complete with animated cowboys and cowgirls to explain the details of our program. We had envisaged running this via a laptop and data projector in the children's area of the library, but when time came to present the display, the safety issue of cords, computers, and unattended equipment came to light, and viability was questioned.

We were very pleased to come up with a solution, borrowed from Bayside Library Service in Melbourne, and the feedback from the community has shown the idea to be one that we will continue to use for other events.

The PowerPoint screens have been saved as individual JPG files and are run as a continuous display on a Digital Photo Frame. The effect is the same as if it was the PowerPoint presentation! Once we could see the positive impact of this very eye catching idea, we also saved the PowerPoint images onto a disc to be played in the DVD drive of the wall-mounted television in the children's section. While children are browsing or reading the information is rolling on the screen. We have seen this work on many levels, providing opportunities for conversations between staff, children, and parents.

This simple method of file transfer to JPG format and display on the photo frame proved a winner for our purposes. It was an easy way to create and present up-to-date visual messages to promote our library services. A Digital Photo Frame, positioned where people are attended to at the Circulation Desk has provided us with an instant promotional display, which is both space saving and effective.

Judy Atkinson
Library Programs Officer
Coffs Harbour City Library
judy.atkinson@chcc.nsw.gov.au

Community praise for 21st century libraries

Public libraries in Australia are always seeking to broaden their services to support their communities. I write as an innovator of one of these new technologies: yourtutor by Tutoring Australasia. In just five years, more than 300 Australian public libraries have adopted yourtutor with the aim to engage with their communities even further – connecting with the next generation of library users, as well as supporting parents, carers, and teachers at the same time.

The only electronic service of its kind in Australia, yourtutor connects students to real people who are experts in school

curricula. Getting 'stuck' with homework is no longer an impossible hurdle for students and their parents, thanks to the public libraries in Australia – and now in New Zealand – who, in 2009 alone, provided more than 21 000 hours of free primary, secondary, and tertiary tutoring to local families.

Importantly, while 21st century libraries adopt new and changing technologies – the goal of providing equitable access to learning resources remains constant.

"As a parent, I just sat and watched my daughter in a session and I am amazed that such a great library service is available."

Northern Territory Library

"Thank you to the librarians for this help with my schoolwork. I enjoy learning with an online tutor it's like having a personal tutor with you, even after dinner. And we even have a whiteboard. I love that idea."

Year 11 student, City of Canning Libraries, WA

"I think this is great. Prob the best library service ever since my parents are never really able to help me out with science and now I can get help online, and it's free. Awesome."

Year 8, Central Coast, NSW

"I love this service, it helps when mum and dad and teachers are not around to help with English essays! Thanks to the library!"

Year 10 student, Geelong Regional Library Corporation, VIC

Sarah Crossing
Tutoring Australasia
scrossing@yourtutor.com.au

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