EBLIP and Library 2.0 — Friend or Foe?

Two of the recent major challenges to traditional library practice have been evidence-based library and information practice (EBLIP) and Library 2.0. Are these two right together, or too tame to triumph?

EBLIP and Library 2.0 may be put at opposite ends of the innovation scale. EBLIP is concerned with using the best available evidence, researching where possible, and making informed decisions to achieve best practice. Library 2.0 on the other hand challenges us to look beyond standard practice, 'play', and give new things a go. Are EBLIP and Library 2.0 really standing on a crossroad facing opposite directions, or are they less at odds than is seemed at first glance?

These practices may be looking in different directions, yet both are focussed on the same objective — challenging librarians to examine practice in a bid for continuous development and improvement. More than changing libraries, EBLIP and Library 2.0 are more about challenging librarians — the way we think, and the way we make decisions.

EBLIP and Library 2.0 share a focus on the wants and needs of each library's unique client community. Andrew Booth says EBLIP ' ... attempts to integrate user-reported, practitioner-observed and research-derived evidence as an explicit basis for decision-making'. Stephen Abrams says Library 2.0 ' ... is where the user is, when the user is there'. Such a user-centred approach will ensure change is constant, and purposeful.

A key argument refuting EBLIP and Library 2.0 as contradictory propositions is that EBLIP is concerned with the 'best available evidence', neither exclusively nor necessarily research evidence. The evidence-based process is a cycle of asking questions, acquiring and appraising evidence, applying findings and assessing processes and outcomes. This cycle can accommodate both innovators and followers. A lack of data to support an innovation does not preclude the EBLIP framework from being applied, nor the initiative being put into practice. It is just as important to evaluate the implementation, and report on the experience providing some evidence for subsequent decision makers. Our collective knowledge is continually developing — the evidence available today will not be the same as the available evidence tomorrow. Appraisal skills must be adopted to siphon the wacky from the wisdom of the crowd. It is great to try new things, but there is no need to keep making the same mistakes

EBLIP and Library 2.0 might just be a partnership too good to pass up — successful implementation of innovation relies upon good planning, effective decision making, and the right market for the marvellous idea. Library 2.0 is not without boundaries; EBLIP will not stifle innovation. Together they will energise, enthuse and inspire librarians

Learn more about EBLIP at <**http://www.eblip.net.au**>. Learn more about Library 2.0 at <**http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/**>.

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