

Ross' Rave: Dream a Little Dream

Ross LaBaugh, California State University, Fresno / Zayed University - UAE

A university is a library surrounded by a bunch of other buildings.

(Foote, late-20th century)

A library is a coffee shop surrounded by a bunch of books.

(Wikipedia, early 21st century)

Library?

(LaBaugh, mid- 21st century)

Late last week, daughter #2 pushed out a healthy, happy, slippery wee bairn the size of a Butterball. Cringe. As I am still on the other side of the planet, I couldn't be there in person, but thanks to Sprint, Skype and Al Gore (for inventing the Internet), I could sit comfortably in my kitchen as the pixilated pixie came screaming into the world. When mother and daughter fell fast asleep, I quietly logged off, shut down the 'puter and, too, took to bed. Sleep came fast, but fitfully.

.....

In my dream, I woke up worrying I wouldn't make my 08:00 GMT connection and would be late for work. With net traffic at rush, if I didn't make login by then, I'd have to pay an additional salik (road toll) of 5 geuros (global euros) and I'd be docked 15 minutes. I shouted, "On, login, work!" and heard the faint staticky sound of the wall screen brighten.

I adjusted my visor. "Good morning, Ross" blazed around the room. I didn't know how long I had worked at EVL (the Electronic Visual Library) as a CIN (Counselor in Information Navigation) and, though this routine felt unnatural, it also felt familiar. Today, I had a meeting with five students doing a project on medical tourism. Ugh. Since Jenna Bush-Obama's stroke from implant poisoning back in the 2049, this has been a hot pick with the beginners. I make a mental note to put this topic on the "You can not choose from this list" list (along with nano rights, the rise and fall of U.A.E., and legalization of marijuana). I'm meeting them in my office at the 3rd level DunkinBucks of EVL. It's our first vf2 (virtual face-to-face) so I'm not sure how I will recognize them when they develop (log into their AVs). Two clicks after I get there, though, I see three, black-bereted lithes mate-

rialize. Since saliks were implemented, students are rarely late.

"Hi," I say, "Are you from Eckhart's Comp class?"

"Yes," they reply almost in unison.

"Are we expecting others? I thought there were five."

"No, Julie had to withdraw from the uni because she got summoned," one of the bereted lithes says.

"That sucks," I say.

"Yeah, goes to Iraq at the end of the month. She only joined for the edbens (educational benefits). Who would have thought she'd be called?"

"I would," I think, but say instead, "Well, let's hope she's safe and comes back soon." Uncertain on the first account, unlikely on the latter.

We settle down at a table. I activate my scree (keyboard/screen), quietly observing the interactions amongst these students. In the 80 years I've been in this profession (Social Security, my ass!), I still enjoy watching students get ready to work. In the paper days, of course, there was the rustling of backpacks and books. Chairs scraping and muffled ringtones threading through a dozen conversations. Today, the noise and the bodies are gone, but there is still the shuffling and adjusting and moving about. One by one they turn on their screens. "Give a kid a kidney" glows from walls behind them; ONN scrolls news of the water wars in Arizona. Eventually, we are ready.

"So, tell me a little bit about what you'd like to do today."

Their AVs fidget a bit. I can tell by the flicker that they are probably texting each other. One of them, finally says, "We're going to do medical tourism, because Jarry's mom just had breast cancer, but she went to Bangkok and had it fixed and she had a really great time."

“It was so cheap, too!” another student adds.

“Tell me more about your presentation,” I ask in the most neutral tone I can muster.

“Owl (that’s the name of the TA in Eckhart’s class) told us it can’t be more than 5 minutes long and we have to use words, not just images. Ugh, I hate words.”

“We can use that hol (hologram) my mom gave us. It has words,” Jarry says.

“That sounds like it may be of some use,” I say, “though it may be a bit biased.” Screens flicker as the word biased is defined. “I’m sure we’ll find lots of other sources, too; they will all have words. I’m concerned about the length of your presentation, though. Five minutes is not very long and there are five of you,” I say.

“Four,” the quiet one corrects me, “but, really three cause Dodi hasn’t come, ever!”

