It’s Time to Register for PLA 2010!
Apply by November 2 for a Great Stories CLUB Grant.

Connect with hard-to-reach, underserved teens by conducting a Great Stories CLUB reading and discussion program in your library. Online applications will be accepted through November 2 at www.ala.org/greatstories.

The Great Stories Club reaches underserved teen populations through books that are relevant to their lives. Libraries located within or working in partnership with facilities serving troubled teens (including juvenile justice facilities, alternative high schools, drug rehabilitation centers, and nonprofits serving teen parents) are eligible to apply.

Teen participants are invited to read and keep three theme-related books, as well as discuss each title with a group of their peers. The program’s ultimate goal is to inspire young adults who face difficult situations to take control of their lives by embracing the power of reading.

YALSA’s Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee selected “New Horizons” as the Great Stories CLUB theme, along with the following titles:

- **One of Those Hideous Books Where The Mother Dies**
  by Sonya Sones (Simon & Schuster, 2005)

- **The Afterlife**
  by Gary Soto (Harcourt, 2005)

- **The Rules of Survival**
  by Nancy Werlin (Speak, 2008)

For more information on the Great Stories CLUB, including guidelines, book descriptions, application instructions, and feedback from past participants, visit [www.ala.org/greatstories](http://www.ala.org/greatstories) or contact publicprograms@ala.org.

The Great Stories CLUB (Connecting Libraries, Underserved teens, and Books) is a book club grant program organized by the American Library Association Public Programs Office, in cooperation with the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Funding was provided for this program by Oprah’s Angel Network.
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Hello information specialists!

Have you ever thought about how your library’s message is perceived by your customers? At the Howard County (Md.) Library, staff members began experimenting with the philosophy outlined in Frank Luntz’s book, *Words that Work*. Valerie Gross shares her library’s success story and offers tips for implementing this strategy at your own library. Other features include Anthony Bernier’s look at past YA spaces in libraries and implications for planning those areas in the future, and Mary Alice Ball and Wendy Knapp offer a detailed survey of funding for broadband access.

Finally, I hope you’re planning to attend PLA 2010; check out the conference overview on page three. Registration is open at www.placonference.org. Hope to see you in Portland!

Kathleen M. Hughes, Editor; khughes@ala.org

Kathleen is reading *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* by Katherine Howe.

Readers Respond

Essential Services @ your library

Today, public libraries across the country have to prove their worth like never before. In these times, when funding is drying up for all but essential services, it is paramount that we be able to articulate just how vital public library services are.

Here in San Diego County we have chosen a strategy that clearly aligns public library services with the goals and strategies our community and elected or board officials regularly champion as essential. These include five perennial concerns: (1) safety, (2) education, (3) employment, (4) housing, and (5) health.

What do essential services look like in public libraries?

- **Safety**: After-school programs, during the hours many young people are without regular adult supervision.
- **Education**: Teacher cards that supplement school curriculum; basic computer instruction—fundamental skills many need so they can access and utilize all other computer-based resources; online databases that offer access to all, not just those who qualify for scholarships or can afford tuition.
- **Employment**: Assistance with résumés, software, free copies, and workshops; opening the library earlier so users accessing...
News from PLA

Learn. Share. Connect. @ PLA 2010

Registration Is Open!
Registration is now open for the Public Library Association’s (PLA) 13th National Conference, which will be held March 23–27, 2010, in Portland, Oregon. With nearly two hundred educational sessions to choose from, a bustling exhibits hall featuring the best products for public libraries, and several networking, social, and author events, PLA 2010 truly offers something for everyone. Visit www.placonference.org today to register or get more information on the following:

Deadlines
Save money and register early! PLA members (and Oregon Library Association members) who register by December 16, 2009, receive an early bird discount. The final advance registration deadline is February 19, 2010. The Housing Reservation Deadline also is February 19, 2010. (Note: Deadlines refer to date of postmark or fax.)

Programs and Talk Tables
Programs and talk tables are held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. While you’re reviewing programming, help PLA plan for your comfort and enjoyment at the conference by telling us what sessions you’d like to attend. This will help us select the most appropriate meeting room for each program. Visit the conference website to see a list of scheduled programs and to complete the session preference survey.

Special Events

Wednesday, March 24
Nancy Pearl’s Book Buzz
Join Pearl as she and representatives from top publishing companies talk about some of the best upcoming books at this perennial PLA favorite.

Opening General Session featuring Nicholas D. Kristof
Kristof, a columnist for The New York Times since 2001, is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, a tireless investigator of human rights abuses, and passionate investigator of social justice issues around the world.

Thursday, March 25
Adult Author Luncheon with Scott Turow

Young Adult Author Luncheon with Virginia Euwer Wolff

Audio Publishers Dinner
Featuring Chelsea Cain (Heartsick, Sweetheart); Sue Grafton and Judy Kaye (Kinsey Millhone Mysteries); and Marcia Muller (Sharon McCone Mysteries).

Friday, March 26
Adult Author Luncheon with Luis Urrea

Children’s Author Luncheon with Kadir Nelson

Saturday, March 27
Closing Session with Sarah Vowell
End your conference on a humorous note with the noted social observer, author, and National Public Radio regular.

Don’t Delay
Register today at www.placonference.org to qualify for early bird discounts. Also, meal events sell out quickly, so register early to ensure attendance at the events of your choice. Don’t miss a great opportunity to learn new ideas, share success stories, hear best practices, and meet colleagues from around the world.

Exhibits
Totally focused on public librarianship, the exhibits hall will feature more than eight hundred booths demonstrating new products, ideas, and solutions for your library.

