

Association for Library Service to Children

**Great Web Sites
Committee Manual**

April 2006

FOREWORD

This manual has been prepared to aid members of the Great Web Sites Committee in their duties as a virtual committee. It is an attempt to answer commonly asked questions, provide pertinent information, and offer ways committee members should prepare themselves and perform their responsibilities during their term of membership.

During your tenure as a member of this virtual committee, you will become more familiar with the Internet, and surfing, than you ever dreamed possible. You will be exposed to sites you never thought could exist, on both ends of the spectrum from excellent to terrible. You will come to a new understanding of what constitutes superior, or great, criteria for a Web site, and you will never look at the Web in the same way ever again.

Janet P. Sarratt
January 2006

GREAT WEB SITES COMMITTEE MANUAL

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PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Committee Function Statement

To administer and evaluate ALA's Great Sites within the criteria and procedures established for selection and reconsideration. To complete other Web site selection tasks as appropriate. To maintain communication with the Children and Technology Committee. To work closely with the ALSC Program Officer and the director of the ALA Public Information Office. The committee will function electronically.

The Committee

The Great Web Sites Committee shall consist of nine members, including the chair and co-chair. One member shall be in cooperation with REFORMA to handle the Spanish sites, and shall also be a voting member of the committee.

Date Established: 1999, as 700+ GreatSites Task Force

Chair, co-chair, and seven members (9 total)

Board approved the change in membership and the revision of the function statement at Midwinter Meeting, 2002.

In 2004, the ALSC Board voted to invite REFORMA to appoint a Spanish-speaking member to serve a two-year term for the purpose of evaluating the existing Web sites on “Lugares en español para niños” on the GWS site and evaluating new Spanish-language eb sites for inclusion on this Spanish-language page of GWS. The first term beginning immediately upon appointment and ending December 31, 2005

Adopted by the ALSC Board, the REFORMA member’s position was reconfirmed in March 2006 as to their responsibilities as part of this committee.

ALSC Policies

Members who accept appointment to the Great Web Sites committee have an important responsibility in selecting sites that are deemed to be “great.” Those sites that are selected will be placed on the Great Web Sites list. Due to the function of this committee, members should have ready access to the Internet, and be willing and able to participate in discussions and decisions electronically and in a timely manner.

Conflict of Interest

ALSC affirms its confidence in the integrity of members who are invited to be nominated or appointed to serve on award and media evaluation committees, and in the integrity of the officers or nominating committees responsible for selecting candidates. However, because of the nature of the work of such committees, those who serve on them must be especially sensitive to conflict of interest situations and the appearance of impropriety.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the eligibility and responsibility of candidates asked to serve on such committees.

- I. The following situations disqualify a candidate:
 - A. Persons may not accept nomination or appointment who are employed by or advisory to any trade publishing house or any company that produces children's films, filmstrips, recordings, software, and/or other types of non-print media to be evaluated by a committee; or are the author or illustrator of a children's book or creator of other materials to be published or evaluated in the year of committee service.
 - B. A member may not serve simultaneously on an ALSC award or media evaluation committee and an Association Board.
- II. All other persons are eligible for nomination or appointment. The following situations do not normally disqualify a candidate:
 - A. Serving as a professional reviewer of children's books or of non-print materials.
 - B. Involvement in the selection of materials for professional tools, such as *Children's Catalog*.
 - C. Serving as a writer or editor of professional books in the field of children's literature.

All candidates for nomination or appointment have an affirmative duty to notify the nominating committee or the appointing officer of any circumstance or event which would disqualify him/her under this policy or which would otherwise affect, or give the appearance of tending to affect, his/her ability to carry out assigned responsibilities fairly and without self-interest of any kind. A committee member must resign immediately upon the development of any circumstance or event which disqualifies him/her from committee service under this policy or which would otherwise affect, or give the appearance of tending to affect, his/her ability to carry out assigned responsibilities fairly and without self-interest of any kind.

The President of ALSC shall immediately accept such resignations when tendered. In the event a committee member violates this policy, the Executive Committee shall request the committee member to tender his/her resignation. If a committee member refuses, the Executive Committee shall remove the member and inform the Board of its action. The President shall then appoint a new committee member. The final decision rests with the Executive Committee.

Committee Terms

The nine members of this committee (and the REFORMA representative) are appointed by the Vice-President of ALSC in November each year for the two-year terms (arranged on a staggered basis). Members may be reappointed for a second term, but no member may serve more than four successive years. The Chair is appointed annually, at the same

time, from among the members of the committee who have served at least one year, preferably the Co-Chair will be elevated to the Chair position. A Co-Chair will also be appointed, so he/she will be knowledgeable of committee happenings and be able to smoothly move into the Chair position. Terms are to begin at the end of the Midwinter Meeting following appointment.

