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Librarian Trading Cards

Putting a Face with More Than a Name

By Gwyneth Mibeck

Where else can you see librarians wearing a parrot mask, flexing muscles like Rosie the Riveter or smiling sneakily behind heavy books? Librarian trading cards are fun, creative and important. The colorful mini-profiles demonstrate how technology can promote your profession and your library.



Library student Amy Pelman launched the first set of cards this past November through her Librarian Trading Cards Blog: "I now have a steady stream of requests for cards from all over the country and one from Canada," she reports. Ever wondered what your colleagues considered the "one thing you wish more people knew about libraries and what they do?" Probing questions and responses accompany each card to initiate a dialogue about newsworthy topics. No two responses are alike. Pelman showcases each librarian: "I try to only post cards once every 5 or 7 days so that each person gets to be 'on top' for a time." Want to add your own card to the deck? Contact libserves@gmail.com.

Equally exciting is Steven Cohen's use of Flickr.com—the photo-sharing site with tagging capabilities—to create the Librarian Trading Cards pool! Author of the Library Stuff blog, Cohen's approach gives librarians the option of uploading their own cards created through a basic template. Cohen affirms: "I like the idea of using Flickr because it allows anyone to create their own card. It's a neat way to networking in our profession...doing it in a fun way."

At 154 cards and 147 members, the pool is overflowing. Pictures, library homepages, AOL Instant Messenger screen names, special quotes and descriptions splash each card with identity. What do a guitar player, an Irish-step dancer, and a motorcyclist have in common? Librarian Trading Cards celebrate intricacies and communicate changing responsibilities. Joy Weese Moll, a recent library school graduate observes: "My favorite way to view the Librarian Trading Cards is as a slideshow. I set the speed to its slowest rate, so that I have time to read everything, and then watch the cards pop up one at a time. What a fun way to meet other librarians in cyber-space—even librarians from history who never heard of cyber-space!" Melvil Dewey poses seriously behind a neon-green background while Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan floats above his five laws: humor only those who've worked with books can share.

Not limited to individual profiles, Librarian Trading Cards can be used to market events. A rock band jamming at a the Gwinnett County (GA) Public Library, conference images, and group photos give insight into how other libraries are getting people through the door. Brainstorming ideas couldn't be easier with images of past events and organizers' contact information.

Librarian Trading Cards can circulate among staff and users in print format or through e-mail. Distributing the cards at meetings or events adds a more personal element than a business card. As an ice-breaker, the cards can be used as game pieces to help learn names. Hang the cards in a staff lounge to build community. Color-printing? Laminating? Even better.

Who said some librarians don't deal with a full deck of cards? With two ways of creating and uploading your collectors' edition, the possibilities are endless!

Links

- The Librarian Trading Cards Blog: <http://librariantradingcards.blogspot.com/>
- The Librarian Trading Cards Flickr Pool: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/librariancards/>

Tips and Tricks

Have your card created for you and hosted on the Librarian Trading Cards Blog by sending your name and photograph to libserves@gmail.com.

Or

Create your own and add it to Flickr.com. Using the basic template for uploading one photograph and writing text at <http://flagrantdisregard.com/flickr/deck.php>, the general card can be used for individuals and events. The trading card appears in seconds and can be saved to your personal computer.

Flickr.com is a photo-sharing site. Basic membership is free but requires a user log-in and Yahoo! address. Instructions will walk you through uploading general photos, including your card, onto your profile.

Gwyneth Mibeck is a student at the [Dominican University School of Library and Information Science](#) and is the new intern for ALA-APA. Welcome, Gwyn!

We would love to have your [feedback](#) on this article!

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