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The e-Science Initiative of the Lamar Soutter Library: Five Projects, One Goal

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Objective:

Provide current librarians with a variety of options to become adept at the knowledge and skills needed to successfully work in the area of eScience.

Methods:

In 2009, the Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School, hosted its first eScience Symposium for librarians in New England. The event marked the beginning of an ongoing initiative to prepare librarians to take active roles in an emerging trend in research that will impact the futures of academic, research and medical libraries. Based upon feedback from attendees at the Symposium, other events were developed to address the needs expressed. These include single-day professional development workshops that provide a combined lecture and hands-on work in relevant topics; 3-day science boot camps that bring researchers and librarians together to learn about both the basics of scientific disciplines, as well as how the science is applied in today's world; a web-based portal that provides a collection of resources for librarians to improve their knowledge of eScience issues such as data management or developing metadata, plus primers on scientific disciplines; and a recently launched eJournal, "The Journal of eScience Librarianship" that aims to bring together the theory and practice of librarianship in the area of eScience.

Results:

The Lamar Soutter Library's eScience Initiative is currently in its fourth year of programming. Hundreds of librarians from New England, as well as other parts of the country, have taken advantage of the different events over the years. The symposium and professional development days have been replicated by attendees in their respective institutions and/or regions.

Conclusions:

The need for librarians to gain new skills to remain relevant in their role(s) is ongoing, yet difficult to achieve once ensconced in a position and/or career. By providing different ways to grow professionally, the eScience Initiative of the Lamar Soutter Library is leading a national trend in continuing education and improved awareness of eScience Librarianship.