Local Information and Tours
Check out the “On the Town” section of the conference website for information about the Portland area. PLA has also planned many terrific tours.

Preconferences
Take an in-depth look at subjects such as readers’ advisory, technology training, green buildings, and more.

Virtual Conference
Librarians who can’t make the trip to PLA 2010 in person will be able to participate virtually.
Leadership and Excellence @ your library

Public libraries in America have been focused on designing and realizing the “library of the future,” but many are now contending with a big squeeze; pushed on one side by increasing demands for services and materials, and on the other by regressive levels of funding. The future suddenly looks cloudy.

In light of this big squeeze we are faced with two scenarios. We can either focus on providing basic services and simply keeping our doors open—or we can reinvent ourselves. We can shrink from this new challenge or we can forge ahead and work harder to draw the best and brightest to our profession, to continue to provide services that meet our communities’ needs, and to rally our customers to advocate for excellence in library service.

The challenge of continuing to push our services forward under our current circumstances will not be an easy one. But it can be done. At a Public Library Association (PLA) task force meeting last fall, I was inspired by the words of Toni Garvey, director of the Phoenix Public Library. She said, “Despite budget cuts, Phoenix will continue to innovate.” This is the kind of mindset and leadership public libraries will need to overcome this latest challenge.

PLA has been focused on developing the future of public libraries through a strategic leadership program that will help our members respond to new challenges. Luis Herrera, chair of the PLA Leadership Development Task Force, has said, “To thrive as relevant and responsive community-centric places, public libraries need a new generation of change-driven leaders.” As part of an ongoing commitment to develop future leaders, PLA will offer a second round of fellowships to some of our nation’s top executive training programs. Four scholarships will be awarded in 2010.

Adam Goodman, director of Northwestern University’s undergraduate leadership program and lecturer in the school of communication, facilitated a daylong discussion at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference on strategic public library leadership. Library directors, consultants, and emerging leaders from around the country shared their thoughts on how to design a preconference program for the PLA 2010 National Conference and an ongoing leadership agenda for our profession. The dialogue was brisk and lively, particularly as the group examined the leadership abilities that our members will need to successfully meet the economic and social challenges of the future. I was especially struck by the words of Kevin Cherry, senior program officer at the Institute of Museum and Library Services, who reminded us that we must navigate and harness the voice of the community when designing the public
libraries of the future. The needs of our communities must always be at the forefront of our future plans.

Overall, the session was highly productive and yielded many excellent ideas. I am confident that the leadership preconference will be one of the most talked about sessions at PLA 2010 this March, and will provide attendees strong guidance as they work to meet the challenges facing public libraries today. I hope those who attend will take it upon themselves to share what they learn with their colleagues. It is up to the leaders of today to foster the leaders of tomorrow through mentoring and by sharing best practices.

My own guru has been author and researcher Jim Collins. His books, *Good to Great* (2001) and *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (2005), have been an inspiration to me and helped crystallize my “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.” Collins is an expert on how businesses and organizations achieve and maintain excellence. His Hedgehog Concept outlines the three things every organization must grasp in order to go from good to great. Organizations achieve greatness when they have a deep understanding of three intersecting “circles”—(1) their core values, (2) what they can uniquely contribute to people, and (3) which resources drive them the best.

“Greatness,” says Collins, “is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice and discipline.”1 Through the convergence of the three circles, the will to succeed, and the discipline to stay on task, the path to organizational greatness opens up and becomes clear.

Collins’ good to great model led to a very successful makeover of Cuyahoga County Public Library. I believe it can be beneficial to other public libraries as well. Clarifying our passion for public library service and the vital role we play in the lives of our constituents will ultimately help us survive in a dynamic funding environment, and lead to new sources of revenue. Collins warns, however, that clarity of vision alone is not enough to achieve organizational greatness. Strong, effective leadership is also required. Leaders, he says, must identify their personal motivation and translate it into decisions and actions that foster excellence. They must make the right decisions and stand by them, even amidst external and internal difficulties.

In the good to great model, the effectiveness of an organization’s leadership can be measured on a scale from one to five, with five being the highest level. Organizations, says Collins, require Level 5 leadership to achieve greatness. Level 5 leaders exhibit all the traits needed to take an organization from good to great: dedication, effective decision-making, humility, and accountability. They also tend to be mentors, helping to foster leadership skills in others, and in turn, ensuring the continued success of their organizations.

Level 5 leadership is demonstrated in our public libraries every day. Annually, PLA gives awards for excellence and innovation that clearly demonstrate that public libraries are evolving, getting leaner and stronger while continuing to meet their communities’ needs. PLA is pleased to recognize these contributions to our profession, and has identified the increasing value in creating platforms to share ideas and best practices across the profession and the country. More than ever in this time of funding reductions and uncertainty, we must find ways for our leaders to share their successes with one another. Through open dialogue we can help strengthen public libraries and ensure their vitality into the future.

I urge you to go to www.plaspace.org and participate in our social network, Communities of Practice (CoPs), which is now nearly a year old. CoPs allows experienced and emerging leaders to connect and share ideas. PLA is calling for contribution from our membership. We want to hear from you. Join our discussions and share and learn best practices on everything from readers’ advisory to technology; from urban libraries to rural libraries; from staffing issues to marketing public libraries.

Our most important face-to-face social networking opportunity will happen March 23 to 27, 2010, in Portland, Oregon, at the PLA 13th National Conference. This gathering of 10,000-plus public library directors, staff, board members, and vendors is the major continuing education event for our profession. It’s a blockbuster learning environment and a not-to-be-missed networking opportunity. And Portland is a great library city to visit. I hope to see you there.

