

STATEWIDE VIRTUAL REFERENCE PROJECT

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

DATE: January 6, 2005
LOCATION: Regional Justice Center, Kent

ATTENDEES: Linda Fenster, Alice Goudeaux, Buff Hirko, Jean Holcomb, Nancy Huling, Lisa Oberg, Lorena O'English, Barbara Pitney.

After a quick review of the FFY2004 budget, Buff reported that the 2005, final budget year for the project will provide limited funding beyond staff expenses, although there will be a small amount for training and evaluation activities. Lorena described the difficulties encountered when she and Buff trained the October-November class. The 24/7Reference chat meeting function did not work properly, but the orientation day was very well received. A new training class is scheduled to begin on March 2 at SPL with trainers Nancy Huling and Daria Cal.

Focus groups for the final project evaluation should begin in fall 2005. Members discussed possible ways to recruit participants. Buff noted that Whitman County has a number of repeat chat users and that the WCL staff would probably be willing to coordinate one group. That would provide an excellent representation for a rural public library population. It was also suggested that a script be developed that could be delivered by library operators during a chat session with known frequent VR patrons. Blog readers also were mentioned as possible participants, but the idea will need work in order to identify those who are also chat users. The discussion will be taken up again at the April meeting.

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to finalizing plans for the VR Summit on February 9. Buff will coordinate the morning presentations with both Joe Jane and Susan McGlamery at ALA Midwinter. SPL will provide a technician to videotape the speakers and general sessions. Registrants will be requested to bring copies of materials to share, such as usage statistics, marketing items, policies, script listings, etc. Four rooms will be available at SPL: two large (one for registration and lunch, one for general sessions) and two smaller ones for the afternoon breakout sessions. Buff shared copies of possible handouts, which were corrected. City University will not only sponsor lunch, but also provide folders, notepads and pens for registrants. The Summit agenda was reviewed and revised, with the final half-hour discussion re-titled "Proposals for Sustaining Success." The day will begin with coffee at 9:00, then a welcome from Deborah Jacobs and Jan Walsh beginning promptly at 9:15. After Joe and Susan speak, Buff will lead the discussion of issues. An outline of the format for the day will offer "ground rules" that will provide a framework for discussion. Input from all participants will be encouraged, and Steering Committee members will be prepared to ask questions that will spur conversation (e.g., "Did project activities benefit your library and how?" "What didn't work and

why?” “What support activities are needed that the project did not provide?”). Barbara and Alice volunteered to tabulate interest in topics and report at the end of the hour which 6 appear to warrant breakout session discussions. During the lunch hour, Buff will place signs on meeting room doors to identify which topics will be covered. “Birds of a Feather” tables were suggested for the lunch period. Tours of Seattle Public Library will be available following the Summit. A final information message will be emailed to registrants on February 1.

The meeting was limited to two hours in order to accommodate Facilitation Training with consultant Guila Muir in preparation for the VR Summit. The next meeting will be held on April 28, 2005.