Attendance at Meetings

It is helpful if newly appointed members can attend, as observers, the meetings at the ALA Midwinter Meeting prior to the beginning of their term to familiarize themselves with procedures. Members are not required to attend the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference of ALA since all of the work of the committee is done on an electronic basis. It is recommended that those in the chair and Co-Chair positions be able to attend these conferences in order to remain in contact with the ALSC Priority Group Consultant assigned to the awards committee group, as well as with the current ALSC President and Board.

If, during the member's term, he or she finds for any reason that it is impossible to continue in the committee's work, the member should resign immediately so that selection of a replacement may be made as quickly as possible. Resignations, in writing, are addressed to the ALSC President and Priority Group Consultant with copies to the committee Chair and ALSC Executive Director.

Electronic Communication

Electronic communication is the method of distributing information from the Chair to committee members, the regular discussion of procedural issues, and, at the discretion of the Chair, the open discussion among committee members of matters of concern. The Committee adheres to the "Guidelines for Electronic Communication for ALSC Committees," as adapted by the ALSC Board and as posted on the ALSC Web site.

These Guidelines may be found at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/guidelineselec/guidelineselectronic.htm>

The Chair will establish ground rules for electronic communication by the committee at the beginning of his/her term. At times, the Chair may invite open discussion on a matter of concern. The Chair facilitates such open discussion. As this is a virtual committee, all final decisions of the committee will be made electronically.

Since the committee's electronic communication is generally confidential, there are several ways to better insure confidentiality. For e-mail, include the word "confidential" on the subject line or as part of the transmission options. For FAX communication, include the word "confidential" on a cover sheet.

It is also recommended that all correspondence for this committee have "GWS" placed first on the subject line so committee members are alerted to a committee communication in their mailboxes.

PART II: SELECTION CRITERIA

Great Web Sites for Kids Selection Criteria

Established by the first ALSC Children and Technology Committee, 1997

How to Tell if You Are Looking at a Great Web Site

The Web is a lot like a flea market: there's a vast selection of sites to choose from but not a lot of order to it. Some sites are offered by reputable "dealers" and some from individuals who want to show off their personal favorite items. Sometimes it's hard to tell what's a hidden treasure, what's worth taking a look at, and what's a waste of time. It's not hard to find sites if you use a search engine like [Google](#), or a subject directory like [Yahoo](#) (or [Yahooligans](#) for kids). But how can you tell if a site you find is worthwhile?

Sometimes what is in a Web site's address can indicate the nature of the site. Sites from commercial businesses usually include ".com"; federal government sites end in ".gov," K-12 school sites often include "k12" in the address, and college and university sites often include ".edu." Sites from non-profit organizations often include ".org." A site with a tilde (~) in the address usually indicates that this page is maintained or created by an individual, rather than representing an organization, a business, or a school.

Children's librarians evaluate books, magazines, tapes, and software for children to find the best of all. Web sites are no exception. On this page, we have collected some excellent sites for young people. "Children" are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen and Web sites for this entire age range are considered. We will share with you what we look for in a great Web site.

Notes:

- Every site does not need to meet every one of these criteria to be a great site, but the more of them a site does meet, the more likely it is to be a worthwhile place to spend time.
- The content on the Web changes faster than anything we have ever seen in our culture. Therefore, in any recommended list of Web sites, the recommendations apply only to the primary sites that are listed, not to every site linked from the primary sites.

A. Authorship/Sponsorship: Who Put up the Site?

- The name of the individual or group creating the site should be clearly stated.
- The creator should give a source for information in the site where necessary.
- The Web site author or manager should provide a way for users to make comments or ask questions.
- The Web site author or manager should be responsive to any questions regarding copyright, trademark, or ownership of all material on the site. Sites that knowingly violate copyright statutes or other laws should not be linked, listed, or recommended.

B. Purpose: Every Site Has a Reason for Being There.

- A site's purpose should be clear and its content should reflect its purpose, be it to entertain, persuade, educate, or sell.
- Advertising should be limited and appropriate.
- Sites devoted strictly to sales will not be considered as Great Sites.
- A good site should enrich the user's experience and expand the imagination. Sites promoting social biases rather than enlarging the views of the child should not be considered Great Sites.

C. Design and Stability: A Great Site Has Personality and Strength of Character.

- The information on the site should be easy to find and easy to use.
- The site design should be appealing to its intended audience.
- The text should be easy to read, and not cluttered with distracting graphics, fonts, and backgrounds.
- Users should be able to get around the site easily.
- Pages consisting mainly of links should be well-organized and appealing to young people, and the collected links should be well-chosen and useful to children exploring the subject.
- The site's design should be appropriate for the intended audience.
- The site should be [ADA \(Americans with Disabilities Act\)](#) compliant, as much as possible.
- A game or recreational site should have a clear interface and playing instructions.
- The page should load in a reasonable amount of time.
- The page should be consistently available and load without problems; stability is important.
- Required "plug-ins" or other helper applications should be clearly identified.
- The design elements and features on the site, such as searchable databases, animations, graphics, sound files, introductory and transitional pages, etc., should enhance and not hinder the accessibility and enjoyment of the site.
- The interactive features should be explained clearly.
- A user should not need to pay a fee or type in personal information (such as his/her name or e-mail address) before using the site.