Reference
“Tales from the Front” is a collection of news items and innovative ideas from libraries nationwide. Send submissions to the contributing editor.

Programming for Children with Special Needs Takes Off

“Rhythm and Rhyme: A Storytime for Children with Special Needs and their Families” was recently instituted at the Matthews branch of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County (N.C.). Through school visits to institutions educating children with disabilities, discussions with parents, questionnaires, focus groups, and hands-on experience, this innovative programming has evolved to a monthly library event benefiting many children and families who are potentially underserved.

Content consists of low-key music, hands-on activities, and gentle sharing of books and literacy in an atmosphere of comfort with stuffed animals and dim lighting. The program primarily serves children with autism, but also children with Down syndrome and other disabilities.

For more information, contact Tricia Bohanon Twarogowski at (704) 416-5004 or e-mail ptwarogowski@plcmc.org.

Beaufort County Library Holds Scrumptious National Library Week Event

During the 2009 National Library Week “Worlds Connect” celebration, the Beaufort (S.C.) Branch Library and the Friends of the Beaufort County Library set all five senses into play at the “A World of Beauforts” tasting festival held at the picturesque Waterfront Park in historic downtown Beaufort.

Guests to the tasting festival sampled signature dishes from towns named Beaufort in France, North Carolina, Australia, Wales, Ireland, and Malaysia. Local restaurants, caterers, and library culinary enthusiasts helped prepare the dishes available at the tasting.

All of the nearly three hundred people who attended the event raved about the experience. One person commented that the festival was “a good way to unite cultures.”

Everyone—including locals, tourists, and even passengers from the cruise ship whose gang plank led straight to the park—got a new take on geography that day. Books and DVDs give wonderful lessons, but once in a while it is even better to learn with your taste buds.

For more information, contact Amanda Brewer at (843) 470-6524 or e-mail abrewer@bcgov.net.

Tulsa City-County Library Presents Seventh Annual Asian American Festival

More than three thousand festivalgoers delighted in the sights, sounds, and tastes of Asia at Tulsa City-County (Okla.) Library’s (TCCL) seventh annual Asian American Festival, recently held at the Martin Regional Library.

The colorful cultures of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and
other countries in Asia came to life through Chinese dragon, lion, and folk dances; martial arts presentations; Japanese bamboo flute performance, traditional tea ceremony, and manga exchange; classical Indian music and dance performance; hands-on fun, educational activities, and crafts for children of all ages; authentic arts and crafts booths; and Asian cuisine.

TCCL inaugurated the festival in 2003 as a way to honor and recognize the diverse cultures in the Asian communities. The Tulsa Library Trust funds the festival. Admission is free.

For more information about the Asian American Festival, call (918) 596-7977 or visit www.tulsalibrary.org.

**Operation Teen Book Drop**

Thanks to a unique partnership with the Oakland (Calif.) Public Library (OPL), the Children’s Hospital & Research Center Oakland was the recipient of a special campaign, Operation Teen Book Drop, which put free books into the hands of recuperating teen patients. On April 16, 2009, to coincide with Support Teen Literature Day and National Library Week, Children’s Hospital Oakland received six hundred new titles donated by publishers throughout the nation.

Jodi Mitchell, teen outreach librarian for OPL, first learned about the Operation Teen Book Drop program to benefit teen patients through the Young Adult Library Services Association, which is a sponsor of this campaign, along with readergirlz and Guys Lit Wire. Already partnering with Children’s Hospital Oakland and the Oakland Unified School District to bring reader services to teen patients, she immediately requested that Children’s Hospital Oakland be included in this nationwide program.

According to Wendy Bloom, RN, Children’s Hospital Oakland, “We have some wonderful readers who have gone through all the titles in our collection. These new additions will be most welcome by our teen patients.”

The three Oakland agencies have an ongoing relationship with the Hospital School Program and a library on site at Children’s Hospital Oakland. Mitchell visits the hospital every week and brings requested materials that may not be available in their small collection from the public library.

For more information, contact Kathleen Hirooka at (510) 238-6713.

**A Library Fluke**

The Magic Fluke, a company that manufactures ukuleles in New Hartford, Connecticut, supplied the Licia & Mason Beekley Community Library with four brightly colored ukuleles to lend to library patrons. The Fluke ukuleles, two Fleas and two Flukes, were an instant hit. In addition to the instruments, Phyllis and Dale Webb of The Magic Fluke supplied the library with instructional DVDs and books to help patrons learn to play.

The Flukes hang in cases on a pegged shelf in the library. They circulate for three weeks and are most popular with patrons during the summer months and holiday vacation times. Occasionally a family will take out more than one so that they can play together.
Letter “Booking” @ your library

Letterboxing is a unique pastime that combines treasure hunting with craft making and puzzle solving. Online sites provide hunters with clues that lead them to hidden treasure boxes. As this activity grows in popularity, fans have become more creative in hiding these boxes. Some letterboxes have found their way to public library bookshelves in the form of “letterbooks.”

In 2007, a letterboxing patron asked youth librarians at Highland Township (Mich.) Public Library (HTPL) to place a box in the library. The librarians worked with the patron to create clues and hide the box. The clues provide letterboxers with a fun and mysterious introduction to the library while taking them on a tour of the youth department.

Each letterbox contains a logbook and a unique (often handmade) stamp. HTPL's stamp is a handmade version of “Library Bob,” the universal sign for a library. Letterboxers carry their own unique stamp and use a secret trail name. Letterboxers from communities as far as forty miles away have visited HTPL to hunt for the letterbook and have left colorful stamps in the logbook, along with fun, positive messages.