“What thoughts do you have about how you will bit this (break into segments)?”

“Jarry is doing the Bangkok trip ‘cause it’s like her mom and she can interview her. Nora is going to do the good effects, and I’m going to do the bad effects. And Dodi is going to do the intro and conclusion ‘cause that’s what we assigned him.”

“What uni is he with?” Nora asks.

“He’s at Harpo.edu I think,” Jarry replies.

“Is that the one in Chicago?”

“Bid (back in the day),” I answer. “It’s a VU (virtual university) now.”

“Getting groups together can be difficult,” I say, trying to get us back on track, “but it sounds like you’ve begun thinking about the topic and that’s good. It also seems that our meeting today comes at a good time because you haven’t solidified your subtopics completely and you’d be willing to consider shaping your presentation around the kinds of information we may find this morning.”

I realize that I’m projecting more than I should here, but we really don’t have much time.

“Morning?” one of the lithes says. “It’s 11:00 pm here; I’ve got to login to work in an hour.”

I forget these students are from all over the planet.

“Well, let’s move on then, so you won’t be late. Take a look at your screens. I’ve just done a quick scan of medical tourism and it looks like the NLM and Bloomberg libraries are good. See how they have the little red flame next to them? Your UniUni (Universal University ID) will get you in.”

“Can’t we just net this?” Nora asks.

“You could, but I don’t think the public filters are good enough. There’s a lot of flotsam out there.” Screens flicker.

I press on. “You mentioned that Owl wants words, so how about we brainstorm a bit more about your topics, then we can meet at Bloomberg’s next time and use their uni filters to find some info.”

“But don’t they charge for that?”

“Yes, but your edbens cover the cost. You’ve already paid for it.”

“My other dad goes there all the time,” Nora says. “But he’s a docstu. I wouldn’t have any idea what to do when we got there.”

“I’ll be there with you. It’s easy. Really. And, they have this great funi filter (first-year university) that nets to your level, language and goal. Just pop in you UniUni and scree the results.”

“It would be great if it did the presentation, too!” Jarry says half kidding.

“It won’t,” I smile. “And, besides, that would be unethical, wouldn’t it?” Screens flicker longer than usual.

(Dream A Little Dream...Continued on page 10)

(LIB 101 Meets Blackboard ...Continued from page 9)

use of Blackboard to encourage feedback and manage course content will ameliorate technological advancement. Future teachings of LIB 101 may incorporate video and audio streamed through a Flash Player or online tutorials with links on the library homepage. Regardless of which format each instructor chooses, the librarians at Delta State University will continue teaching students essential library and technology skills to enhance their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Resources List:

Faden, E. (2007, May 18). A fair(y) use tale [Video file]. Video posted to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJn_jC4FNDo

LIB 101 example syllabus. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2008, from Delta State University: <http://www.deltastate.edu/pages/3294.asp>

The research process: An outline. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2008, from Delta State University: <http://www.deltastate.edu/docs/library/respro.pdf>

(LOEX 2008 ...Continued from page 5)

Additional activities, using RSS feeds and podcasts, also helped students to understand some of the basics of research and relevance. Future experiments will include blogs as research logs and Wikipedia article creation.

For more information about the conference, and the PowerPoint presentations and handouts for many of the sessions, including from all the sessions listed in this article, visit the website at <http://www.loexconference.org/2008/sessions.htm>

(Dream A Little Dream...Continued from page 12)

“Besides,” I say. “Finding the info is the easy part. It’s figuring out what you need, and then figuring out how to use it is where the real work is.”

“Everything is different but everything’s the same.” I sing to myself.

A few minutes later, Jarry says, “I gotta go. The baby’s crying.”

To this day, I have a hard time remembering that there are real people on the other side of these AVs.

“Ok, Maggie’s Cakery at Bloomberg’s. 06.10.52 @ 08:00 GMT?”

“I’ll be there,” she says dissolving from the chair that was never really there.

“Flash me if you need anything before then,” I say as the others vanish.

.....

From my sleep, the gentle sound of a Bach ringtone. My daughter has just sent me a new picture of my granddaughter.