D. Content: A Great Site Shares Meaningful and Useful Content that Educates, Informs, or Entertains.

- The title of a site should be appropriate to its purpose.
- A site's content should be easy to read and understand by its intended audience.
- There should be enough information to make visiting the site worthwhile.
- If there are large amounts of information on the site, some kind of search function should be provided. There should be at least an outline of topics covered, allowing the users to find topics and move among them easily.
- Spelling and grammar always should be correct.

- The information should be current and accurate, and if the topic of the site is one that changes, it should be updated regularly. A “last updated” date is a plus.
- Links to more information on the topic should be provided.
- Graphics on the site should be relevant and appropriate to the content.
- The subject matter should be relevant to and appropriate for the intended audience.
- The viewpoint presented should be comprehensible to the intended audience.
- The skills required to use the site’s features and structure should be appropriate or appropriately challenging for its intended audience.
- In informational sites, especially those used to support school assignments, quality of content should be most important. Appealing sites for general audiences that are accessible to young people sometimes provide the highest-quality content.
- Some sites, such as health and life-education sites, may include mature content. Such material should be developmentally appropriate to the information needs of youth.

PART III: COMMITTEE WORK

Background Preparation

The committee's evaluation process aims toward the selection of Web sites which meet the Great Web Sites criteria rather than adding a variety of sites that just seem to look good in a list of sites. You will find that working in a group composed of persons from different backgrounds and geographic areas will enable committee members to become aware that in some instances different regions and geographic areas may tend to look at materials in a different light. Please also see Appendix A (page 26).

During the year it is recommended that members should regularly return to the criteria, rereading and reminding themselves that these comprise the boundaries of their nominations and their choices.

Schedule/Calendar

It is understood that all committee members will be working on various aspects of the committee's work during the course of the calendar year.

Schedule

Because of the enormous amount of work involved and because the work needs to flow with a certain degree of regularity, it is essential that committee members note this schedule for nominations, balloting, maintenance and adhere to it. Each Chair will adapt the schedule to meet specific years with varying Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting dates.

Calendar

January

- ALA Midwinter Meeting, site determined by ALA.
- Those who are in attendance at the Midwinter Meeting meet (not mandatory, as this is a virtual committee). Updates and discussions may be held, but no major decisions may be made as this is a virtual committee and all decisions must be made on-line by the virtual committee.
- Midwinter Meeting report distributed to all committee members by **the end of January**

February

- Verification of e-mail addresses and committee member information on Great Web Sites Committee page **by the second Friday in February.**
- Maintenance sites are divided among committee **by the second Friday in February.**
- Introduction of committee members – each committee member writes a brief (one or two paragraphs) introduction addressed to entire committee **by the second Friday in February.**
- Distributes manuals electronically to committee members.
- Online discussion of GWS evaluation process and

new business **third and fourth weeks of February.**

- Committee members select journals evaluating children's Web sites to look at regularly **by the end of February.** (Or, if all committee members are in agreement, they all will maintain a diligent watch for new Web sites to nominate in all of the journals they receive.)
- Committee members pick which month they will be responsible for making the selection for our "Web Site of the Month" highlight on the home page **by the end of February**

March

- Each committee member receives URLs of sites received via the online Submission Form to evaluate whether they should be brought before the full committee for the upcoming final vote by **the first Friday in March.**
- Each committee member evaluates (pre votes) sites submitted by the public and submits URLs of sites to be included in the final vote by the full committee **third Friday in March.**
- Each committee member submits a minimum of three sites for consideration by full committee by the **fourth Friday in March.**

April

- Full Committee votes on all sites submitted for consideration
- Ballot sent to committee members by **first Friday in April**
- Votes due to committee chair by **third Friday in April.**
- Winning sites are notified of their inclusion on Great Web Sites by the **fourth Friday in April**

May

- Winning sites are distributed to committee members for annotation, section assignment and age level designation by the **first Friday in May and are due back by the second Friday in May.**
- Maintenance of assigned sections of GWS sites is to be done. Changes, deselections, or re-vote submissions of **maintenance sites** is due by the **third Friday in May.**
- Annotated sites are submitted by the chair to ALSC for inclusion on Great Web Sites page **fourth Friday in May.**
- Chair submits fully annotated list of new GWS additions to ALSC-L by the **fourth Friday in May.**

