

Loud Library Voices : Gary Green (Pancakes & Mash, March 2011)

- Loud Library Voices: Campaigning, The Web, Journalists & The Offline World
- Gary Green: Voices For The Library founder/campaigner. Technical Librarian / Surrey CC
- Presentation – images taken from various campaigns
- Presentation – #savelibraries quotes taken from Twitter

Cuts & questions

- Mid 2010. Threat of cuts in funding and closures coming
- Questions about relevance of libraries when you can 'just Google it', books cheap and everything is available as an e-book
- Questions about relevance of librarians

Voices For The Library

- Was anybody doing anything in defence of libraries?
- All wanted to provide positive face of libraries
- Founders met on Twitter – most not met in real life
- Most of us librarians, but all library users
- Gloucestershire, Doncaster campaigns
- Decided to do it ourselves – national campaign
- Within two weeks had website, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter up and running
- Still mostly virtual campaign – though most of us have met now
- Do it outside our day jobs
- Voluntary – Big Society saying fair enough, but on our terms and for what we believe in
- Team - past and present: Phil Bradley, Johanna Anderson, Mick Fortune, Katy Wrathall, Simon Barron, Gary Green, Lauren Smith, Ian Clark, Bethan Ruddock, Tom Roper, Mandy Powell, Ian Anstice, Alice Halsey

2011 – Cuts

- 526 libraries under threat of closure, recently closed, handed over to communities, privatised

Blog/site

- User stories/value of library to them – send stories to us
- Blog about situation libraries are in – question it
- Campaigning ideas
- Supporting statements
- Reporting back

Journalists

- Make connections – go to them, don't wait for them to come to you
- They can promote what is happening
- You can help them with research
- Don't miss an opportunity – if you are keen they'll come back to you again
- Get out and make yourself known – get your voice heard
- Write articles

#savelibraries

- Started archiving 'lovelibraries' 'savelibraries' tweets in August 2010
- Capture why people felt libraries were important
- @Mardixon sent out tweet Jan 2011 asking people to tweet why they'd #savelibraries
- #savelibraries trended worldwide and made people more aware of library cuts
- Currently about 20,000 tweets archived #savelibraries

Online tools

- Behind scenes – started discussion on Twitter and LIS lists
- Use emails; wiki to store info; online meetings; face to face meetings
- Use Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Blog to inform people, delicious as a resource of links
- Use as many channels to try and reach as many people as possible
- Try to connect to re-use info and reduce work

- Google alerts to get regular updates about libraries
- Twitter
 - news articles; using Tweet buttons means you don't have to retype links, headlines
 - Amend headlines so people know where article is about. No good tweeting a headline like "A village library is closing". It's not informative.
 - Can put your own perspective on an article, by wording you use in the tweet
 - Encourage people to get involved and campaign for their local libraries
 - Discuss situation with others
 - Promote events, local campaigns, consultations
 - RT relevant blog articles
 - RT tweets by other local campaigners
 - Good way to report live on events and keep momentum. 5th Feb loads of RTs about the events around the country
- Facebook – similar to Twitter but less volume of updates. Feed Facebook statuses to Twitter
- Flickr – sharing the library love in photo form
- Youtube – favourite videos
- Hootsuite – can feed info to a number of Twitter, Facebook accounts at the same time.
- PC, mobile smartphone – different tools for different situation
- Andricious – bookmark on phone and gets tweeted.
- Even tinkered – Tagxedo of VFTL site – words are clickable links. Runs search on site
- #savelibraries tweets – would love to do mashup with them

Closures Map

- Leeds data – put into map with Google docs spreadsheet fed into Yahoo pipes. Pulled in employment info and stats
- Wanted to expand it.
- Map – Ian Anstice site Public Libraries News tracks closures- markers for each authority indicating number of libraries to close (Screenshot)
- Didn't want to reinvent wheel – started helping Ian Anstice

