

World Book Day 2010: an event to treasure?



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High-profile national or international literary and/or educational events provide libraries with an excellent platform from which to promote their services. In celebrating World Book Day 2010, an 'around the world' themed treasure hunt was held by libraries and learning innovation (LLI) at Leeds Metropolitan University. The event ran during the period 4 March – 12 March 2010. As the university's library graduate trainee, I assisted project manager Lou Charnley (senior information services librarian) and fellow colleagues in the design and execution of this initiative. This article provides an overview of the project from inception to post-event evaluation, and may be a useful resource for fellow practitioners wishing to organise a similar event in their library.

INCEPTION

The library at Leeds Met has a long history of staging interactive and educational events as a means of raising our profile and encouraging use of our services. As such, World Book Day 2010 was earmarked as an event around which to stage a promotional activity. At a meeting of the library's events, planning and marketing team, a range of ideas as to possible activities were discussed. The favoured approach emerged as an 'around the world' themed treasure hunt to be held in the library.

The concept of the treasure hunt was quite simple. An initial clue was given to students on a treasure hunt entry form, with the instruction that the 'advanced search' feature on the library catalogue could be used to solve it and direct them to an item of library stock (books or audio visual materials). Inside this particular item was the next clue, which in turn required the use of the library catalogue's advanced search in order to lead to the next item, and so on. In the final (sixth) item was

a note to participants that they had completed the treasure hunt and should pass their entry form to library staff at our help and information point (HIP).

The rationale behind the activity can therefore be seen to have been three-fold:

- facilitation of students' use of the advanced search feature of the library catalogue
- increased student knowledge of the library by directing them to a variety of sections of book stock and audio-visual materials, and
- increased promotion of the library through internal and external marketing affiliated to the event.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

Prior to the execution of the event, a range of tasks required completion. These are outlined in detail here.

Preparation of publicity material and entry forms
Members of the library events team liaised with the university's graphics team in order to produce professional publicity material and entry forms. As the activity was an 'around the world' themed event, the publicity adopted a travel theme. The promotional poster and entry form are shown below (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Library treasure hunt promotional material

Selection and preparation of library stock to be used in the event

The event was used in part to showcase the range of resources available in the library. As such, fiction, non-fiction (including local-history books) and audio-visual materials were selected for use. Each of the materials chosen could be linked in some way to a city or country in the world, in order to maintain the 'around the world' theme. A further pre-requisite in the selection of resources to be used was that they were dispersed throughout the library. This ensured that students taking

part were directed to a variety of stock locations within the library.

The above process was complicated by the fact that Leeds Met operates libraries at both the city centre (Civic Quarter) and Headingley campuses. The event was executed at both sites, so some manipulation of the stock – such as relocating books from one library site to another and updating the library catalogue – was necessary.

In order to help participants, the items used in the event were decorated with luggage labels and tags. Thus it was explicit to students when they had located the correct item on the shelf. As a contingency, old blank VHS cases were also decorated in order that they could be used as substitutes should original items have been moved or hidden.

Development of clues allied to treasure hunt

Having identified the stock to be used in the event, the next step was to devise the clues to be used in their identification. The clues and materials used are shown in Figure 2.

search feature on the library catalogue returned the correct items when using the search prompts.

Promotion of the event to colleagues and students The event was publicised to colleagues through a number of communication channels. A group e-mail was sent to all colleagues informing them of the activity and outlining how the event was to be co-ordinated and implemented. Contact details of organising staff were provided in case colleagues had any questions or queries in relation to the treasure hunt. The activity was also advertised in the weekly LLI staff bulletin in the run-up to the event, and more informally through one-to-one conversations between colleagues.

From a student perspective, the event was advertised on the front page of Leeds Metropolitan University's website, on the library's own website and via posters and publicity within the library itself. Updates on the library's Facebook and Twitter pages also provided publicity. The prize for the winning entrant was a £20 book token for a local book shop, and this was central to the publicity drive.

Clue	Material title	Author(s)	Material type
Start your quest close to home with a celebration of Leeds . What Joy!	A celebration of Leeds: people, places, pictures and memories to mark the 800th anniversary of Leeds city charter	John Morgan and David Joy	Non-fiction book
Are you Tough Enough to Buck up and find this German film?	Tough enough	Detlev Buck (Director)	DVD feature film
Go for a Long Walk to find your next clue. Here's a hint... it's not on a column.	Long walk to freedom: the autobiography of Nelson Mandela	Nelson Mandela	Non-fiction book
For Sterling work, we're sending you on a Passage to this country.	A passage to India	E.M. Forster	Fiction book
Now you're really getting in the Groove . Strike Early for this one!	One nation under a groove: Motown and American culture	Gerald Early	Non-fiction book
Beckett Park or City centre? Either way you'll make it back to Leeds in less than 100 years. Well done!	City of Leeds Training College: continuity and change 1907–2007	Lori Beckett	Non-fiction book

Figure 2. Clues and materials used in library treasure hunt

As is apparent from the table, bold text was used to illustrate which elements of the clue should be used in the advanced search feature of the library catalogue. The clues were piloted on colleagues within the library to ensure that (a) they made sense and were 'solvable', and (b) the advanced

IMPLEMENTATION

Catalogue PCs were decorated with flags and luggage labels for the duration of the event in order to provide further publicity. Materials used as part of the treasure hunt were placed on the shelves at 8am on 4 March and removed at

5pm on 12 March. Frequent checks (three times daily) were made by colleagues at both sites to ensure that the library materials used in the event remained untarnished and in the correct location.

Entry forms were distributed to students from the library HIP (Help and Information Point), with the instruction that completed forms should be returned there also. At the end of the event, the winning entrant was selected at random from all the correct entries. A small prize-giving ceremony was undertaken during which the winning entrant was awarded his prize.

EVALUATION

Staff time used in planning and executing the activity was the most significant cost in relation to the project. Publicity materials were designed in-house, whilst colleagues drew upon their own creative skills in producing the flags and luggage labels used to decorate the chosen stock and the library catalogue PCs. Material costs were therefore small.

The true impacts of events like these are hard to quantify, since the benefits they foster – to both the library service and the students themselves – are largely hidden. From a library perspective, however, the external marketing of this event certainly helped to raise the library's profile, as demonstrated by its promotion on the front page of the university's website. Feedback from participants was limited, though as one student stated, 'It was a fun way to pass half an hour.' If any of the students who took part in the activity now benefit from an improved knowledge of the library catalogue or stock, then it should surely be considered worthwhile.

Events such as this therefore demonstrate just one of the innovative ways that academic libraries can continue to support student learning and promote their services in a fun, quirky and low-cost way.

For more information about any aspect of this article, please feel free to contact Lou Charnley (L.Charnley@leedsmet.ac.uk / 0113 812 3789) or Joe Kendal (TJ.Kendal@leedsmet.ac.uk / 0113 812 3382).