Digital Strategies

at

East Hartford Public Library

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Link to East Hartford Public Library:

https://www.easthartfordct.gov/library

Developing a Digital Strategy for East Hartford Public Library:

Audience Centered

The tax dollars for the Town of East Hartford provides digital and on-site services to the community to make sure all of their needs are meet. "East Hartford Public Library offers a wide variety of resources and services including public computers with Internet access, Wi-Fi, 3-D printing, programming for adults and children, technology instruction classes, and study rooms in our recently renovated Raymond Library." ("Library | East Hartford CT", April 9, 2019) In order to make sure that the audience knows exactly what is going on, the East Hartford Public Library provides a link on their website to an events calendar, where the patron can see the date and times for scheduled events, be it their own events or something of interest to them.

Another method that is used in the library, tried and true, is a circulation in the local newspaper and to have a printout available on all the desks around the library. The most popular services used is the Maker Space, the Creative Commons, Study Rooms, and Children's events. Although it does not reach the outskirts of the town of East Hartford, the library has a reached new user through local students visiting the library for school work, and other visitors just passing through the town.

Screenshot of East Hartford Public Library Events Calendar

Sustainable and Scalable

Providing a greater extension through digital means would provide the library with even more visitors and more of an opportunity to request funds from the town in order to support the growth that would come with the new community reach. The East Hartford Public Library website is managed by the Town of Hartford using a proprietary framework. A more flexible and scalable framework like WordPress would be much easier for library staff to use and update and would be better enabled to handle high traffic volume and provide metrics on website use. For example, if we could know what pages are "hot" or being shared by our patrons, we could deliver more of that content in the future. Even provide more services that are related to the programs and events the community needs and wants.

Entrepreneurial and Innovative

However, to be successful, even a non-profit organization has to think like a business. Digital contact software, like MailChimp, would allow the library to send email blasts to interested patrons and receive feedback about patron engagement. For example, MailChimp allows you to see what patrons are the most active with email lists, what they tend to click on,

and which articles generate the most interest. This is essential feedback for offering new material, services, and events to the library's patrons.
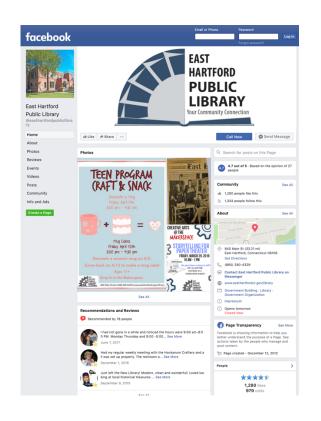
Open, Reusable and Sharable

Articles on the East Hartford Public Library website do not carry and licensing information. To have a proposal that the East Hartford Public Library's articles carry a Creative Commons license, which is a type of open source license that allows readers to use the material in derivative works, is a positive aspect that would permit more open standards for the library. There are a range of Creative Commons licenses, ranging from unfettered access in the public domain to a fairly restricted set of use cases. A preference for the Library could be in using the "Attribution+ShareAlike" license, which allows the material to be distributed for any purpose (commercial or non-commercial) as long as attribution is provided and as long as the resulting work carries that same license ("Creative Commons — Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic — CC BY-SA 2.0" n.d.). Thus, the license will continue to perpetuate even if the material is used in derivative works.

Embedded Across the Organization

Although the approvals for all these changes to the library's digital strategy would come down the line from the Mayor and the Town Council, the implementation would come directly from the director of the library. Each department of the library with any type of strategy would be heard and have their opinions shared and even spread throughout the library's digital strategy. In order to benefit the very limited access that the community has to the Pitkin Glass Collection at the East Hartford Public Library, the Cultural Asset Department Head would have to approve of how to make the collection available online, and what information to provide the patrons with

on the digital format. As of yet, the Library only uses a social media presence in order to display certain artifacts, but not their main museum attractions. This method is only used to promote the events and programs happening at the library, and to provide feedback on the services the patrons have received or used, but not as a way to reach a new population of users to learn more about the museum collection. This is a current work in progress that is moving slowly, but surely in the right direction for the library and the town of East Hartford.

Screenshot of the East Hartford Public Library Facebook Page

However long it takes in creating an online catalog and digital strategy for the library, it is known that it will have a great and positive impact on the residents, visitors, and town. A digital strategy, similar to the Science Museum Group is out of reach, but the same principles can be applied in a smaller scale to fit both the town's budget and the library's vision and mission for their many visiting patrons.

Reference:

"2016-Nmc-Horizon-Report-Museum-EN.Pdf." n.d. Accessed April 9, 2019

"Creative Commons — Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic — CC BY-SA 2.0." n.d. Accessed April 9, 2019. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/.

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