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Preparing your library for mobile devices

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Introduction

This paper had its beginnings in a discussion at the USQ Library about the necessity, or not, to provide information on the Library's website about how eBooks can or cannot be used on mobile devices, specifically eBook readers. Varying sides in the discussion had differing opinions about our students', and staff, abilities in using mobile devices and eBooks. The systems team, who were involved in the development of a mobile Library interface, and were themselves proficient users of technology, felt that students and staff needed no instruction, whilst Information Services staff felt that they did.

Many Libraries have become the "main campus resource for services for mobile devices" (Lippincott, 2010), including development of mobile interfaces and support of student use of mobile devices. At USQ, the Library is the only section at USQ with a mobile interface and the Library operates as a pseudo IT Help Desk to help students connect to mobile devices, particularly after hours. Therefore it is perhaps not wrong to assume that Library staff will have the ability to troubleshoot and use mobile devices, specifically using Library applications on mobile devices.

This, however, is not the actual situation. Library staff, in this world of constantly changing technologies, are constantly under pressure to adapt to and understand new technologies. This is not new. In 1978, when talking about libraries and automation, Becker stated that "lately social and technological alternatives have occurred at so great a rate that change must be dealt with continuously". This statement could also apply as equally to libraries in the 21st century. Staff are finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with, and become proficient users of, new technologies. It is safer to assume that your staff do not know all about mobile devices. As one staff replied when asked what she had learned from mobile devices training, "I learned that I'm a dinosaur!" A small project was consequently created to investigate

issues relating to eBooks and mobile devices, and the best way to communicate this information to Library staff and university staff and students.

This paper details the processes undertaken, some information regarding eBooks and mobile devices which we discovered, details of training delivered and lessons learned and highlights methods for promoting to and educating student about the use of eBooks and mobile devices.

eBooks in the Library

We quickly became aware through our research and staff surveys that there were two different issues that were confusing staff and students. The first one was mobile devices, what they are and what they can be used for - specifically within the USQ Library context. The second is the issue of using eBooks. It quickly became very clear that the whole matter of eBooks is confusing for everyone – dinosaurs or not! To the question What is an eBook?, Armstrong, Edwards & Lonsdale (2002, p.217) state that "there is no absolute recognised answer." As we attempted to create a simplistic definition and explanation of the various eBooks which form part of the USQ Library collection, and how they differ from non-Library eBooks, we soon began to agree.

Mandy will address the first issue in relation to training that we have instigated at USQ and I am going to talk about some of the issues that we faced in particular with the second point – that of eBooks and eBooks on mobile devices.

We hear a lot these days about the wonder of eBooks and being able to download these onto mobile devices in order to read them anywhere and at anytime. In the commercial world this might be so – but it is not the case in the academic world. eBook readers – don't seem to be impacting terribly on our services at USQ – more so the issue of other mobile devices e.g. iPad, iPod, smartphone etc. There are a number of issues in play (just a disclaimer here – this is as it relates specifically to USQ at this time – there could be different subscription environments in other Universities and in fact even for USQ our subscription conditions could change in a few months).

1. Our academic Library subscriptions may allow a USQ client to access an eBook online, but the subscription does not allow for the book to be downloaded. However, this varies from platform to platform – just to confuse everyone even more! For example it is possible to download an eBook from EBL – but only for 24-48 hours, but it is not possible to download from any others – only access via the Internet.

2. At USQ we subscribe to four main eBook platforms – eBrary, NetLibrary, Books 24/7 and EBL (Electronic Books Library). Whilst accessibility to these is quite good on the iPad, the small screens of the iPod, iPhone and other smartphones make it complex to move around the screen – although it is possible. Not all eBook vendors have done the work in making their eBooks properly accessible on mobile platforms. Neither are mobile interfaces standard with all of the eBook platforms and even when they are available they require prerequisite work by Systems staff to make them work.

3. Some of the eBook platforms require the downloading of separate eBook readers eg Adobe Digital Editions or Bluefire Reader (specifically Apple mobile devices). To add to confusion for the end user, this is different for some eBook platforms, but not for others, and changes depending on the mobile device.

4. Some of the issues we are finding are not able to be solved internally and will require communication and collaboration with vendors and eBook platforms.