- Added campaign/event info with links – manually – no spreadsheet
- Two others – Emerson and Nick helped put it into structured format
- New map built on Google Fusion tables – mostly by Nick
- Means we can re-use data
- I'm not getting as much time to update it, so it's good that others are finding time to update it

Online flow of information

- Use simple methods, because tools are already there
- Paper.li : pulls links out of Twitter by using a search. Produces a newspaper type page (image) automatically updated and archived... don't have to miss any news that has been tweeted... just go and look at paper.li edition for that day.
- Packrati.us: Saves links to delicious from your Twitter account and any hashtags as delicious tag
- Twitterfeed – automatically publish any RSS feeds you want to Twitter
- My personal Twitter tweet link using #ukpling hashtag, saves to delicious bookmarks via packrati.us; Twitterfeed pulls out #ukpling bookmarks and feeds to @ukpling account – handy if I also want to tweet it from my own account
 - Yahoo pipes – map; behind the scenes work – identifying any campaigns, events, consultation on original closures map without having to trawl through each marker; feed of combined news stories to vftl website
- Try to keep it simple – don't get tangled up in knots when connecting everything together

Get Involved In Healthy debate

- Respond to people who think libraries and librarians aren't relevant
- Online and offline
- In the pub
- Beyond people who work in libraries
- Don't just sit there tutting and ask who is going to save libraries?
- If you want to save libraries you need to do it yourself, not expect someone else to do it for you

Roles

- Different things that need to be done
- Not just about updating twitter, Facebook
- Talk to others outside the group
- Keep an eye on what's going on, so you can nip any problems in the bud
- Fall into roles, even though maybe started in different roles
- I do lots of tweeting (but not only me), some updating blog, facebook, collecting news, tinkering and saying "I know! Let's stick it into Yahoo pipes"
- Has given me opportunity to do something useful with my tinkering

Getting the point across – online & offline

- Online – good way to communicate to the masses
 - Report back on what's going on. Did you have a meeting with a councillor? Are you collecting signatures on a petition? Have you submitted a FOI request? Report back on it, then.
- Not just about having a website or a Facebook page – you need to get out into the real world
- Phil Bradley posters – used by campaigners. Adapted from out of copyright posters
- Save Doncaster Libraries campaign posters
- Leaflets through doors - Rosehill
- Gloucestershire events 5th Feb. Friends Of Gloucestershire Libraries – events at all libraries that were open.
- Petitions – both Glouc & Doncs had over 15,000 signatures on their petitions
- Stony Stratford – took all books out
- Correct any misunderstandings – do your research
- Sometimes newspaper headlines are wrong and give false hope ie "libraries saved"... no they're not, they've been given a 6 month reprieve
- Attend events outside libraries – vftl planning to attend a couple of literary festivals
- Lobby those in power
- Question the councillors and politicians
- Videos – Somerset
- It works – it enthuses others

- It works – it makes the headlines, it makes the BBC national news
- It works – it makes politicians uneasy and unable to sweep it under the carpet

Louder voices

- Connect with others who are campaigning
- Get others to help – don't think you can do it yourself
- Even if someone can only give you 5 minutes of their time make use of it
- Don't think you know best – find out how others have done things
- Don't reinvent the wheel – has someone else in your area already started a campaign? - join them and build numbers of campaigners

Events

- Help coordinate
- Organise meetings

Difference between VFTL & other campaigns now time has moved on

- VFTL national (although we do link to campaigns such as Doncaster and others)
- Most others local
- Have had 110,000+ visits to website since starting in September – can reach wide group – more than local campaign
- Offer support and advice to local campaigns
- Show how other campaigners have achieved things
- Links to the media
- Good links to other national organisations focussed on libraries and literacy

Anyone can campaign

- Don't think library staff in local area are going to campaign, because most of them can't campaign – sometimes dismissable action.

If you do campaign it won't be an easy ride, but it will stop and make councils think about what they are doing and make them aware that the people they are supposed to serve are keeping an eye on what they are doing.