

OLA Super Conference 2010  
Session #411 – Breaking Down Barriers with BiblioCommons

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This session will explore the various ways in which public libraries have used the BiblioCommons application to make their OPAC the face and heart of their website. People enjoy browsing and selecting material when they visit the library, and are showing increasing demand for the ability to do the same online. BiblioCommons, more than just an OPAC, helps libraries achieve this goal. Session will include a panel discussion about public and staff reactions to implementation, training, etc.

Convenor: Alexander Mahabir, Port Hope PL

Introductory remarks by Gail Richardson

Good morning and welcome. Thank you for coming.

Like any good panel presentation, we're going to rely heavily on our convenor to keep us to time. We're going to present in the order of our "go live with BiblioCommons date." And I've only got a few minutes as I'm sharing time with my colleague Beckie here. So I'm going to stay strictly to script.

Oakville Public Library went live in July of 2008 and played the part of "the cheese stands alone" so we have been thrilled to see more and more libraries coming on board. Because the more BiblioCommons libraries that we have, the better we get. That's benefit number one.

And as we go along today, talking about specific instances of BiblioCommons in Oakville, and Stratford and Halton Hills and Ottawa, we should remember that there are also instances already in Edmonton and California and Missouri, and coming soon to other libraries in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and other parts of the United States. And I do believe that Hamilton PL is in Why do we care who else is running BiblioCommons? There are three main reasons:

- 1) We can share reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations amongst ALL of our customers AND offer them a place in which they can express themselves and converse and exchange ideas with other library users.

- 2) As a larger client base closely allied through this common product and working with a very open and responsive development team and 21<sup>st</sup> century Canadian company, we increase our voice exponentially. In other words, we occupy a very large seat at the table for future features as our users share this common experience.

For the last reason I'll wear my Knowledge Ontario hat as Interim Project Manager for Connect Ontario.

- 3) In Ontario, the more libraries who sign up by April, 2010 for a full free year, and then take advantage of future discount prices through the agreement between BiblioCommons and Knowledge Ontario, the less expensive it will be for all of us. But make no mistake – even without this agreement, at competitive pricing against other mere discovery layers, please know that BiblioCommons is giving us much more for much less.

Going back to my second point about have a very large voice in terms of development, I must say that I've never yet given a demonstration of this product without someone in the audience coming up with a new use for it.

Today you'll hear a little bit about what the current BiblioCommons libraries in Ontario have done, and again, I'll ask you as we go along to think of BiblioCommons not as a product but as a **concept** – the library of and for the people – the end user – and to realize that we may call this a “NextGen catalogue”, or describe it as “better than an OPAC” or “a superb discovery layer” but really it is much, much more than that.

After just a few years in development, BiblioCommons leads the way in their field but we have only yet seen the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

- Think better ways to share our information with our users and between our users.
- Think better ways to share our data, to display our data.
- Think about the special collections we each tend to keep hidden away and hopefully are now digitizing, about our local history books and indexes, about community events and services – all of which relate to items in our catalogue and all of which we'd like to connect in that online display.

Connect Ontario, with companies like BiblioCommons, will give us those tools as we work together to create a true 21<sup>st</sup> century library system for Ontarians.

Now, Over to Beckie who will talk more specifically about our experience with staff and the public as we rolled out BiblioCommons.