Families who have come to HTPL to letterbox often stay to browse the collection. Letterboxing provides an inexpensive way for libraries to reach out to a group of curious and adventurous people who may not have ever visited their local library.

For more information, visit www.atlasquest.com or www.letterboxing.org. You may also contact HTPL Youth Services Librarian Brenda Dunseth at (248) 887–2218 or e-mail bdunseth@highland.lib.mi.us.

Book a Librarian

Professional librarians are available for one-on-one by appointments to better serve patrons with research questions or to offer personal technology training. The thirty-minute appointments, open to Skokie (Ill.) Public Library cardholders, typically focus on library orientation; researching a topic using online research tools; resources for small business owners; local, state, and federal law; as well as health, historical, and consumer-related research.

For more information, e-mail tellus@skokielibrary.info or visit www.skokielibrary.info.

Multnomah County Library Launches Multilingual Streaming Video Series

In response to growing linguistic diversity, Multnomah County (Ore.) Library (MCL) has created Welcome to the Library, an online video series in Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese that introduces speakers of these languages to the many services offered by the public library.

Viewable from the library’s website, the Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese versions of Welcome to the Library include eight chapters that focus on useful information such as how to get a library card and how to use a library computer. All three are also posted on YouTube and are available as DVDs that can be checked out from the library.

Creation of the Welcome to the Library series was supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Oregon State Library. DVD sets of the Welcome to the Library series are being provided to all public library systems in Oregon for use in their own outreach work.

For more information, contact MCL Marketing and Communications Manager Penny Hummel at (503) 988–5498 or e-mail pennyh@multcolib.org.

First Boston Public Library Combination Branch Library and Community Center

The newly renovated Jeremiah E. Burke High School, opened in September 2008, is the first in Boston to include a public library and community center. The concept was developed via the Community Learning Initiative, an effort by Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Boston Public Schools, and the Boston Public Library to work collaboratively to ensure that children’s emotional, developmental, physical, and academic needs are met.

The 16,000-square-foot library includes a sunlit “living room” with comfortable seating and computers, a children’s room with a large collection and craft and activity room, a “jazz lounge” for teens with lounge seating, as well as group study rooms.

The community center features office space, a meeting room, and use of the Burke High School athletic facilities when school isn’t in session.

For more information, contact Mary Bender at (617) 859-2220.
The Big Read
= A Big Opportunity for Your Library

The website explains it best:

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment.

The Big Read answers a big need. Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America, a 2004 report by the National Endowment for the Arts, found that not only is literary reading in America declining rapidly among all groups, but that the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young. The Big Read aims to address this crisis squarely and effectively. It provides citizens with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their communities. The initiative includes innovative reading programs in selected cities and towns, comprehensive resources for discussing classic literature, an ambitious national publicity campaign, and an extensive website providing comprehensive information on authors and their works.

Each community event lasts approximately one month and includes a kickoff event to launch the program locally, ideally attended by the mayor and other local luminaries; major events devoted specifically to the book (panel discussions, author reading, and the like); events using the book as a point of departure (film screenings, theatrical readings, and so forth); and book discussions in diverse locations and aimed at a wide range of audiences.

The NEA inaugurated The Big Read as a pilot project in 2006 with ten communities featuring four books. The Big Read continues to expand to include more communities and additional books. By June 2010, more than 800 grants have been awarded to communities in the U.S. to host Big Reads since the program’s 2007 national launch.1

This Perspectives column features essays by librarians who have hosted The Big Read. They describe the special events that they planned for their chosen books, the partnerships they developed, and the very positive results!
The Maltese Falcon in Live Oak, Florida

Marlene Mitchell (mmitchell@neflin.org), Youth Services Manager, Suwannee River Regional Library, Live Oak, Florida

The Suwannee River Regional Library was one of 208 organizations nationwide selected for a Big Read grant in 2009. We chose *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett as our book.

We presented a wide variety of activities. In addition to the traditional book discussions and book-to-movie screenings, we invited the public to a CSI lecture/demonstration, community theater presentations, craft programs, fingerprinting by the sheriff’s department, scavenger hunts, podcasts, a film noir marathon, adult book discussions, tween book club, mystery story-times, and other programs. We partnered with many organizations, schools, and businesses to provide additional programs and promotion of The Big Read Suwannee County. The impact of The Big Read on our large rural community was far-reaching. Our county spreads over 688 square miles and includes many small towns. We were able to present programs and events in multiple locations throughout the county, bringing our programs to people who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to participate. We had a great response from the public with many requests for continuing the events every year.

The highlight of our Big Read experience was our wonderful kick-off party. On February 5, 2009, we invited the community and our Big Read partners to join us for hors d’oeuvres, music, and dancing, all based on the 1930s era. Danny Hales, our library director, portrayed Dashiell Hammett and distributed copies of the book. The guests also received a surprise when our displayed model of the Maltese Falcon disappeared during the festivities. This provided the opportunity for further discussion among everyone as to “whodunit,” and the speculations continued throughout the month during the hunt for the missing Maltese Falcon.

We used The Big Read to launch a tween book club, which started out with a mystery theme and the reading of Bruce Hale’s version, *The Malted Falcon*. The children were so enthusiastic about this event that we continued the book club through the remainder of the school year. The high school and the middle school also partnered with the library to present Big Read programs. Their activities included podcasts, reading circles, a film noir marathon, art projects, and a scavenger hunt—all of which helped to encourage students to read.

The Big Read provided opportunities for new outreach such as presenting a reader’s theater to a local retirement village. We also visited schools, a museum, an art guild, recreation centers, and businesses. The resources also gave us the opportunity to encourage the community to delve into the area’s history through our History Mystery Event. One of our community partners, the Suwannee County 4H Council, researched and created questions based on Suwannee County history. The clues were then printed in the newspapers, announced on two radio stations, and added to our library’s and the newspapers’ web-pages. This kept The Big Read in the news daily.

