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Sent via e-mail to:-peter.wojciechowski@gmail.com

Hi Peter,

Ref: ITLA/Database Query

Below is some information about different Database software programs that I am aware of. In 2005, I wrote & delivered The National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries Database Training for which I did research into different software.

- <http://www.toy-cupboard.com> - A couple of our members are using this software, it had a few bugs but they seem to have resolved. Toy Cupboard was developed by a company called PACSis then later sold on to Paula Denton. (NB: I believe there are some Toy Libraries in Australia that utilise this software)
- <http://www.toy-tracker.co.uk/> - A popular database used by a number of Toy Libraries across the UK. Friendly staff, I have recently delivered training to a new Toy Library who is in the process of purchasing this database.
- <http://bytewings.nl/> - Spelio. Some UK Toy Libraries use this Database & seem happy with it, they were very helpful in my dealings when I developed the NATLL Database Training Course.
- <http://www.ctlib.org.uk> (John Cozens Recalldate Ltd 02392 698789 john@recalldate.co.uk) - Great support to us & to a colleague who was still utilising Toybase Database which is no longer supported. We have also purchased this software for two of our Toy Libraries. A good database with optional Web module developed by Recalldate after former Toy Library Software Toybase was no longer supported & developed. The Toy Library in Crich purchased this software www.crichtoylibrary.org.uk and Toy Store Address is www.toylibraries.org
- justin@defy-logic.co.uk They have developed a bespoke database recently for Bulwell Toy Library / <http://www.toy-library.co.uk>. Bulwell Toy Library are very pleased with it.
- <http://www.libertoy.com/> - Had no real dealings with this
- <http://www.libratu.com/online/library.jsp?id=66> - Had no real dealings with this

When considering what database you are going to purchase, you need to clear on building in capacity - how do you want your toy library to develop?

- Are you going to have an Administrator?
- Who will be responsible for keeping it up to date
- Can you include other Toy Libraries to utilise similar software to bring down cost/share resources - Inter Toy Library Loans etc?
- Level of IT Skills for Staff & Volunteers - Bar codes are very simple
- Are various workers going to have to access it at different locations, different levels of security access?
- Consider web based options, a couple of our members are considering this as laptops are vulnerable (damage / theft) or are just not backed up properly or regularly which is a very common problem.
- Does it need to be mobile, available on Portable devices e.g. tablets?
- What reports do you need to develop for the operation of the Toy Library and for reporting to funders?
- What data you need to record/track e.g. ethnicity etc..
- Make sure you do not Google images to upload to databases unless you have permissions
- On-going cost Annual Maintenance /Support fees of IT Companies & possible costs associated with web hosting as this varies considerably.
- How you want to produce catalogues - Hard copies /CDs

NB: Always speak to the customers who have been using software for some time for feedback

There were some other Toy Library Software packages developed as bolt-ons to other databases which were developed for the Government initiative 'Sure Start Children's Centres' but these tended to be expensive and didn't operate that well independently.

I hope this helps, have you had any contact/feedback from other Toy Libraries/Networks?

Keep in touch, I am in the process of joining ITLA

Regards

Ann-Marie McMillan

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(Former National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries (UK) Senior Outreach Worker/Trainer & Quality Play Matters Advisor)

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