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Mash Oop North

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Mashed Library 2009- Mash Oop North.

On 7th July, Mashed Library celebrated it's second anniversary with Mash Oop North, an 'unconference' styled event centred on the use of data mash-ups in a library context, or "bringing together interested people and doing interesting stuff with libraries and technology". Following on from the success of the 2008 event at Birkbeck College, Mash Oop North was sold out within 24 hours, attracting more than 65 delegates including tech-savvy librarians, developers, and students (sponsored by CILIP Yorkshire and Humberside and Mimas).

The day kicked off with a series of parallel sessions, introducing delegates to a range of new technologies and tools, and discussing how best to go about implementing their use.

Brian Kelly of UKOLN spoke about *Enthusiatic amateurs and overcoming institutional intertia*, prompting interesting discussions on the legality of using other people's data, and the problems surrounding technical know-how amongst library staff. The session concluded with Brian encouraging delegates to advocate data-sharing and mash-ups within their institutions, and use working prototypes to demonstrate the potential benefits to policy makers.

Tony Hirst presented a *Yahoo! Pipes cookalong*, which despite a few technical hitches, proved to be very popular. As the title suggests, this hands-on session introduced delegates to Yahoo! Pipes as a tool for creating a variety of mash-ups using a few simple 'ingredients' such as RSS feeds. This provided a clear demonstration that even the 'Enthusiastic Amateur' can put ideas into practice.

In a joint session entitled *Making library data work harder*, Dave Pattern and Iman Moradi showcased some of the ways library data has been used to enhance services at the University of Huddersfield. Delegates were prompted to think about future trends in this area, including the increasing need for personalisation of services.

In addition to this, Richard Wallis (Talis) introduced us to the *Juice Project*, an open source project which allows libraries to easily 'slap some mash' on their OPACs without duplication of effort across institutions. Interactive designer, Brendan Dawes, looked at approaches to data visualisation in a presentation entitled *Somewhere I have never travelled*, and Mike Ellis presented *Scraping, scripting and hacking your way to API-less data*, a session which focussed on how to extract data from web pages, and the tools available for manipulating and processing it into something more useful.

All of these presentations were recorded, and videos will be uploaded onto Vimeo and YouTube if you are interested in viewing them in full.

The opening sessions were followed by a networking exercise designed to get delegates talking to each other about topics of mutual interest, such as information literacy, mobile technologies, and web 2.0. Participants benefited from this opportunity to meet like-minded delegates, and it is clear that many of these initial discussions helped focus ideas for the afternoon session.

Following on from a lunch of pizzas (thanks to Talis), there was a series of 'lightning talks'. These 5-10 minute presentations covered a range of subjects, from the work of Edward R. Tufte, to the use of Scriblio to create a semantic union catalogue. In keeping with the unconference theme, delegates were encouraged to continue networking, whilst dropping in and out of the talks. However, the lightning talks proved a bigger hit than expected, and the majority chose to listen to these in full, before returning to their networking later in the afternoon.

The day concluded with the opportunity for delegates to collaborate, and submit ideas for the conference prize-giving. In total, an impressive 30 ideas were put forward. Winning contributions included combining book data with library floor plans to aid collection development and library design, and providing the facility to rate books at the point of return, whilst integrating these ratings into the library catalogue. All of the ideas have been released with a CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 licence. Check out the Mashed Library blog (http://mashlib09.wordpress.com/) for details of all 30 entries.

Prizes were awarded as follows (in no particular order):

- The UKOLN group prize went to Owen Stephens (open University), Edith Speller (Trinity College of Music), Fiona Bradley (IFLA), Nicole Harris (JISC), and Chris Langham (Birmingham City University).

- The Facet prize for the best use of book data was awarded to Mike Ellis of Eduserv.

- The CILIP (Yorkshire and Humberside) prizes for blurring the boundaries went to Sara Wingate Gray (University College London), and Martin Philip (University of Sheffield).

- The MOSAIC Project prize went to Amy Hadfield (University of Aberystwyth).

- The Emerald ‘coolest idea’ award was received by Tanya Williamson (University of Huddersfield)

Overall, the day was a great success, as the tweets for the event at #mashlib09 go to prove. The varied programme for the day helped raise awareness of the latest developments in technologies, and how they are being applied in a library context. It also gave librarians an opportunity to learn how to manipulate data without the need to write programs or codes, a skill which will become vital as libraries increasingly expose their data to the wider community.

The next Mashed Library event has been pencilled in for the end of 2009. Keep an eye out for details, as it is sure to be as popular as ever!