We used grant resources to reach reluctant or lapsed readers in our area by distributing more than three hundred copies of *The Maltese Falcon* from the library with additional copies distributed in the high school. We encouraged readers to make use of the study guides and CDs that were supplied. Teacher’s guides were used in the school and for the reading circles. The provided public service announcements were used by the local media. The six large banners provided by Big Read were used at the school, Live Oak and Branford libraries, and on major intersections. The posters they provided were distributed to all of the partner organizations and were displayed around the county. Bookmarks were available for everyone and distributed at all events and then a supply was left for the organizations to hand out. The Big Read website was a great help; we referred.
to it often for information and inspiration.

The most effective marketing tool we incorporated was the use of life-size cardboard stand-ups of Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade. We purchased eleven stand-ups and added Big Read banners across the fronts of them. We also added a Sam Spade business card in his hand. The stand-ups were placed in the county courthouse, city hall, the recreation department, schools, the retirement village, and several businesses. Two of the stand-ups were relocated to different spots during the month. We also used one to advertise events in the library. Sam Spade’s office was created in the lobby of our library, including vintage furniture and lamp, black and white art, an antique typewriter, confidential files, and a fedora and trench coat on a hat rack. This area was also used to display and distribute brochures, books, and guides. The county commissioners and the city government proclaimed February as Big Read Suwannee County Month, which provided great newspaper coverage. Another effective marketing effort was the purchasing of advertising space in the newspapers by the Friends of the Library. By buying the ad space instead of relying solely on public service announcements we were guaranteed to have our publicity in the newspaper every week and positioned on the same portion of the page for consistency. Public service announcements were included every week in addition to the paid advertising.

We appreciated the opportunity to expand our services and hope to continue The Big Read events in our county. The project allowed us to interact with the community in many new and beneficial ways. The variety of events brought people into the library who did not frequently visit. The Big Read also gave people in the community something to get excited about and come together to exchange their thoughts and ideas around one book.

My Ántonia in Weatherford, Texas

Dale Fleeger (dfleeger@weatherfordtx.gov), Director of Library Services, Weatherford (Tex.) Public Library

The City of Weatherford, Texas, is at the geographic center of Parker County, about twenty-five miles west of Fort Worth. There are four public libraries in the county, with Weatherford Public Library (WPL) being the largest in terms of collection and activity.

By most standards WPL is a small- to medium-sized community library. Our staff works hard to keep up with continued growth. Taking on additional projects is not something we can easily justify. Why did we consider seeking a Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)? We undertook the challenge only because we were able to partner with other community organizations.

The whole process began innocently enough in the summer of 2007 when I met some friends for lunch. One of the participants, the grant writer for Weatherford College, had just read about the NEA’s Big Read grant program. She wanted to know why WPL didn’t seek one of the grants. I was a little resistant, but intrigued by the idea. We continued the discussion and with some creative brainstorming developed a list of potential partners who could each bring something to a countywide project. In the next few weeks we pulled together our steering committee with representatives from the four primary sponsors—Weatherford College (WC), Weatherford Independent School District (WISD), the Doss Heritage and Culture Center of Parker County (aka The Doss), and WPL. After some discussion, the committee selected the book My Ántonia by Willa Cather. We felt there would be a great deal of interest in the book because the storyline matches very closely the history and development of Weatherford and Parker County. The committee decided that the college would serve as the fiscal agent for the grant. We came up with a name (“‘The Big Read: Parker County Reads Together’) and we were moving. With all of that done, one last decision remained. In fact, this was the toughest decision the committee had to make. Should we actually submit the grant application? We were committing ourselves to raise funds locally and plan and implement numerous programs. Did we have the organization and support to complete the task? Could we find the volunteers to help? Boldly, we said yes and sent the application off to NEA.

While waiting to hear from NEA as to whether we would receive a grant, we began to flesh out our calendar of events. Each organization represented on the committee brought unique possibilities for programming. The WC drama department committed to mount a production of the play, My Ántonia. WPL and the Friends of WPL committed to arranging for Betty Jean Steinshouer, noted Cather authority, to present her program “Willa Cather Speaks” at several venues in Weatherford as a part of the project. The Doss would host an old-fashioned hoedown with food from a chuckwagon and...
frontier-style entertainment. WISD agreed to involve their tenth grade classes by including the novel in the curriculum for the spring semester of 2008. We got word that we were to receive a grant. We would hold our Big Read activities from April 15 through May 14, 2008.

The value of our project came from identifying the strengths of each of the partners and developing a total program that built on those strengths. For example, WC has access to design and printing capabilities. So the design of a local logo and development of printed calendars of events and posters was handled by them. The Doss has facilities to handle a large outdoor event like the hoedown. They coordinated all of the aspects of that event. The library has a nice sized auditorium that proved perfect for the family film programs. The library was also able to integrate the theme into our children's storyline programs during our monthlong Big Read. The kids got to play games from the era represented in the book. They got to help lay out the outline of a sod house and even lay up some of the sod. The public schools were able to involve the young adults by including the study of My Ántonia in the spring semester’s American literature course. We also involved the county judge, the mayors of our four largest cities, and numerous other community celebrities.

As we began to solidify the calendar of events we were able to draw in numerous other community organizations and the media. One popular activity was the weekly book discussions held during lunch hours in three locations around the county. The committee enlisted discussion leaders to facilitate the activities at each location. Businesses wanted to participate and offered to provide free lunches for these meetings. We also hosted “Big Read After Five” events so those who couldn’t attend at lunchtime had an opportunity to get involved as their schedule allowed.