5. Not all software works together as we provide services to our clients e.g. ezyproxy is not mobile ready – so when students log into our databases and eBooks on a mobile device it is still quite clunky.

6. In our testing we have discovered that some eBooks , which opened as normal on PCs, will not open on mobile devices. This problem is random and occurs on different platforms, but appears to be a problem which must be fixed by the vendor.

How have we helped staff with this confusion regarding eBooks?

- Created cheat sheets that help staff to quickly identify what each of our eBook vendors offer, how to perform basic functions, what works on the different mobile devices and which require additional software ie eBook readers.
- Conducted training – which Mandy will talk about soon.
- Camtasias - written scripts and will be recording Camtasia Studio tutorials in the coming weeks for both students and staff to access.

....but we need to be vigilant and keep on looking at this issue. We need to assign a number of experts who will keep up to date with this issue and training needs to be conducted on an ongoing basis.

Technology

When it comes to mobile devices do we offer mobile technology services just because everyone else is doing it or because we can see real benefit to our users. I think that it is the latter. People today are becoming always connected – there is great opportunity for libraries to be a part of this and offer services and information that is useful, relevant as well as leading edge.

However, technology seems to be far ahead of vendors and publishers. Even though technologies available now, and able to be implemented by our systems staff, there is not always a fit between the technologies and the software we are buying and subscribing to. What is the future? Will our vendors, and therefore us, always be chasing our tails and trying to catch up to technology, or will technology reach a stage that this happens seamlessly.

There is such a large range of technologies available – how do you decide what to focus on, what to train on and what to market? What is the 'in' thing today could so readily be obsolete tomorrow. Technology is constantly changing.

Research tells us that the mobile phone is vastly becoming the most used and accepted of mobile technologies. Jason Griffey in the book Mobile Technology and Libraries says

> *"...mobile phones are becoming the primary information interface for users everywhere.....In 2010, 90 percent of the world's population will have access to a cell phone signal. It is the fastest growing, most embedded, and most widely adopted technology in existence today".* (Griffey, 2010 pp.2-3).

A summary of the literature reveals that there is not a lot of current research on the issue of mobile devices and the library – but there is some – here is a summary of that research (a bibliography of readings will be available after the conference).

First the bad news!

The bad:

- It is expensive in terms of time and resources to allow staff to investigate and implement many of the mobile technologies that could be used in the library. In times of tight library budgets it will always be a matter of balancing new technologies and opportunities with existing services (Carlucci Thomas, 2010).
- The problem of digital rights, platforms and non-compatibility is inhibiting what we can do and provide (Carlucci Thomas, 2010).
- Many library staff are not confident in dealing with mobile technologies and services.
- eBooks have still not been fully integrated into the academic arena – it is still a work in progress. There are issues with acquisition, collection development, technology standards, purchasing models, cost, copying and printing, interface problems, and archiving issues (Abdullah & Gibb 2008; Vassiliou & Rowley, 2008).
- If staff don't know about the services and information that is available on mobile devices – how can we support students who are using these technologies?

Now for The good news!:

- There are wonderful and exciting opportunities for libraries to promote access to their services and to expand our reach to local and distant students. That clients can access information 24/7 from any location is a great service to offer (Carlucci Thomas, 2010).
- Most staff are eager to learn about new technologies and given the time and resources are happy to 'play' with mobile technologies (McDonald & Davio, 2011).
- eBooks have much to offer, and as stated by Abdullah & Gibb (2008, p.594), "remotely accessible and available around the clock, can potentially lead to savings in physical space in the library, can prevent or reduce the loss of, and damage to, books

and are more readily integrated with virtual learning environments". eBooks and mobile devices – combined have the potential to transform the way our students access information.

- If our research and staff survey have shown us anything it is that this is in many ways a new frontier for libraries. Even though there are many issues there are also many opportunities and libraries have to think of ways that we can exploit this technology.

Training Needs

In order to provide innovative services and exploit technology, "we need to understand and play with technology ourselves" (McDonald & Davio, 2011, ¶3). Conducting staff training to familiarise them with various aspects of eBooks and mobile devices was vital. Prior to the training staff were surveyed to discover their current knowledge of eBooks and mobile devices, what exposure they had had to them, what types of support questions from students they were getting, and how confident they felt they were to be able to deliver support to students. The survey (see Appendix A) was sent out to all Library staff, with the majority of respondents from the Client Services sections.