June

- Changes for maintenance sites submitted to ALSC by the **first Friday in June**.
- Each committee member receives URLs of sites received via the online Submission Form to evaluate whether they should be brought before the full committee for the upcoming final vote by **the first Friday in June**.
- Each committee member evaluates (pre votes) sites submitted by the public and submits URLs of sites to be included in the final vote by the full committee by the **third Friday in June**.
- Each committee member submits a minimum of 3 sites for consideration by full committee by the **fourth Friday in June**.
- ALA Annual Conference, site determined by ALA.
- Those that are in attendance at the Annual Conference meet (not mandatory, as this is a virtual committee). Updates and discussions may be held, but no major decisions may be made as this is a virtual committee and all decisions must be made on-line by the virtual committee.
- Annual Conference report distributed to all committee members by **the end of June**

July

- Full Committee votes on all sites submitted for consideration
- Ballot sent to committee members by **first Friday in July**.
- Votes due to committee chair by **third Friday in July**.
- Winning sites are notified of their inclusion on Great Web Sites by the **fourth Friday in July**

August

- Winning sites are distributed to committee members for annotation, section assignment and age level designation by the **first Friday in August and are due back by the second Friday in August**.
- Annotated sites are submitted by the chair to ALSC for inclusion on Great Web Sites page **fourth Friday in August**.
- Chair submits fully annotated list of new GWS additions to ALSC-L by the **fourth Friday in August**.

September

- Each committee member receives URLs of sites received via the online Submission Form to evaluate whether they should be brought before the full committee for the upcoming final vote by **the first Friday in September.**
- Each committee member evaluates (pre votes) sites submitted by the public and submits URLs of sites to be included in the final vote by the full committee by the **third Friday in September.**
- Each committee member submits a minimum of three sites for consideration by full committee by the **fourth Friday in September.**

October

- Full Committee votes on all sites submitted for consideration.
- Ballot sent to committee members by **first Friday in October.**
- Votes due to committee chair by **third Friday in October.**
- Winning sites are notified of their inclusion on Great Web Sites by the **fourth Friday in October.**

November

- Winning sites are distributed to committee members for annotation, section assignment and age level designation by the **first Friday in November and are due back by the second Friday in November.**
- Maintenance of assigned sections of GWS sites is to be done. Changes, de-selections, or re-vote submissions of **maintenance sites** is due by the **third Friday in November.**
- Annotated sites are submitted by the chair to ALSC for inclusion on Great Web Sites page **fourth Friday in November.**
- Chair submits fully annotated list of new GWS additions to ALSC-L by the **fourth Friday in November.**
- Incoming Chair begins monitoring Suggestion Form for the March/April vote by the **third Friday in November.**
- In-coming rising-chair begins monitoring User Survey by the **second Friday in November.**

December

- (Changes for maintenance sites submitted to ALSC by the **first Friday in December**
- Chair writes “Thank You Letter” to committee

members' supervisors if requested by the **second Friday in December** (Appendix B, page 27).

January

- Chair compiles pre- and post-Midwinter Meeting forms
- Co-Chair assumes responsibilities after Midwinter Meeting

Processes and Procedures

General Guidelines for Virtual Committees

- When you receive an email requesting a committee response, **RESPOND**
- When you respond, respond to **EVERYONE ON THE COMMITTEE** unless a response to the chair only is more appropriate
- Respond to e-mails in a **TIMELY MANNER**; within 48 to 72 hours if possible
- If a deadline is given for response, **MEET THE DEADLINE**
- If your e-mail address changes, **INFORM THE CHAIR**
- If you have questions, **ASK**
- Please see Section 6 and Section 7 of the “Guidelines for Electronic Communication and Virtual Committees,” below.

6. Virtual committees.

6.1. ALSC may determine that some committees can conduct their business entirely online and designate these as virtual committees.

6.2. All members of virtual committees must have convenient access to email.

6.3. It is recommended that the chair of virtual committees attend midwinter and annual conference in order to participate in the division leadership meeting and to conduct other business.

6.4. It is particularly important that all members of virtual committees participate fully in electronic discussion of committee business.

6.5. In order to facilitate input from members at large about committee business, virtual committees should be sure to announce their electronic agendas on the ALSC discussion list well in advance of decision deadlines and solicit comments from the membership.

7. Virtual participation on traditional committees.

7.1. The ALSC vice-president/president-elect, president, or a committee chair may determine that one or more members of an appropriate committee may be designated virtual members. Virtual members participate in all business of the committee but are not required to attend conference meetings.

7.2. It is recommended that no more and 25 % of any committee be virtual members.

7.3. Care should be taken that virtual committee members are allowed to participate in all business of the committee, including discussions and voting. It is recommended that each virtual member be paired with a buddy who attends conferences and takes responsibility for ensuring the virtual member's inclusion. In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange electronic or telephone communication during conference in order to gather input or votes from the virtual member.