Fundraising was one part of the project that was daunting to most committee members. We had requested $7,500 in our grant proposal. Could we raise our local match in dollars and in-kind contributions? In the end, when we counted the commitments we had far surpassed our goal. The communities were excited about participating. The local newspapers and radio stations provided more than $25,000 worth of media coverage. The area Barnes & Noble provided eight hundred paperback copies of the book at a deep discount. Dozens of people gave gifts and money to support many of the public events. When we look back we can see that this project did much to bring together citizens from different parts of the county, people of varying ages, and most of all created an excitement for reading.

Whether it’s The Big Read or some other community event, building partnerships to achieve goals is a valuable process for all libraries to engage in. A partnership provides opportunities to undertake projects your institution would not otherwise be able to handle. Partnerships provide you with a chance to interact with potential new audiences for your services. You have a venue to meet other community leaders and demonstrate your abilities as an important part of the community leadership. As we all attempt to justify our operations and budgets, partnerships broaden our access to potential users and funders. Being seen in the community is important. Being seen with other leaders provides your organization with additional credibility with the decision makers.

The Big Read program provides you with a perfect reason to partner with other institutions in your community. Investigate the possibilities of bringing The Big Read to your town. And build those partnerships. They will provide additional opportunities for you and your library in the future.

My Ántonia in Mundelein, Illinois

Marie K. Zahmle (mzahmle@fremontlibrary.org),
Big Read Coordinator, Fremont Public Library District, Mundelein, Illinois

The Fremont Public Library District (FPLD) is located largely in Mundelein, Illinois, in central Lake County, thirty-five miles northwest of Chicago.

Fremont Public Library (FPL) chose the complex American classic My Ántonia by Willa Cather as its Big Read selection. There were many reasons to select this novel. It celebrates the immigrant experience and gives opposing viewpoints of the American dream. It considers differences of class, nationality, and gender. In a sense, the novel also is a coming of age story in its description of narrator Jim Burden’s childhood and adolescence. Cather’s work also can be read as a love song to the pioneers and frontier. She describes the courage and vision needed to stand strong on a new frontier, whether it is a physical or an internal one. The library’s district has a strong history of immigration, both recent and in the past.

The NEA awarded the FPLD $2,500 for its Big Read program. The Friends of the FPLD gave the library a matching gift of $2,500.
I planned the library’s programs, including a living history performance, book discussions, music concerts, and film showings for April and May 2008. All programs and materials were free and open to the public. Starting in February 2008, I created an ongoing display offering copies of the novel as well as Big Read materials. Using grant funds, FPL purchased one thousand copies of *My Ántonia* to give out to the community. Library staff drove and walked around the district, asking businesses to post fliers and provide Big Read handouts. The business response was positive; many windows displayed the Big Read fliers. Library staff visited the local middle and high schools, giving them copies of the novel for the students as well as Big Read readers’ guides for students and teachers. Library staff also sent out press releases to all major local media. I sent invitations to all district government officials, school officials, teachers, library officials, and leaders in the district’s community. FPL Adult Services Librarian and Technology Coordinator Curt Tagtmeier and I created a blog, *Fremont Reads*, to discuss the Big Read activities and the novel. Tagtmeier added interactive questions. The blog featured information about Cather, the Big Read program, the novel’s historical background, discussion questions, and an audio guide to the novel. The library also offered patrons the ability to download the novel to a computer or MP3 player or to listen to the library’s podcast. The library invited book groups to join in the Big Read.

The kickoff celebration, “Willa Cather Speaks,” with Betty Jean Steinshouer, took place on Monday, April 14, 2008, to coincide with National Library Week. Dressed as Cather, actress and literary scholar Steinshouer gave a two-hour portrayal, remaining in character as she answered diverse questions from the standing room only audience. The Friends of the FLPD graciously served refreshments and coffee at all of the Big Read events. At the library, the 1995 television film *My Ántonia* and the PBS film *American Masters: Willa Cather* were shown. Two folk concerts were also held.

The library’s Big Read events were largely attended by adults, especially seniors. The concerts attracted some younger participants, mostly children accompanied by their parents. Big Read programs were announced in the library’s newsletter, which is sent to all households in the district. The library announced all Big Read events on its website. As the Big Read coordinator, I sent press releases directly to local news reporters. The Big Read grant and events were announced on the North Suburban Library System’s website.

If you’re planning to apply for The Big Read, I offer the following recommendations:

- Enlist the support of the library director, board of trustees, management, and library staff.
- Develop strong partnerships with as many community organizations as possible.
- Maintain ongoing communications with fellow Big Read coordinators and the Arts Midwest staff, who can offer practical and enthusiastic support and advice.
- Distribute Big Read materials to as many businesses and organizations in the library community as possible. In attempting to reach many diverse groups, I spoke with business people from many different backgrounds.
- Be familiar with the novel and The Big Read materials.

Have fun! The Big Read is a great way to do successful outreach in your community.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* in Iola, Kansas

Roger Carswell (rcarswell@seksls.org), Director, Southeast Kansas Library System/Iola (Kans.) Public Library

A courtroom kickoff event, book discussions, a biographer’s talk, a
movie, and a play were among the activities of the Allen County Big Read. Held during February and March of 2009, our Big Read featured *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

Iola, Kansas, is a town of about 6,000; Allen County has a population of about 14,000. We are thus one of the smaller communities to participate in The Big Read. Although it was somewhat of a challenge for us, two factors made us uniquely positioned (for a small community) to participate in the program.

