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IST 611: Information Technologies in Educational Organizations

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Collaborative Technology Report

Summary

For this project, I worked with Molly Ortiz-Brazak, the Library Media Specialist at East High School in Rochester, New York, to create ALA READ posters for the library that feature students and promote literacy. The students on the posters demonstrate good academic standing, quality of character, and/or extra-curricular achievement. The posters also highlight well-known East High faculty and staff, including teachers, support staff, and the principal.

We also developed a technology-based protocol for teachers and school faculty to select students to be featured on the posters. This year, we produced a number of posters at once. In subsequent school years, posters will be created on a monthly basis.

Finally, this project includes promoting the library through READ posters on the library website. Digital images of the posters are compiled in a video in slideshow format, and the video will be uploaded to the library home page.

Team Members (Responsible Parties)

Molly Ortiz-Brazak

This party also includes all other library staff.

- Order and receive READ software/templates
- Oversee project execution
- Communicate with participating instructors and school staff
- Ensure that budgetary issues are addressed

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- Become familiar with READ poster software
- Take pictures of selected students, faculty, and staff

- Create initial READ posters for current school year
- Develop a web-based process for East High faculty to nominate and select students to be on posters
- Create a video slideshow of poster images for library webpage
- Instruct library staff on how to use READ poster, web-based survey, and slideshow creation software

Target Audience

The target audience for this project includes all students at East High School. The school serves grades 7-12 in Rochester, New York (“East High School”). The student body is comprised of nearly 2,000 students (“East High School - Rochester, New York – School Overview”). The library hopes to use the posters to reach a broader audience of East High students.

A secondary target audience for this project includes East High School faculty and staff. This specifically targets teachers, administrators, aides, and other relevant support staff. Featuring this group in the posters and engaging them through a web-based selection process will encourage them to promote the library to the students with whom they interact.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessments of the responsible parties and the target audience have been collected through an open communication with both groups. Due to time constraints, this assessment was in the form of vocal communication and e-mail.

Responsible Parties

This group of users expresses the need to promote the library to East High School students. They would like to do so in a manner that is appealing to students, faculty and staff. This group also asserts the need to engage students, faculty, and staff in library activities and promotion.

Target Audience

Students at East High School, who are the primary target audience of this project, have the need to use the library as a resource for intellectual growth, technological development, and entertainment. The posters help meet this need by promoting the library and its resources to a broad range of East High School students.

This group also needs to develop a sense of community at East High School, and to be encouraged to perform well academically and through extracurricular activities. The posters engage students who are selected to appear on them, and encourage students to improve performance with the reward of being featured on a READ poster.

Goals and Learning Objectives

Goals:

- Create approximately thirty posters for display in the library and around the school for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school year.
- Establish a method for nominating and/or selecting future students to be featured on posters
- Learn the software through which the posters are created
- Display the posters on the library web page in a slideshow format
- Encourage students to improve academic performance
- Engage faculty in promoting library use and literacy
- Increase library use

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this project, **Responsible Parties** will learn the following:

- Effective marketing techniques to promote library use and literacy
- Knowledge of web-based tools to engage faculty in library activity
- Knowledge of software for poster creation
- Knowledge of software for slideshow creation
- A better understanding of East High students, faculty, and staff

At the completion of this project, the **Target Audience** will learn the following:

- Students can incorporate technology into their projects
- Increased effort in school and community activities yields numerous rewards
- Various methods of expression through technology
- Knowledge of web-based tools to communicate with peers
- The library is a resource for books, databases, and technology

Technologies Used

This project utilizes a digital camera, Photoshop Elements, iMovie, and the Internet. The posters were created using images and layered documents that were purchased through the ALA READ store (“READ CDs”). Using a digital camera, responsible parties photographed East High community members and developed the posters using Photoshop Elements versions 3.0 and 4.0.

The project utilizes the Apple-based software iMovie to create the slideshow for the library webpage. The images are uploaded to the software and compiled as a video podcast. The presentation is saved as a video and uploaded to the library webpage by the school webmaster.

The Internet is utilized in this project to deploy a web-based survey among East High faculty and staff. Also, the Internet will provide additional opportunities for East High School community members to view the posters, as they will be displayed on the library website.

Challenges

The most prominent challenges of this project have involved adherence to the timeline. Due to various external factors, we were unable to print and display the posters before the project deadline. Firstly, the READ CD, with Photoshop and images, arrived significantly later than earlier timelines expected. Additionally, we have been unable to deploy the video slideshow, and are waiting for the high school’s webmaster to execute this aspect of the project. These challenges are of little detriment to the library, because the school year extends beyond the deadlines created for this project. However, it has demonstrated the need for more strict timelines and open communication with external parties.

Another challenge with this project is ensuring that the surveys are completed in earnest. To overcome this challenge, the link will include the following disclaimer: "All submissions are subject to judgment for validity."

An unforeseen challenge of this project has been the initial selection process. Since the librarians lacked the time and methods to collect nominations, choosing East High community members to feature on the first rollout of posters was subject to the complete discretion of the librarians. This was a minor challenge, but it was overcome through an open discourse between librarians and other relevant parties.

Finally, it has been difficult to create a selection process for subsequent school years. Speculating on participation, success, and failure has proved arduous in the planning stages. This will be overcome by the librarians at East High, but I hope to maintain a connection with them to see its execution and discover any new challenges and opportunities.

Results

While this project has not been fully executed, the results have already become apparent to responsible parties. Students, faculty, and staff have shown remarkable interest in the project, and demonstrate the desire to use the posters as a method for increasing library patronage. Several inquiries from target audience members indicate a desire to discover the technologies utilized, and articulate a willingness to learn similar technologies for their own usage. These occurrences connote that, upon completion, the posters will achieve the goals and objectives of the responsible parties.

Reflection

This project has been an interesting and rewarding challenge. The task fell into my lap by accident: I was originally conducting fieldwork at East High that included a cataloging project, but another student accepted before me. As a result, Ms. Ortiz-Brazak presented this project to me, and, as an alumna of the program, suggested that I use it for my collaborative technology project. Luckily, I have previous experience with the technologies involved, so my own learning curve was reduced and I was able to put more effort into educating the librarians.

With more foresight, we would have ordered the READ CDs at an earlier date, because the entire project was contingent on their arrival. This is the sole reason why full deployment has not been attained. Since we have put such time and effort into this project, it is disheartening that our original timeline has not been met for the purposes of this report. However, I look forward to continuing my relationship with East High School and working with them to ensure that the project is completed as soon as possible.

The READ posters have presented a very unique learning opportunity for educators and students. The obvious usage of technology for learning has been in teaching the librarians at East High about the software and photographic techniques necessary, so they can create additional posters in following years. The unexpected boon of this project has been the interest that is has generated among East High students, faculty, and staff. On every visit to the school, I had passersby asking about the project as I took pictures, or leaning over my shoulder to watch my progress in Photoshop. I am excited to learn how often the librarians field questions about the posters once they are on display, and am glad to provide them with the knowledge to explain it, develop their own, and pass the same knowledge on to students. Our initial goal was to promote the library and East High community members, but the additional opportunities for education about the technology has been incredibly gratifying.

Works Cited

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