

My Virtual Thumb Tacks

By Bill Self

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In the fall of 2011, the Lenox Hill Library's cork bulletin board joined that 21st century when I pushed the button and started up a virtual bulletin board.

In this age of electronic resources available without coming into the library, communication with hospital staff, residents, attendings, etc. can be an issue. In looking into ways to improve communications and re-connect with my library users, I took a cue and used the assistance from my colleagues at Memorial Sloan Kettering Library - putting in place an electronic bulletin board.

For under \$2,300 I was able to purchase a desktop pc (without monitor) with 2 VGA cards, 2 NEC 42inch LCD monitors, 2 coaxial cables and wall mounts. And while I coordinated with the IT, Engineering and Facilities Departments (no easy task in itself) to configure and install the equipment, I worked on creating a PowerPoint presentation.

So far the presentation consists of slides that: 1) cover some basics of EBM and PICO searching; 2) how to find the library page on the NSLIJ Health System's website; 3) a brief description of the library's electronic resources from AccessAnesthesiology to Nursing Consult to UpToDate; 4) new journals and textbooks added to the collection; and 5) announcements covering topics such as World AIDS Day, "Did You Wash Your Hands?", "There's an APP for That", etc. The slideshow runs during the day during library hours. The computer is shut down when I leave for the day.

But what has made the biggest impact are the slides covering recently published articles and poster presentations. From PubMed I pulled recent citations by Lenox Hill Hospital authors and created a slide of both the citation and the journal cover art. In addition, several Resident Coordinators have provided slides of poster presentations.

I knew this project was a success when one of the Department Chairs was taking a "short-cut" through the library and stopped dead in his tracks – the slide of his most recent article was on screen just as he was walking by. He was happily surprised by seeing this system and this provided a great opportunity to do some quick PR for the library. He has since worked to create an identical system for his own department. In addition, residents whose work is on the screen have stopped to thank me for recognizing their work.

With this expenditure from a "rainy day fund", I have been able to increase the library's "presence" and find a new way to reach out to the hospital staff and my end-users. While much research is now done remotely and off-site, using the electronic bulletin board helps to reconnect to the doctors if only to remind them that it's because of the library that these resources are available to them.



