

Directors' Day

By Ross Tyner.

The 2010 BC Library Conference introduced the first ever Directors' Day. Aimed at library directors and senior managers from libraries of all types, this full-day Friday session included breakfast with exhibitors, a PD workshop, and the opportunity to network informally with colleagues.

Breakfast with exhibitors

The first portion of the day was intended to address one of the challenges faced at conferences by both directors and exhibitors: finding time to talk to each other amongst the sessions, meetings, social events and other commitments. The breakfast brought these two groups of busy people together in one room and held us captive for an hour, to the mutual benefit of all involved (or am I suffering from Stockholm syndrome?). One exhibitor was heard to declare that she would have appreciated an entire day for this activity but, alas, the Conference planners had other things in store for the directors.

PD Workshop: Aligning Strategy, Structure, Staffing & Success

Facilitators Rebecca Jones (Dysart & Jones) and Jon Husband (independent consultant and "observer of human systems") presented their take on the organizational changes required for libraries to thrive in current and future demographic and technological environments. Mr. Husband coined the term "[wirearchy](http://www.wirearchy.com/)" to describe the organizational principle he advocates for modern workplaces. Wirearchy is non-hierarchical, reflects the Internet's interconnectivity, and is characterized by a "two-way flow of power and authority based on knowledge, trust, credibility, and a focus on results, enabled by interconnected people and technology"¹

While participants went away with some new ideas, the session could have been improved by additional opportunities for discussion among directors and by a better understanding on the part of the presenter of the workplace environments typical of contemporary academic and public libraries.

¹ Jon Husband, "Wirearchy."
<http://www.wirearchy.com/>

Networking

After lunch in the exhibits, directors were whisked away to enjoy food and libations at four of the South Okanagan's many fine estate wineries. On the bus, while sipping wine, and at dinner, directors were afforded the opportunity to talk informally about issues of mutual interest and concern. Several directors in attendance felt this was the most productive part of the day, which is not surprising given the extent to which librarians value networking, and which also says something about the tastes and interests of this year's crop of directors.

Future plans

No formal debriefing session took place at the Conference but, based on discussions at a subsequent meeting of post secondary library directors, those in attendance valued the opportunity presented by Directors' Day and would be willing to give it another try at next year's Conference, provided the PD program is better focused, the timing is revisited (some directors felt that Friday, being the main Conference day, was not an ideal day to be pulled away from other activities), and Conference planners are able to locate brew pubs in Victoria equal in quality to the wineries in Naramata and Summerland.²

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² This last comment represents the opinion of the author and should not be construed as representing the views of any other directors in attendance.