

Knot Notes...



QUIPU GROUP LLC
services, products and consulting

KNOT NOTES FEBRUARY 2015

While the core mission of libraries has not wavered—to inform, entertain, and inspire—the ways in which libraries fulfill this in the 21st century has become increasingly diverse. From collections (tools, seeds, video games, energy meters, museum passes) to programming (STEM workshops, Skype author visits, makerspaces, NaNoWriMo), the impact can be felt most in our physical spaces. Brian Kenney, *Publishers Weekly* contributing editor and director of White Plains (NY) Public Library, recently shared his thoughts on “[screen time](#), “[scream time](#),” and [how people today use the library](#)” that could describe what many of our staff and patrons experience in our libraries. Libraries may not be quiet sanctuaries from the busy world every day, but there are moments, as Kenney points out. “... And I would wager that at all but the smallest libraries, parents can still find that oasis—at least before 3 p.m., when school gets out.”

At Quipu Group, we are proud to have our clients be among the most disruptive, forward-thinking, and creative libraries in the country, and we’re betting that there’s plenty of screen time and scream time in your buildings that you are darn proud of—keep up the good work!

FOCUS ON PITS

Quipu Group’s recently released Patron Incident Tracking System (PITS) is a web-based application that allows library staff to log and track patron incidents and offending patrons. Staff can track individual perpetrators and document their activity and suspensions, as well as store images and other pertinent documents.



PITS is designed to reflect each library’s rules of conduct, and the follow-up actions which it is allowed to impose. Libraries configure the list of infractions, locations, follow-up actions, and personal descriptors. Libraries can store as much or as little information as is appropriate per local policies. For example, a library may decide not to keep any information about victims or witnesses, and policies may prevent the storage of images of perpetrators.

Users, locations, managers, and supervisors can be defined in two different ways. The simpler method assigns a manager and supervisor for each staff user. This method is best if staff generally work at the same location all the time, with only a few staff who float between multiple locations. The alternate method allows managers and supervisors to be affiliated with a specific location. This

Dates to Remember

[ACRL](#), Portland, OR - Mar. 25-28, 2015

[Innovative Interfaces User Group Meeting](#), Minneapolis - Apr. 14-16, 2015

[Computers in Libraries](#), Washington, DC - Apr. 27-29, 2015

MY FAVORITE THINGS

Free Web Service:
[Privnote.com](#)

Privnote.com gives users the ability to send sensitive information through a website that allows the creation of read-once, encrypted messages. Once the recipient reads the message, it is destroyed. If a recipient gets to the site and the message is already gone, you know it has been intercepted, and necessary changes can be made.

I often use privnote.com to send usernames and passwords to customers in a way that cannot be intercepted or spied on. It is simple, secure messaging for sensitive information, and it's free.—Scott

method is best if most staff float among multiple locations frequently.

How does PITS work? A staff member logs in and creates a new Incident Report, noting the date, time, and location. They then indicate which rules have been broken on the "Infractions" tab. They can enter a description of the event if they have time, or it can be added later.

Once the Incident Report is created, staff can enter information about the people involved in the incident and indicate if additional support was called. They can also upload attachments, such as an image captured from surveillance video; additional staff can also login and add comments.

When all the necessary information is gathered and input, the incident report is submitted, and email message is automatically sent to the user's manager and supervisor. The submitting user will also be copied if their preferences are set to do so.

The manager or supervisor will then review the Incident Report and can add comments or follow-up actions. The report can also be forwarded to internal arbiters (library director, head of security) and external partners, such as local law enforcement agencies. When an Incident Report is updated, those connected with the report will be notified via email.

PITS allows libraries to document and track disruptive patrons outside of the integrated library system, preserving patron privacy while increasing patron security and safety. For a demonstration, please contact thefolks@quipugroup.com.

COME SEE US! INNOVATIVE USERS GROUP/COMPUTERS IN LIBRARIES

Quipu Group will be exhibiting at the Innovative Users Group meeting, April 13-16, in Minneapolis, MN. Look for us in booth #18; if you'd like to schedule a meeting, please [let us know](#).

Quipu partners Melissa Stockton and Robert Anderson will be presenting at Computers in Libraries, Tuesday, April 28, 4:00-4:45 pm as part of the *Community: Engagement, Partnership, & Impact* track. Their session, "Connecting with Communities: Libraries, Arts, Entertainment, & Security" will discuss how the ePASS venue pass reservation service has been embraced by California library systems and their patrons and cultural institutions, and the collaboration with local law enforcement made possible with PITS.