First, we had an existing organization with experience mounting several One Book, One Community projects, designated as “Iola Reads.” The Iola Reads planning committee is a true community partnership. Members include myself as public library director, our youth services librarian, the curriculum director of the Iola School District (who chairs the committee), all four school library media specialists, the director of the Allen Community College library, the director of the Bowlus Fine Arts Center, and several interested citizens. Beginning in 2006, there have been two Iola Reads projects annually—one featuring a young adult novel, the other an adult book. We have been able to fund these programs through grants from two local trust funds supplemented by group and individual donations. Iola Reads has a record of quality programming built around book selections and has generated considerable community interest in One Book projects.

Second, we were ready to meet the matching funds requirement of The Big Read grant. The Bowlus Center has income from endowments and grants from local trust funds enabling it to schedule at least three programs annually for its Cultural Arts Series. For 2009, one possibility for this series was a traveling theatrical production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The funds spent on bringing this production to Iola could be used as matching funds for The Big Read. The Iola Reads committee enthusiastically decided to make this book our adult selection for 2009 and apply for a Big Read grant, and the Bowlus Center scheduled the play.

The grant was written by the Bowlus director, Susan Raines. One of the first decisions was to expand The Big Read to include the entire county. This brought in three additional public libraries and two school districts. In the spring of 2008, word came that our grant application had been approved.

Attendance at the national training session (costs paid by NEA) is a requirement. Those of our group who attended it were decidedly of the opinion that it was of such value that they wouldn’t have skipped it, required or not. They appreciated the chance to talk with other libraries/communities that were also slated to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as well as those which had used the book for a previous Big Read. They picked up lots of program ideas and came back energized and excited.

One thousand copies of the book in mass market paperback (as well as a handful of large-print, Spanish, and audio versions) were ordered. Each library had a supply of books to give out, with additional distribution points in each community. Boxes with about ten copies each of the paperback were placed in such sites as a doctor’s office, pharmacy, senior citizens center, self-serve laundry, and others. As had been our experience with prior One Book projects, more books were picked up at the pharmacy than any other location outside the libraries. These boxes were restocked as long as supplies lasted—which is to say, hardly at all. By the second week of the six-week project, all books had been distributed and we were robbing those few places which had more than two books left to restock those with none.

The kickoff event was held in a setting very appropriate for the book—the courtroom in the county courthouse. It included the reading of a proclamation by the county commission, some remarks by the district judge and others, the handing out of books, and refreshments. A number of book discussions were held, many of them led by a volunteer from the English department of the community college. Venues included the libraries in each community and at meetings of the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs. At least one class in each of the three school districts in the county taught the book during the period of The Big Read.

Charles Shields, author of *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee* and *I Am Scout*, its young adult equivalent, presented a program about Lee and the research he had done for his book. Besides the
public program, Shields spoke to classes at Iola High School and Allen Community College.

The Montana Repertory Theater presented their production to a nearly sold-out audience of 520 at the Bowlus Center. One of the school districts bused students who had read the book to Iola for the play. The movie, starring Gregory Peck, was also shown in the Bowlus Center’s Recital Hall during the course of the project.

A very active marketing campaign included distribution of “What Page Are You On?” buttons, production of posters with community “celebrities” reading the book, a weekly radio program, and several articles in both the news and op-ed sections of the Iola Register. The Register’s editor wrote some columns about the book and the project, always closing with the query, “What page are you on?”

The Iola Reads/Big Read committee ended The Big Read tired but satisfied. It had been a very successful and truly community-wide project.

For Iola and Allen County, The Big Read = a big hit.

Conclusion
The Big Read now encompasses programs for twenty-four books. Programs for six additional titles are in preparation. The selections range from the familiar (To Kill a Mockingbird) to the less-familiar (The Shawl). They are contemporary (Love Medicine) and classic (Tom Sawyer). Each provides enjoyable reading and provocative discussion.

Your challenge will not be whether to apply for The Big Read, but how to choose just one book!

References and Notes

PLA Advocacy Toolkit Now Available


By using the guide, workshop trainers will be able to create a sample advocacy plan for a library, adapt the general training agenda for specific audiences, answer questions from training participants, provide concrete local examples of how each of the resources in the toolkit might be used, lead general discussions and group interactions, and manage small-group discussions and reporting processes.

At PLA 2010, the 13th National Conference of the Public Library Association.
Register today at www.placonference.org!
An Internet Holiday

This Internet Spotlight column is for everybody. Of course it is always written for all library staff, but this time we hope everybody will read it all the way through.

Do you hate the fuss around online social media and content sharing tools like Flickr, Twitter, and Facebook? Or maybe you're just the opposite—you just love all these new tools? Maybe you secretly (or not so secretly) pine for the "good ol' days" when technology in the library mostly meant lights, central heat, books, and a telephone. Whoever you are, this column is for you.

We are very keen on technology, but we are also very aware that many folks getting this magazine don't feel that way. We know—we've talked with you. The effect technology has had on library services and culture has been drastic—and they simply aren't going away. We too have been in overworked, underpaid situations where technology at times seemed like another thing we had to do but didn't have time for. Sure, those bells and whistles were nifty, and we maybe even wished we had time to play with them, but believe it or not, often we just didn't have that time—we were too busy keeping our libraries open and running.

So, if you have ever felt like that, please read on!

Perhaps you like and "get" technology tools that most folks call "2.0," but you don't find yourself using them very often. Maybe it slips your mind. Or perhaps you just don't see a reason to care too much about these cool tools, and your work habits don't include structured time for playing with and finding practical uses for them.