Pre-training Survey Results

The results of the survey were not unexpected. As anticipated, the Lending Services staff, who do not have as much exposure to eBooks and assisting students with mobile technologies had less knowledge and lower confidence levels than ILRS (Information Literacy and Reference Services) staff. Overall there was some confusion and misunderstanding about what eBooks were and what there inter-relationship was with mobile devices.

Knowledge of mobile devices

Most staff had a reasonable grasp of what a mobile device is, though several included a laptop in the category. All had heard of the Apple range of iPod, iPhone and iPad. Significantly fewer had heard of eBook readers, especially the Kobo and Sony PRS, and only two actually owned one. Most staff indicated that they had seen students using one of the Apple devices, particularly the iPhone (22 respondents), though as one staff commented "may have seen them using a device, but I would not have known what it was – just one of those new fangled gadgets."

Knowledge of eBooks

Most respondents had a general knowledge of eBooks, though around 25% of respondents indicated they did not know the difference between Library eBooks and general eBooks. Most staff had heard of the main eBook aggregator databases to which USQ Library subscribes. The main problems staff saw with the databases was the confusion caused by the different platforms, and the problems with printing, copying and downloading eBooks.

Supporting students

Staff were asked to indicate if they had been asked specific questions from students and if they would be able to answer them. Fortunately, there was a match in response levels for the most commonly asked questions and those that staff felt they could answer:

- How do I connect wirelessly to my mobile device
- How do I print this eBook
- How do I download eBooks to me PC

The most telling response was for the question asking how confident staff felt in answering questions relating to eBooks and mobile devices. The majority of staff indicated only so-so as their confidence level, with no staff indicating they were very confident (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Staff Confidence Levels answering eBook and mobile device related questions – pre-training survey

What we learned from the survey

Most staff have a general understanding of what a mobile device is and what it is used for, but know little of the specifics of using devices or helping students use mobile devices to connect to USQ networks and use Library resources. Most staff have a general idea of what an eBook is, but are unsure of the specific s of Library owned eBooks, and how students use them. We tried to address this in the training offered.

Delivering Training

The training was delivered in one 90 minute session. We attempted to incorporate various aspects of eBooks and mobile devices. Our main goals for the session were to:

- Aquaint staff with the different types of Library eBooks and give them an understanding of the differences with general eBooks
- Aquaint staff with new technologies and let them have a hands on experience with mobile devices (specifically those we had at USQ Library – iPod, iPhone, iPad, Kobo and Kindle).
- Aquaint staff with the USQ mobile interface
- Train staff in how to connect mobile devices to the USQ Wireless network
- Train staff in basic use of the main EBook aggregator databases.
- Show staff how to reference different types of eBooks.

In 1977, Miriam Drake observed that staff "would 'flee to the stacks' when the computer terminal arrived" (Thompson, 1983). Whilst staff weren't quite fleeing to the stacks when a student approached the desk with a mobile device in hand, they were often fleeing to another staff member for assistance. We wanted them to have enough skills and confidence to be able to handle the basics themselves.

How successful was the training?

To ascertain how successful the training was we asked staff to complete a follow up survey (see Appendix B), which was based on the original survey, but with some changes. Whilst overall there were improvements in staff knowledge and ability, the results were not as good as expected. In terms of staff confidence in answering eBook and mobile device related questions, there was an increase in the number of confident and very confident, and a

