Are You Ready to Roll?:
Expected Technology Competencies and the Library Worker
Why worry about technology skills?
Great Expectations

- How can we learn what others see as key technology skills?
- How can we assess our own skills?
- How can we grow our skills?
- How can we stay aware of technology trends?
Library Technology Skills Survey

- November/December 2008
- 9 questions; Web-based
- Marketed to 14 electronic discussion groups
- 26 technologies or skill areas
n and demographics

- 1,800 responses

- All types of libraries – academic (54%), public (25%), special (11%), school (10%)

- 80% hold an MLS

- <= 10 years (36%)
  11-20 years (28%)
  >= 21 years (35%)
Primary area of responsibility

- Cataloging (16.4%)
- Library administration (16.3%)
- Reference (13.7%)
- Library IT/systems (10.2%)
- Instruction (8.1%)
- Circulation (4.6%)
- Eight other areas at 2.5% or less

- Other (19.2%) : “I do it all!”
What did the survey reveal?
Most common technologies and skills

1. E-mail (97.9%)
2. Word processing (96.2%)
3. Web searching (94.1%)
4. Searching library databases (92.7%)
5. Using an integrated library system (86.3%)
6. Web navigation (80.7%)
7. Teaching others to use technology (79.1%)
8. Spreadsheets (78.3%)
9. File management/operating system navigation (62.3%)
10. Troubleshooting technology (61.9%)

Next 3:
- Presentation software (60.1%)
- Scanners (57.8%)
- Database software (54.1%)
Bottom five technologies and skills

- Computer programming (8.5%)
- Network management (10.9%)
- Assistive/adaptive technology (18.1%)
- Graphic design (21.3%)
- Installing technology equipment (24.9%)
Somewhere in the middle

- Educational copyright knowledge (47.6%)
- Creating online instructional materials (43%)
- Making technology purchase decisions (40.2%)
- Installing software (38.7%)
- Web design (36.7%)
- Instant messaging (32.6%)
- Computer security knowledge (28.4%)
- Blogging (28.2%)
Other skills (9.8%): a sampling

- “fixing printer problems—because IT takes an hour+ to come over and do anything about it”
- “E-games: Wii, etc.”
- “Music and Video editing”
- “Accounting software”
- “microfilm readers”
- “creating macros”
- “Adobe Photoshop”
- “Facebook, MySpace”
- “making posters, bulletin boards, etc.”
- “ripping audio”
- “use of digital cameras and the software for them”
- “Unofficial software testing—IS knows if we can’t break it, it’s probably OK for the rest of their customers.”
Respondents chose, on average, 13.9 of the 26 technologies or skills.
Top areas for self-improvement:

- Web design/HTML
- Various Web 2.0 applications (blogs, wikis, etc.)
- Creating databases/MS Access
I wish my library had:

- Blogging
- IM
- Podcasting
- SMART Boards
- New integrated library system
- Wireless (access, printing)
- Staff who know web design, web 2.0, programming, graphic design
- More people!
- “... more enthusiasm for new technologies”
What can we learn from these results?
Introspection

- Do survey results and learning desires match my situation?

- How would I answer the survey?

- What would I like to know more about?

- What do I wish could happen in my library?
Assess your learning needs

- What do I know? What should I learn in order to know X?
- Combination of standard expectations and locally-defined needs
- Explore established lists of competencies/tasks
- Make your own list
WebJunction Survey

- Self-evaluation on technology competencies (June 2009)
- 12-23 questions; web-based
- Two options: Core skills or System & IT skills
- 1223 responses (78.5% on Core skills)
- 66% from public libraries
Strongest Skills

1. Recognizing basic computer components
2. Selecting, cutting, copying, pasting text
3. Creating, opening, saving word processing docs
4. Performing basic operating systems functions
5. Performing basic operations on computer hardware (reboot, mouse and keyboard, etc.)
6. Opening/closing programs, printing
7. Recognizing removable storage (USB, CD/DVD)
8. Using common web browser functions
9. Using common application features (menus, etc.)
10. Identifying and using common web browsers
   • Selected as “strong” by 86.7% or more
Weakest areas

- Understanding the use and setup of data projectors and AV equipment
- Downloading e-books and audio books
- Understanding the function of cookies
- Understanding and applying the library’s computer and internet usage policies
- Performing basic troubleshooting procedures

- Selected as “strong” by 59.9% or fewer
WebJunction Competencies

- Covers many library skills beyond technology

Core Software Applications
- Performs basic word processing operations
- Creates, opens and saves or deletes files
- Selects, cuts, copies, pastes or deletes text
- Performs operations to structure, format and spell-check documents
WebJunction Competencies

Internet
- Understands and uses the Internet and World Wide Web
- Understands the basic structure of the Internet and of the World Wide Web (Web sites and Web pages)
- Identifies and uses common browsers for accessing the Web; understands and uses URLs
- Uses common functions of Web browsers (navigation buttons, scroll, add “bookmarks” or “favorites,” print)
- Downloads and saves files from the Internet, including image, audio and video
- Downloads e-books and audiobooks
Do-it-yourself competencies

- Identify an area
- List what you can do
- List what you’d like to learn to do (ask others)
- Chart your progress
- Rinse; repeat
Pursue continuing education

- Libraries need to be committed to continuing education (1.5% rule)
  - Internal options
  - External options
- Broaden your knowledge!
Internal Options

- Time to explore – play!
- Technology petting zoos
- 23 Things: @ WebJunction search 23 things summit – also Helene Blowers 23 things
- Webinars – WebJunction, vendors, etc.
- Make training a regular activity in the library
External Options

- Conferences
- Workshops
- Participation in online discussions
- Participation in local technology interest groups
- Informal visits to other libraries
Share what you know

- Serve as a resource
- Gain confidence by assisting library patrons
- Assist colleagues
- Participate in teaching training sessions
Stay aware of technology trends

- Chapter 2 of my book
- **Cites & Insights** (Walt Crawford)
- **LITA Top Tech Trends**
- **Seven Things You Should Know About** (EDUCAUSE)
- **Glengage** blog (Glen Horton)
- **Library Success** wiki
- **Web4Lib** electronic discussion group
- **TED Talks** (brief videos on technology, education, and design)
How do we put it all to work?
A personal strategy

- Have a list of what you’d like to learn
- Pursue professional development
- Build a network of people who know more
- Read a good book or some good blogs or tweets
- Teach others what you already know
Questions?

John J. Burke
Library Director
Miami University Middletown
Burkejj@muohio.edu
513-727-3293

http://www.users.muohio.edu/burkejj/mla2009/