

November 14, 2014 / Jaclyn McKewan

## Top Ten Things I Learned at NYLA (Outside the Sessions)

The workshops and speaker sessions at NYLA are of course a great way to learn about new trends, practices and success stories in the library world. But I also learned quite a bit by browsing the exhibit booths at the trade show, talking with colleagues and helping the SMART section:

10. Rosetta Stone is back. I remember that several years ago, Rosetta Stone, the language-learning software, was available to libraries as an online subscription, but at some point they discontinued the service. As of March 2014, Rosetta Stone is once again available to libraries, through Ebsco databases. Perhaps they wanted to compete with Mango Languages, which many libraries have subscribed to in recent years. Read .

9. People love games at the booths. WNYLRC employees helped staff the booth for the NY 3Rs Association, Inc, and for the second year in a row, we had a prize wheel for people to spin. This year it was a “wheel of trivia” where the spin determined a trivia question to be asked about the person’s library council, or all the councils as a whole. It definitely attracted positive attention from passersby.

8. Webjunction is now free for everyone. The online courses for library workers previously had a cost – either to individual libraries or to state libraries that partnered with the project. Now the courses are free to all library workers and volunteers across the country. Sign up at <http://learn.webjunction.org>

7. There’s another option for library apps. Before coming to NYLA, I only knew about Boopsie, the company that can create a mobile app for your library. At the trade show, I learned about Capira, who also create library apps. Your library’s app can integrate with your catalog and databases. It can even serve as a “virtual library card,” displaying the barcode on the screen for easy scanning at check-out. It also give you the ability to send notifications to app users, notifying them of closings or other information. Check it out .

8. "Please Interrupt Me." That's what's printed on posters and buttons provided by Grey House Publishing. It's a great way to let patrons know they can feel free to come get help at the reference desk. I was able to snag a poster and button for myself, and you can download your own posters at <http://www.greyhouse.com/helpdesk.htm>



5. A creative use for Library Box. You may have heard of Library Box, the device that allows you to provide free content over wifi without actually needing an internet connection. SMART (Section for Management of Information Resources and Technology) used this as a way to promote their conference sessions. At each SMART-sponsored session, a LibraryBox was available with a digital badge. Attendees could download the badge on their mobile device, collecting one at each session. At the end of the conference, the person with the most badges would win a prize (or there would be a drawing in case of a tie). If you attended our Gadgets & Gear conference in 2013, you already know about Library Box, but otherwise, you can learn about it at <http://librarybox.us/>



4. People love games, part 2. At the SMART booth, we offered people a chance to play an iPad game. For one dollar, we handed them an iPad with a trivia game loaded on it (in the Technology category) and awarded prizes based on the number of questions answered correctly out of ten. This was a great success, with many people trying it out, and some people even choosing SMART section membership as their prize.

3. What happens to all the clearance Halloween candy on November 1st. It gets bought by vendors for distribution at their NYLA booths. It was almost like trick-or-treating for adults.

2. How to make a Makerspace. Or rather, I learned where to learn how to make a Makerspace. You may remember a blog article from 2013 about our RAC committee visiting the Fayetteville Free Library

(<http://wnylrcwatch.org/newsletter/?p=4556> ). They were the first U.S. public library to have a makerspace, and they had a booth with examples of some of their projects and activities. They also have information about making a Makerspace at <http://fflib.org/make> (And don't forget that WNYLRC is hosting a Makerspace workshop on December 1st: <http://www.wnylrc.org/workshops/73> )

1. I never saw a smartwatch in person, but now that I have, I need to own one. A fellow librarian showed me her Samsung Galaxy Gear watch, and I was enthralled as she described the features. It included the ability to view and respond to texts with voice commands, vibrating alerts when your phone rings, and even the ability to answer the phone a la Dick Tracy. You don't even need to turn the watch "on" as the face lights up when you bring your wrist up to look at the time.

Unfortunately I learned that the Galaxy Gear watches only work with Samsung phones, and while I have one now, that may change in a few months. But after doing some research, I discovered the "Android Wear" line of watches, which works with any Android phone running version 4.3 or up. These watches lack the feature of being able to answer phone calls on the watch, but also have some cool features like a heart rate monitor, calendar, and notifications from Google Now. Check them out. at <http://www.android.com/wear/> . And watch out for iPhone smartwatches to be released in 2015.