General Guidelines for GWS Committee

- Sites require a “YES” vote from two thirds of GWS committee members in order to be included on the list of Great Sites (With a full committee of nine members, six or more “YES” votes are needed for inclusion as a GWS.)
- When sites are selected, they must have a location on the site and a short annotation written (Special plug-ins required are generally noted in the annotation).
- Each e-mail subject should begin with GWS: <specific topic> to help committee members follow subject threads.
- When writing to the committee chair, please cc the Co-Chair.

General GWS deadlines

February

- Introduction of all committee members
- Overview of handbook/process manual; discussion of committee’s work for the year

March, June, September

- Each committee member submits three to five sites for consideration
- Each committee member evaluates sites submitted by the public and submits URLs of sites to be voted on by the full committee

April, July, October

- Full Committee votes on all sites submitted for consideration

May, November

- Maintenance re-evaluation done for each GWS section; if necessary, site information is updated, sites may be deselected and, if appropriate, submitted to the committee for re-evaluation.

Proofreading Sites to be Added to the Great Web Sites Site

- Is the address correct?
- Is everything spelled correctly?
- Is there a different section or an additional section that this site should be placed in?
- Is this site already listed on Great Web Sites?

Submitting Annotations for New Great Web Sites Sites

- What section and sub-section does it belong in?
- What age levels is it appropriate for? Assign pencil designation as appropriate: Preschool, Elementary, Middle School, Caregivers/Parents, Teachers/Educators.
- What keywords should be searchable for the site (four to six as appropriate)?
- What is the site's contact information (an e-mail address where the congratulatory letter can be sent)?

Maintenance of Great Web Sites Site

- Sites currently on the GWS page will be divided among all committee members.
- All sites will be checked bi-annually.
- URL should still work.
- Links on homepage should be active.
- If a site is inactive or directs user to a different site, it should be removed.
- If a site has changed its URL, the new address should be displayed on the GWS page.
- If a site has become blatantly inappropriate, it should be removed.
- If a site has dramatically changed its focus (or become too commercial), or there is any question about its appropriateness, it should be submitted to the committee for a re-vote.

PART IV: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility for selection and maintenance of the year's Great Web Sites rests with the committee. This manual describes those responsibilities. However, there are others who have responsibilities for the list. The next several pages give an overview of the responsibilities ascribed to others, beginning with an overview of the responsibilities of the committee Chair.

Committee Chair

The Chair is a voting member of the committee with all the rights and responsibilities of other members.

The Chair's responsibilities include setting the tone for committee discussion. This is done by acceptance of all statements relevant to the discussion, by firm leadership in moving discussion away from irrelevant statements and back to pertinent criteria-based discussion, and by providing an opportunity for all members of the committee to speak without allowing any of the members to dominate the discussion.

Additional responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Sending letter to each member's employer (December) (Appendix B, page 27)
- Establishing calendar and mailing procedures for the committee. Sending committee roster to all members. (February)
- Distributing manuals electronically to new committee members. (February)
- Conducting and distributing agendas to committee members for all committee members
- Corresponding with committee member immediately after appointment.
- Receiving nominations, preparing ballots, tabulating ballots, and sending them to committee members as per schedule outlined in this manual. (All year)
- Checking eligibility of sites nominated. (All year)
- Receiving nominations from ALSC members, committee members, and through the Great Web Sites nomination form (Appendix C, page 28). (All year)
- Answering all correspondence promptly, referring correspondence to the ALSC President or Program Officer for reply when appropriate. Sending congratulatory letter to those sites selected for the GWS (Appendix D, page 29). Copying all correspondence to the ALSC President, ALSC Program Officer, and Priority Group Consultant. (All year)

- Retaining copies of pertinent correspondence (electronic and otherwise) for the ALSC past history files. Seeing all is sent to the ALSC office at the end of the calendar year. Records may be in CD and/or print format.
- Working with ALSC Program Coordinator to arrange committee meeting schedule. (All year)
- Submitting budget request for next year's chair. (On request only)
- Maintaining financial records of committee's expenses and requesting reimbursement for ALSC. (All year)
- Attending Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting when possible.
- Preparing committee reports at and between conferences for the ALSC Board.

Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference

- Arranging in advance of committee meetings for all material (computer, Internet connection, screen, etc.) to be available in the meeting room, which is separate from the all-committee meeting during Midwinter Meeting. During Annual Conference, the committee meets with the all-committee grouping and does not require any equipment.
- Acknowledging observer presence by letting observers be aware of what phase of its work the committee is engaged in. Exercising leadership to assure that the committee can work together without interruption.
- Preparing copy for the press release, if needed.
- Preparing committee report for ALSC Board before leaving Midwinter Meeting.

