Jim says the market share of eBooks has hit 20%…

According to Simon Sinek’s inspiring TED Talk on the Law of Diffusion of Innovation, if you want mass market acceptance of an idea, you can’t have it until you achieve a tipping point at 15-18% “market penetration.”

eContent, specifically eBooks, have reached that tipping point. eBooks aren’t an emerging technology, they are an accepted and EXPECTED reality. Is your library ready for this?

How many of your libraries own an eReader or Tablet Computer for staff to use?

eBooks are the next change in our constantly changing lives. We already manage change - - we change our library’s vision and mission and strategic plan, our collections, our facilities, and our technologies…

But how do we also ensure that our library’s most significant investment – OUR PEOPLE – are ready to adapt to and support not just a new technology like eBooks, but technology in general?

Before we talk about that, let’s have a reality check (nod if you agree)…

- Patrons are coming to the library with their new gadgets (eReaders, tablets, smartphones), expecting help. Sometimes still in the box. They also want purchase recommendations.
- In general, those who feel most comfortable with eBooks, have an eReader or a tablet they use themselves.
- The process to find, checkout, download and read/listen to an electronic LIBRARY book is complicated. It involves multiple pieces of software, knowledge of file management (side-loading), and in our case multiple online accounts.
- Technology is at the heart of many CORE library service…not just the online catalog, but mobile smartphone apps, public computers, wireless, computer and printer management, email, hardware/software updates, Office software and the INTERNET — eReaders and Kansas EZ Library are just new library services with a technological heart.
So, change is the only constant, eBooks are here to stay, and we have patrons asking for assistance....

**How do libraries ensure EXCELLENT CUSTOMER Service in this environment? Three ideas...**

1. **Empower and Support the Director in developing an agile, nimble and resilient staff with Continuing Education.**

   o Focus on Meredith Farkas’ *Skills for the 21st Century Librarian*:\n     aka Core Competencies (See handout for article written in 2007, contemplating how to improve MLS ed)
     - **Ability to embrace change** -
       “We should **fear** not providing the best services to our patrons much **more than we should fear change.**”
     - **Comfort in the online medium**
       Able to use the tools and TEACH others to use the tools – internet, search engines, eBook software and eReaders
     - **Ability to troubleshoot new technologies**
       Skills and knowledge to figure out what’s wrong and fix it – ‘out of order’ = bad customer service
     - **Ability to easily learn new technologies**
       Learn how to learn, play, and explore. Experience the technology from the patron’s point of view..
     - **Ability to keep up with new ideas in technology and librarianship** (enthusiasm for learning)
       “We need to be able to keep up with what’s new in technology and what libraries are (or could be) doing with it.”

   o Encourage and support a **Community of Learning** or a **Learning Organization** – notion based on *The Fifth Discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization* by Peter Senge.

     - Support implementing existing models and ideas: “**The C’s of Our Sea Change**” in *Computers in Libraries* by Helene Blowers and Lori Reed - First 23 Things self-paced, yet cooperative tech learning program.

23 Things Kansas in 2010 – did your library participate?
• Make CE a priority – is lifelong learning part of the Library’s mission or vision?
• Model the behavior – Ask for updates and briefings from the Director – take an active interest, stay informed and be supportive.

2. Approve the purchase of an eReader or Tablet for staff to use.
   o Staff can use the hardware internally to explore, learn, and play.
   o eReaders start at $80, 7 inch tablets at $200, iPad is $500
   o Staff can use it with Patrons to troubleshoot issues and demonstrate or teach about this service.
   o Create programming around it – great opportunity to be responsive to the Community.

3. Consider the impact of eContent on your library’s Customer Service goals.
   o How would the best possible customer/staff interaction in the library or in the community go?
   o Is everyone – Board, Director and Staff – ready to answer questions about the impact of eContent on the library?
   o What does your library need to do to address this new role of ‘community helpdesk’?

Embracing eBooks is an extension of our mission – we should build on the TRUST the Public already has in the library to be knowledgeable, helpful and patient guides.