decrease in the uncertain and very uncertain, but there still remained a large number of staff in the so-so category (see Table 2).
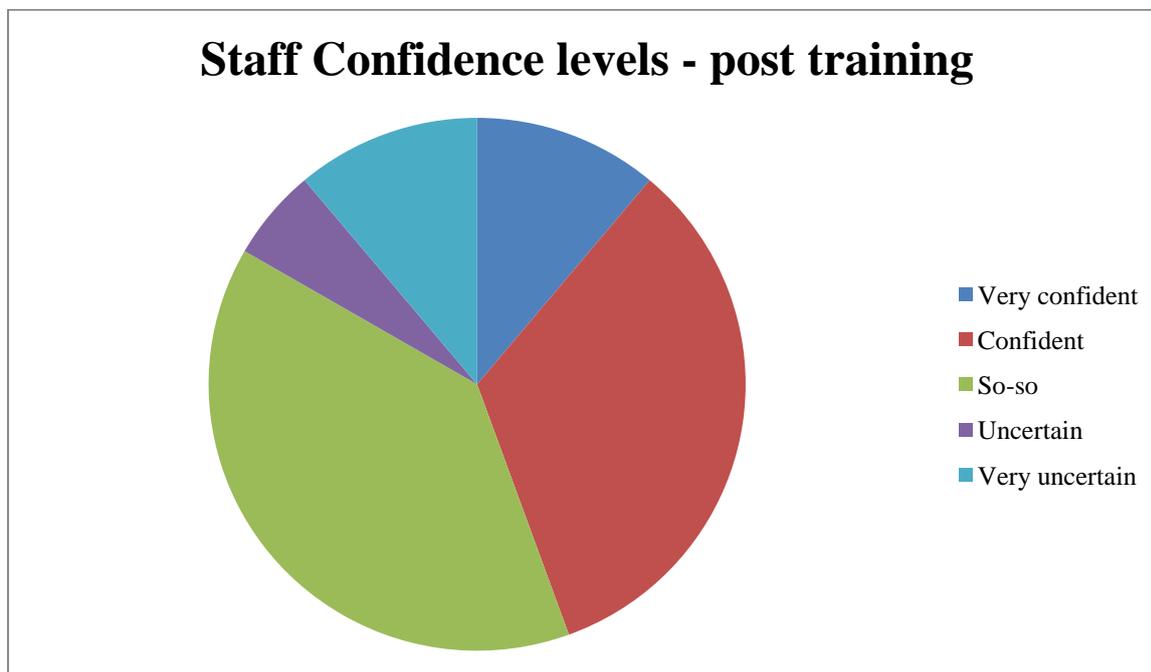
Staff Confidence levels - post training

Legend:
- Very confident
- Confident
- So-so
- Uncertain
- Very uncertain

Table 2 – Staff Confidence Levels answering eBook and mobile device related questions – follow-up survey

There were noticeable improvements in staff perceived ability to answer various eBook and mobile device questions from students (see Table 3), but the results were also not as high as would be expected following training.

	How do I connect wirelessly to my MD	How do I download eBooks to my MD	How do I download eBooks to my computer	Can I access MyLibrary from my MD	Can I download eBooks to my eBook reader	How do I print this eBook
Pre –training survey	59%	28%	50%	59%	39%	68%
Follow-up survey	60%	60%	73%	73%	67%	73%

Table 3 – Staff ability to answer specific questions from students

Most perplexing were the results for questions asking staff what mobile devices and eBook aggregators they had heard of. During the training, five different mobile devices (iPod, iPhone, iPad, Kobo and Kindle) were shown and passed around the attendees, and basic instruction carried out in four eBook aggregator databases (Books 24x7, eBrary, EBL and Netlibrary). In the follow-up survey, there were some staff who had attended the training

who indicted they had not heard of all of the mobile devices and eBook aggregators demonstrated during the training.

In both the pre-training and follow-up surveys, staff were asked what Library services and resources could be accessed from a mobile device. In the pre-training survey, 33% indicated all online Library resources and services, but in the follow-up survey only 14% of respondents indicated all online Library resources and services.

As well as not delivering the anticipated results, in some aspects the training had actually further confused staff. The discussion which had pre-empted this training many months prior to delivery evolved around the issues in accessing Library eBooks on mobile devices. During our research we discovered that there were many other issues about eBooks and mobile devices, and thus attempted to include all of them in the training. The result was that adequate time and explanation was not able to be allotted to each issue during the training. While eBooks and mobile devices are intrinsically linked in some ways, in others they are two very different beasts, and this was perhaps not adequately explained to staff.

However, the comments from staff in the follow-up survey were not all negative. In fact, they were overwhelmingly positive. The showed that staff appreciated the hand on playing with technology, and that staff found the demonstration of different eBook aggregators very useful. Most indicated they would like further and repeated training in this area.