Between Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference

- Sending appropriate (needed) committee files to next Chair and all other files to ALSC Program Coordinator.
- Preparing and sending suggestions to the Chair of the next year's committee. (February)
- Follow the committee's calendar of work.

Co-Chair

- Is kept abreast of everything the committee is doing by receiving cc's from all committee members and the Chair.

- Compiles data received from the survey located on the Great Web Sites site (Appendix E, page 30).
- Assists the Chair where needed.
- Attends Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting when possible.

Staff

- On President-elect's instructions, sends letters of invitation to new committee members. (November)
- Works with Chair in establishing meeting schedule. (All year)
- Works with the Chair in seeing that additions and deletions are made to the Great Web Sites site.
- Works with the Chair as a liaison for persons wishing to contact the Chair.

Membership

- May participate in nominating sites by sending suggestions to the Chair (Appendix C, page 28).

Board

- Regularly, or upon request, reviews and reaffirms the committee's charge, criteria, procedures, etc.
- If necessary, deals with conflict of interest of committee member.

President-Elect

- Appoints or reappoints committee members.
- Appoints committee Chair, preferably former Co-Chair.
- Appoints Co-Chair.

President

- If necessary, makes appointments to fill vacancies on committee.
- If necessary, deals with conflict of interest of committee members.
- Presides at press conference.

Priority Group Consultant

- Upon request, assists the committee and Chair with procedural problems.

- If necessary, deals with conflict of interest of committee members.

PART IV: APPENDICES

Appendix A

Important/Useful Web Sites to Bookmark: (for Committee Orientation)

Great Sites

<http://www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cfapps/gws/default.cfm>.

Great Sites Criteria

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/greatwebsitesforkids/greatwebsites.htm>

The Librarian's Guide to CyberSpace for Parents and Kids

<http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/availablepiomat/librariansguide.htm>

American Library Association

<http://www.ala.org/>

Guidelines for Electronic Communication and Virtual Committees (Section 6 on Virtual Committees and Section 7 on Virtual Participation are particularly relevant)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/guidelineselec/guidelineselectronic.htm>

YALSA's Guidelines on Virtual Committees (Sections 2, 3, and 4 are particularly useful) Virtual Member Policy

<http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/aboutyalsa/virtualmember.htm>

Web site Usability for Children

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20020414.html>

Appendix B

Sample Letter to Committee Member's Employer

[DATE]

[NAME, ADDRESS]

[SALUATION]:

Please accept our congratulations and thanks for your support of [NAME] during her [or HIS] term on the ALA'S Association for Library Service to Children's [YEAR] Great Web Sites Committee during [year].

The committee, selected [number] great sites for the Great Web Sites for Children List during [YEAR]. In order to refine the list to the sites that were added, approximately [number] were looked at by the committee during [year]. The job of a committee member has become very demanding. Besides evaluating the nominated sites, the members also were involved in an intense process of evaluation of many non-nominated sites in order to locate sites eligible for nomination and later voting. It's a demanding but wonderful experience and one that should prove of great value to their libraries, systems, schools, and children, as well as to themselves.

[NAME] has been an exemplary member of this committee and participated promptly and willingly during the course of their membership in this committee.

Thank you again for your support during this selection process.

Sincerely,

[NAME], Chair
[YEAR] Great Web Sites Committee

Appendix C

Great Web Sites Committee Nomination (Suggestion) Form Would you like to suggest a site?

The Great Web Sites Committee of the Association for Library Service to Children welcomes your site suggestions. Before suggesting a site, please read [our criteria](#) for selection to the Great Sites.

If you would like the Committee to consider a site, please fill out the following form in its entirety. Due to the high volume of submissions, we do not correspond directly with site owners unless their site is selected for inclusion on the Great Web Sites Web page. The committee will notify sites that are chosen via the contact information provided on their Web page.

Title of site:

URL of site:

Who put up the site?

Description of site:

Your name/Affiliation:

Thanks for your suggestion!

Source: <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/suggestgreatsite/suggestgreat.htm>

Appendix D

Great Web Sites Committee Sample Congratulatory Letter

Congratulations! We are happy to announce that your <name of site>, at <url> has been selected for inclusion in the American Library Association's Great Web Sites for Kids, located at:

<http://www.ala.org/gwstemplate.cfm?section=greatwebsites&template=/cfapps/gws/default.cfm>.

Great Web Sites for Kids are those considered the best web sites for ages birth to 14, outstanding in both content and conception. As applied to web sites for young people, "great" should be thought to include sites of especially commendable quality; sites that reflect and encourage young people's interests in exemplary ways. Our selection criteria can be found at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/greatwebsitesforkids/greatwebsites.htm>.