EPASS HOW-TO GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

Have you been thinking about adding museum and other local venue pass distribution to your library's offerings, but concerned about the lead-up process? Thanks to our friends at Contra Costa County Library, we've just posted an awesome [ePASS "how-to" guide](#) to the Quipu Group



website. The guide walks through each piece of the process, from garnering support from local institutions to adding their offers to your local ePASS service. With this exceptional outline and walkthrough in hand, a strong ePASS service can be part of your patron services initiatives in no time!

WELCOME NEW CUSTOMERS!

eCARD - Lake County (IN) Public Library (lcplin.org)



ePASS - Discover & Go, California. San Francisco Public Library (sfpl.org)

PITS - Berkeley (CA) Public Library (berkeleypubliclibrary.org) and Contra Costa (CA) County Library (ccclib.org)

PARTNER CORNER - SCOTT STOCKTON

I wear many hats at Quipu, as we all do. I act as the systems administrator for our hosted servers, do project management, and programming and development. I also do research for Quipu, looking for new technologies and methodologies we can use in our development. I have had the opportunity to lead several Quipu development projects, and each one has brought its own challenges, compromises, and rewards.

In my role as sys admin for Quipu, I selected linode.com as our hosting provider. They provide very good virtual servers with very good support, and continually add new services and often offer free upgrades to newer hardware or newer configurations. Even when things go wrong, like a hardware failure, the service is great. I receive an email telling me our server will be down for 45 minutes to an hour while they move it to new hardware. Within an hour, I receive another email telling me it is all done and my server is back up and running. The only downside to this is that I sometimes have trouble notifying all the customers that use that server before it is back up and running again. However, that is a small price to pay for not having to worry about server hardware, and not having to manually rebuild a server after a hardware failure.

Their newer servers even have Solid State Drives (SSD), so I'm hoping to upgrade some of our servers to newer ones. The SSD should speed up our applications as well as overall system performance with a price that is slightly lower than we pay now, and that kind of thing is very exciting to me!

I am always surprised and amazed by the wonderful ideas that our customers bring to us, and the solutions they envision to their everyday problems. Our new Patron Incident Tracking System (PITS) is a wonderful example of this collaborative creativity. Reporting and tracking unacceptable patron behavior is an annoying and uncomfortable part of library work that no librarian really wants to do. Have you ever heard anyone say, "I became a librarian so I could interact with difficult people and write it up afterward"? So, why not create something that

makes dealing with this disagreeable task faster and easier? That is exactly what technology is for!

The idea of PITS was brought to us by Berkeley (CA) Public Library. After years of trying to keep track of unruly patrons with a paper system, they decided it would be worth the investment of time, effort, and money to have a new application created that would help them do this unpleasant, but necessary, task. In terms of development, PITS is very different from most of our applications in that it doesn't connect to an integrated library system or to any other external resources. So, on the one hand, it is a much simpler application than some we have created. On the other hand, it requires a level of security that is not common in library applications.

I have also worked on MobileBridge, our mobile interface to a web catalog; a book club kit reservation system for Pierce County Library; and an [interactive resource map](#) for History Colorado, our state historical association. I also created an interactive ledgerbook [page maker](#) for an online exhibit for History Colorado. The exhibit was called "Tribal Paths", and it included a Native American ledgerbook. The page maker application allows users to create their own ledgerbook page using graphics from an actual ledgerbook. This was probably the most fun development project I've ever been involved in.

I enjoy projects that fall a little outside of typical library development—those projects that make me think a little differently and learn about new things. I also really enjoy working on projects that truly make it easier for educational organizations to cooperate in a way that benefits all parties involved. Quipu Group's ePASS service is a good example of that; it allows museums to increase their attendance, libraries to better serve their patrons, and end users to expand their intellectual horizons. In the past, I worked for an art museum as a preparator, framing art, installing and maintaining exhibits, and building crates for artwork. So I do have a streak of "museum" mixed in with my MALS and library experience.

In my spare time, I like to make things, like decorative boxes, carvings, and some steampunk items. You can view some of my and pictures of our dogs (dachshunds) on my [personal website](#).

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