Lessons Learned

From this initial training and the associated surveys, we have learned a great deal and will be amending our training accordingly to more effectively deliver the necessary information to staff. The main lessons learned:

- Do not try to cover too much in one session
- Create a series of small training sessions delivered over several weeks.
- Deliver separate sessions on eBooks and mobile devices, and then a session which explains there interaction.
- With new concepts and technologies, allow staff plenty of time to absorb
- Give hands on training wherever possible

What we hope to deliver with our new training program

- Practical, hands-on sessions on the use of different eBook aggregators

- Sessions on searching and finding eBook resources

- Regular Technology expos – every 6-12 months, where new devices and technologies are demonstrated and wherever possible, staff are able to "play" with the devices.

- Practical sessions on resolving issues and problems students have with mobile devices

- Overview sessions on new and emerging Library eResources

In the follow-up survey, some staff also indicated that they were not asked for help with using mobile devices and eBooks often, and thus would forget what was covered in training. Thus we also will be providing (and these are currently in development):

- Cheat sheets at the service desks detailing basics for different eBook aggregators

- Information on the Library website

- Short online tutorials in using different eBook aggregators (for staff and students)

- Short tutorials in connecting mobile devices to wireless

- Staff loans of mobile devices so that staff can experiment with their use for different aspects of their everyday work.

Promoting and communicating to students

The final stage of our research project is to develop different mechanisms to promote eBooks and the Library mobile interface to students, and to educate them in effective use of eBooks and other Library resources via both PCs/laptops and mobile devices. Libraries have not been effective in promoting eBooks (as well as other services). Various surveys on eBook usage by students (including one conducted by eBrary of over 500 Libraries) concluded that many students are unaware of eBooks, unsure of how to access them, are confused by the different platforms, and how to use the different features (Abdullah, 2008; McKiel, 2007). Their issues are very similar to those experienced by Library staff.

Libraries develop great services, but do poorly at getting students to use them. A recent, brief, on the fly survey of 10 students in the USQ Library (which was trying to ascertain how students would attempt to renew books through the Libraries mobile interface), showed that

none had seen the mobile interface, only three had used the renewal feature (MyLibrary) on the normal website, and that four students had never visited the Library website and had no idea how to find it. These were students in the library, what about students outside of Library?

We will be attempting to promote eBooks and the mobile interface and to educate students in the following ways:

- A dedicated webpage to explain how to use Library eBooks and other resources both with PCs and mobile devices.
- Displays about eBooks and their features in all campus Libraries
- A virtual display via the Library website incorporating vodcasts and brief tutorials
- Online tutorials in the use of different eBook aggregators.
- Encouraging academic staff to include more eBooks in reading lists.
- Snapshot training in using eBooks and other Library eResources.
- Technology Expos for students, which will highlight new technologies being used by the Library, and give students hands-on experience with new devices.

The Future

Even though the idea of a mobile device has been around for a considerable period of time and was forecast as early as 1978 by Becker (p.412) who said "in time individuals may have a small information terminal. Much like a pocket electronic calculator, which will bring individual information messages on command"…, when it comes to mobile delivery, the Library world in many ways isn't ready for it. This includes our vendors, our institutions, our staff, and our students. It is up to us to try to rectify this. We need to investigate technologies, we need to expose staff to technologies, we need to educate students on using technologies, we need to be advocates for mobile platforms and delivery to our vendors and institutions. We are our own worst enemy. We spend so much time doing the daily grind, that we don't give time and resources to developing, researching and educating. How many libraries have staff who are dedicated, at least partly, to investigating new and developing technologies and how they can be applied to the Library?

Whilst staff may be overwhelmed by the rapid pace of technological change – as one staff put it "Stop the electronic advance, it's snowballing me!" we cannot afford to ignore new

technologies. From this project we have learnt that in order to provide a usable Library, it is vital to educate both staff and students, particularly in new and emerging technologies and resources. With eBooks and mobile devices we have only touched on one small aspect of technology. We need to investigate other technologies (such as QR codes) and resources which staff and students are unfamiliar with and unsure about, and develop appropriate training and promotional plans. We cannot assume (like our system staff have) that users and staff will become familiar with new technologies as their use in society becomes commonplace.