During the Great Web Sites selection process, your site was one of <number> sites selected as a 2005 Great Web Sites for Kids addition. We hope you will consider linking back to this site from your page. Our seal and instructions for using can be found at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/greatwebsites/greatwebsitesforkidssealofapproval/GreatWebSitesSeal.htm>

Congratulations again from all of us on the 2005 Great Web Sites committee!

Note: May want to use the abbreviated URL: www.ala.org/greatsites for part of the above addresses.

Appendix E

Great Web Sites for Kids User Survey

Improving service to our members is one of our top priorities. The feedback you provide about your experience on our Web site can help us to determine how we can make our Web site better. Please take a moment to complete this short survey.

Name: Optional

E-mail address: Optional

What was your main purpose in visiting the site?

- ☐ I was looking for homework help.
- ☐ I was looking for Web resources to use with my curriculum.
- ☐ I was looking for Web resources to assist my school's students/teachers.
- ☐ I was looking for Web resources to answer reference questions.
- ☐ I was looking for Web resources to help my child(ren).
- ☐ I was just browsing.

Did you accomplish your purpose?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How easy was it to find information on the site?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

Did you get "lost" at any point while visiting the site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Did you understand what the pencil icons represent?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Did you find the age labels helpful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you used the Search Box, did it help you find the information you were looking for?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which areas of the Web site do you find most useful?

- ☐ Web Site of the Month
- ☐ Homework Subjects
- ☐ Library & School Sites
- ☐ Sites for Parents, Caregivers, Teachers & Others

Which of the following are you? (Choose your primary role.)

- ☐ I am an elementary school student.
- ☐ I am a middle school student.
- ☐ I am an elementary school teacher.
- ☐ I am a middle school teacher.
- ☐ I am another type teacher.
- ☐ I am a certified media specialist.
- ☐ I am school library staff.
- ☐ I am a public or special interest librarian.
- ☐ I am an educational professional.
- ☐ I am a parent/guardian.
- ☐ I am a childcare provider.
- ☐ Other.

How often do you visit this website?

-

Enter comments here.

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Appendix F

The Librarian's Guide to Great Web Sites for Kids

The Internet, World Wide Web, information superhighway, and cyberspace are all words used to describe an exciting and fun learning tool that continues to offer families and children access to a wide variety of information.

At the touch of a keyboard or screen, at the click of a mouse or by voice command, it is possible to view a copy of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address or today's breaking news. Children can find assistance with their science projects, watch a movie trailer, or send electronic messages by e-mail, instant messages, or chat, to a friend across the street, in another town, or another country.

Using this technology wisely with your children will help keep them safe and provide fun and educational experiences for the whole family. Since the sheer volume of places to go and things to do online can be overwhelming, parents and children might need help finding the most useful and appropriate information on the Internet. Librarians are experts at selecting, organizing, and categorizing information, making it easier for you and your children to use. Today, librarians are applying those same skills to cyberspace so that you and your child can make the most of the vast resources the Internet offers.

We hope that these tips and guidelines will help you and your children enjoy the benefits of the Internet. Remember: It's not the technology, but how it is used that makes a difference in a child's life.

Keep Up with the Internet

How do parents and children keep up with new technologies and the opportunities they provide for fun and learning? Whether you have Internet access from home, libraries and librarians are always there to help. Almost all libraries also offer free Internet access for adults and children.

A great starting point is the American Library Association's "Great Web Sites for Kids" (www.ala.org/greatsites). These sites are fun to visit and many of them are educational. They are easy to navigate, have clearly identified authoring sources, and make effective use of the Internet to create unique, interactive experiences.

You and your children can also look at your local library's Web pages for recommended Web sites, take classes on Internet use for children and adults, get homework help, and attend the special programs your local libraries, schools, or community centers provide to get acquainted with the newest and best Internet technology and content. This way both you and your children can become experts in what the Internet has to offer.

Keep up with Children

Spending time online with your children is the best way both to learn about the Internet and to teach your children responsibility, good conduct and the values that are important to you. Ask children to share their favorite Web sites and what they like about them. Help them discover Web sites that can assist with their homework, hobbies, and other special interests. A set of suggested criteria is available at the Great Web Sites for Kids. These criteria are helpful for parents and children when considering the quality or validity of any Web site.

The vast majority of Internet sites are safe. But, like the real world, the virtual world contains content that may not be appropriate for children. Parents also should examine Web sites for racial, gender, and other biases they feel are inappropriate for their children. For your home computer, parents need to learn about and decide if filtering software has an appropriate role in your household. Studies on such software have demonstrated that filters are not perfect. They cannot block everything you might not want your child to see, and may block information that is helpful.