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Appendix A

Library Staff ebooks and mobile devices survey

Name:_____ HEW level:_____ Age: 20s   30s   40s   50s   60s

1. Do you know what is meant by the term mobile device?   Yes   No
If yes – what do you consider a mobile device to be?

_____

_____

2. Have you heard of any of the following?
☐ iPod
☐ iPhone
☐ iPad
☐ Kobo
☐ Kindle
☐ Android
☐ Smartphone
☐ Sony PRS

3. Do you own any of the above devices?   Yes   No
If so, which one/s?
☐ iPod
☐ iPhone
☐ iPad
☐ Kobo
☐ Kindle
☐ Android
☐ Smartphone
☐ Sony PRS

4. What devices have you seen students using?
☐ iPod
☐ iPhone
☐ iPad
☐ Kobo
☐ Kindle
☐ Android

☐ Smartphone

☐ Sony PRS

5. How have you heard about different types of mobile devices?

☐ Media

☐ Friends/Family

☐ Work meetings

☐ Work email

☐ Research/professional reading

☐ Other

6. What are mobile devices used for?

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. What Library services and resources can be accessed from a mobile device?

    _____

    _____

    _____

8. Do you understand the differences between library subscribed ebooks and other ebooks?   Yes   No
    If yes, please define:
    Library subscribed ebook

    _____

    _____

    _____

    Other ebook

    _____

    _____

    _____

9. How have you heard about different types of ebooks and eresources?

☐ Media

☐ Friends/Family

☐ Work meetings

☐ Work email

☐ Research/professional reading

☐ Other

10. Which of the following cross discipline ebook aggregators have you heard about.

☐ Books 24x7

☐ Cambridge Books Online

☐ eBrary

☐ EBL

☐ netLibrary

11. What are the biggest problems you see with library ebooks

_____

_____

_____

12. What are the biggest advantages you see with Library ebooks

_____

_____

_____

13. Have you been asked any of the following questions from students?

☐ How do I connect wirelessly to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my computer?

☐ Can I access MyLibrary from my mobile device?

☐ Can I download eBooks to my eBook reader?

☐ How do I print this eBook?

14. Which of the following questions would you be able to answer?

☐ How do I connect wirelessly to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my computer?

☐ Can I access MyLibrary from my mobile device?

☐ Can I download eBooks to my eBook reader?

☐ How do I print this eBook?

15. How confident do staff feel answering ebook related questions. (please circle one)

Very confident----------confident---------so-so----------uncertain-----------very uncertain

16. How often are you asked for help in using ebooks?

Daily-------------weekly------------monthly-----------rarely-----------never

17. How often are you asked for help in using ebooks on mobile devices?

Daily-------------weekly------------monthly-----------rarely-----------never

Appendix B

Library Staff ebooks and mobile devices survey

Name:_____ HEW level:_____ Age: 20s   30s   40s   50s   60s

18. Do you know what is meant by the term mobile device?   Yes   No
If yes – what do you consider a mobile device to be?

_____

_____

19. Have you heard of any of the following?

☐ iPod

☐ iPhone

☐ iPad

☐ Kobo

☐ Kindle

☐ Android

☐ Smartphone

☐ Sony PRS

20. What are mobile devices used for?

_____

_____

_____

21. What Library services and resources can be accessed from a mobile device?

_____

_____

_____

22. Do you understand the differences between library subscribed ebooks and other
ebooks?   Yes   No
If yes, please define:
Library subscribed ebook

_____

_____

_____

Other ebook

_____

_____

_____

23. Which of the following cross discipline ebook aggregators have you heard about.

☐ Books 24x7

☐ Cambridge Books Online

☐ eBrary

☐ EBL

☐ netLibrary

24. Which of the following questions would you be able to answer?

☐ How do I connect wirelessly to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my mobile device?

☐ How do I download eBooks to my computer?

☐ Can I access MyLibrary from my mobile device?

☐ Can I download eBooks to my eBook reader?

☐ How do I print this eBook?

25. How confident do staff feel answering ebook related questions. (please circle one)

Very confident----------confident---------so-so----------uncertain-----------very uncertain

26. Did you find this training helpful?

Very helpful   Helpful   So-so   Not very helpful   Not at all helpful

27. What was the most useful thing you learned from this session?

_____

_____

_____

28. What would you like to see included in similar sessions in the future?

_____

_____

_____

29. Other comments:

_____

_____

_____