Whether or not a filter is in place, guidance from parents and other adults is crucial in creating safe and positive Internet experiences for your children. We strongly recommend that you supervise older as well as younger children's Internet use at home and at the library. It's a good idea to place computers in the kitchen, family room, living room so that you can see your children using it. Young children should never be allowed to "surf the Net" alone. Review your safety guidelines with them on a regular basis.

Suggested Family Internet Safety Guidelines

The best way to ensure your child's safety on the Internet is to be there. Of course, that is not always possible. Just as you teach your children rules about dealing with strangers outside the home, you must provide rules for communicating online at home or elsewhere. Discuss your library or community center's Internet use policy with children as well as your family rules. You may also decide to make an "Internet Use Agreement" with your child. Getnetwise.org offers sample contracts.

Suggested Rules for Kids

Always ask your parents' permission before using your full name, address, telephone number, or school name anywhere on the Internet.

Don't respond to messages that make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

Never tell anyone your passwords.

Do not give out credit card numbers without parents' permission.

Never arrange to meet in person someone you've met online unless you discuss it with your parents and an adult goes with you.

Do not believe everything you see or hear online. Some people may be trying to sell you something or spread inaccurate information. If information you see or hear seems untrustworthy or frightening, discuss with your parents or other adults you trust.

Suggested Netiquette for Kids

It's also important to teach children "netiquette"—how to behave online. Such straightforward rules as not typing in all capital letters (it looks like you are shouting), being polite, and keeping quiet in chat rooms until you get a sense of what people are talking about, are simply good manners as well as common sense.

Definitions

Just as there are different TV channels and kinds of magazines, there are many types of places to visit in cyberspace. Here are a few examples:

World Wide Web sites often contain colorful graphics, sound and animation, as well as text, and each may be linked to many other Web sites. Many of the most informative sites are sponsored by educational sites are sponsored by movie and nonprofit organizations. Some companies, toy manufacturers, publishers, and other firms to sell their products. There also are thousands of sites created by individuals to express an idea, pursue a hobby, or "publish" their own vision.

Databases offer an enormous quantity of searchable information. Whether compiled by a commercial entity or other institutions such as museums and the federal or local government, experts tend to be consulted or in charge of content selection.

Search Engines are computer programs that search and store information about Web sites and allow users to locate web sites based on such information. Unlike a database, a search engine is not composed of human experts in its compilation process and cannot judge the validity or authority of each Web site found.

E-mail is electronic mail that makes it possible to send a written message to one person or thousands almost instantaneously.

Instant Messaging (IM, IMing, ICQ, etc.) allows people to see if their friends are using the Internet and then send messages back and forth in "real time." This combines the "instant" aspects of a chat with the messaging aspects of e-mail. IM is also available on some cellular phones.

Blog (Weblog) is a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links—a personal online journal that can be viewed by all.

Chat rooms are generally devoted to particular subjects like baseball or video games. Participants can talk to each other in "real time," with their remarks appearing as they type them in.

Usenet groups are postings on specific topics, where the comments—and sometimes images—follow one another in a "bulletin board" style.

Discussion/Mailing Lists (listserv®) are email-based online communities that allow subscribing members to exchange ideas on a given topic. List topics range from pure

entertainment (movie star fan mailing list) to highly specialized professional discourses (applications of biopsychology).

Sites for Parents and Caregivers

Child Safety on the Information Highway

www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm

A guide to Internet safety for young people, originally from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Interactive Services Association.

Connect for Kids

www.connectforkids.org

This nonprofit site provides news and information on issues affecting kids and families, over 1,500 helpful links to national and local resources, and two e-mail newsletters.

KidsHealth.org

www.kidshealth.org

Articles on many aspects of child health—for parents, kids, and health professionals—from the Nemours Foundation.

Mother Goose Pages

www-personal.umich.edu/~pfa/dreamhouse/nursery/rhymes.html

A collection of nursery rhymes, with tips on how to share them with children of different ages.

Sites for Kids

Harry Potter

www.scholastic.com/harrypotter

Scholastic has created a fun-filled site for Harry Potter fans of all ages. Click on this site and find a trivia game, a pronunciation guide, owl posts and more.

Seussville

www.seussville.com

The Cat in the Hat, Sam-I-Am, Horton and the Whos, and the rest of the Seuss characters welcome you to Seussville, Dr. Seuss's playground in cyberspace. You can play games, chat with the Cat in the Hat, win prizes, find out about new Dr. Seuss books and CD-ROMs, and much, much more!

Time for Kids

www.timeforkids.com

This companion to the Time for Kids magazine connects youth with up-to-the minute

news and current events. The site also includes a dictionary, measurement conversion table, country information and games. Full-text articles are available in English and Spanish.

Congress for Kids

www.congressforkids.net

Learn the basics about the U.S. government with activities led by Uncle Sam.

Find out more at

www.ala.org/greatsites

Sites for Kids