There is also a chance that you are like us, and you just love new technology. You've found ways to make time for practical emerging technology and you test, push, and pull it. As you exercise your technology muscles, you think about the implications these tools might have for the future of libraries, information, and society—and when you do, your brain gets tingly at the potential. And you stay up well after midnight thinking about it.

In talking about different attitudes toward emerging practical technology, we at least have one thing in common: We can only handle so much. And like technology or not, we have a lot to do. Let's be honest—when we have a few slow moments, oftentimes we would rather just sit still or have a chat with
a coworker, patron, or close friend. (And there is always that bag of chips in our desk that requires attention too, right?) I mean, c’mon, you’ve worked hard and you deserve some time to chill out. As fellow library workers and the authors of this column, we feel your pain. We get tired and overwhelmed at times, too.

This month, the Internet Spotlight is shining on you. We want you to take a break. Just stop. Don’t read a feed, look at a Flickr picture, or read another blog post. Put down that iPhone or Blackberry, and stop tweeting today. Just stop. Stop it. Let the interweb spin its tubes whichever way it wants today, because you will be taking a break. And if you can’t do it today, then plan for some down time soon. Think of it as a “buy nothing day” for your Internet consumption. No Internet! Fingers off the keyboard, mister! Put down that mouse, madam!

Here’s a reminder for all you techies, social media geeks, and well-connected-online types that read this column. No, we haven’t lost our collective minds. We do, however, realize that breaks are good, and that even though we go home at night and don’t generally show up in the office on the weekend, we still work. We blog. We read RSS feeds. We post pictures to Flickr or videos to YouTube. We read our vanity feeds to see what people are saying about us and our ideas. E-mail is on 24/7. But you know what? Not getting to something for a day is okay. Twitter replies and direct messages will still be there. Those Facebook wall comments? Still there. Will you miss important blog posts? Probably not—you’ll still have it waiting for you to read at your leisure.

Sometimes, taking a break actually stimulates creativity. David has found this to be true. If he’s been stuck in a rut on a writing or music project, taking a break from the activity tends to help. Then, when he’s ready to revisit that project, it usually ends up better than before.

Can you do it? Do you have to plan for it? If so, when will you pick your day? What do you think you’ll miss? What will you like most about your day off from the Internet? So many fun questions, eh? That must mean this self-appointed Internet holiday has some potential, right? We’re hoping lots of folks at least seriously think about the idea, and that many of you actually do take a day off the Internet. Once you are back in the Internet saddle, we’d sure love to hear how your day went. So drop us a line and tell us all about it!

Tips for taking a day off from the Internet:

- To get the biggest bang for your day-off-the-Internet buck, make your day one where you would usually be on the Internet a lot.
- If the day you pick is a work day, why not talk to coworkers about the idea and come up with a library-wide day off the Internet?
- Do something fun (and very analog) on your day off with the time you would have been punching keys.
“Bringing in the Money” presents fundraising strategies for public libraries. Many librarians are turning to alternative funding sources to supplement shrinking budgets. Fundraising efforts not only boost finances, but also leverage community support and build collaborative strategies.

Ten Quirky Suggestions

Below are ten quirky suggestions for library fundraising. Undoubtedly, some won’t be applicable, but I sincerely hope some may be relevant. And maybe one might prove revelatory.

1. Nurture the Introverts and the Extroverts

A broad approach to fundraising will include grant writing, planned giving, annual campaigns, major donor solicitation, and special events. To focus on two of these: Grant writing is a field for introverts and special events management is for extroverts. Both tasks are important, but the skill sets they require are not complementary. Don’t expect to find them united in a single individual.

Always be on the lookout for that special introspective person with solid writing skills and analytical talent. That’s your grant writer. Allow that person time to learn the craft. Nurture the gift. Then, also, be on the lookout for the multitasker on the library staff who handles people well and tackles challenges with energy. That’s your special events person. Nurture his or her gifts, too.

Trustees searching for a new library director—or library directors searching for department heads—often make the mistake of assuming that these contradictory skill sets can naturally coexist in a single individual. In truth, most people only have a small set of skills at which they have true mastery. Libraries that are successful in fundraising know that it requires a pool of people, each talented in a different way, to cover all the fundraising bases.

2. Don’t Be Afraid of Excessive Planning

The long-range (three- to five-year) strategic plan is a fundamental tool of fundraising, as well as an essential element of organizational management. The role of fundraising should be addressed in one specific section of the strategic plan, and mention of fundraising as it pertains to specific library departments should be sprinkled throughout the document. Every year, strategic plans should be adapted into one-year implementation plans, with measurable goals and assignment of responsibilities.
Ideally, the development of the strategic plan should be facilitated by an outside consultant with no vested interest in the outcome of the process. Library management and trustees should always be on the watch for potential strategic planning facilitators. Professional consultants are expensive, but the investment is nearly always a wise one. In addition to their planning expertise, professional consultants can guide with information gathering and market research in preparation for the plan. Good volunteer facilitators are harder to find but if you think you have identified someone with the appropriate facilitation skills, it never hurts to ask for a donation of services.

It is vitally important for both the library staff and the trustees to realize that the final strategic planning document is, at best, a set of guidelines and not a strict rule book. The world is unpredictable and no strategic plan can forecast all possible contingencies. A good strategic plan is a very flexible document. Even though most are created to be five-year documents, the accumulation of unforeseen chance events usually renders a five-year strategic plan outdated by the close of the third year. That's when you start planning for the next one. Embrace this endless round of planning.

3. Create Multiple Avenues for Fundraising
Libraries have a history of doing this, thanks to the popularity of Friends organizations and library foundations. Ideally, the library, the Friends, and the foundation each carve out their own fundraising niche, respecting the functions and boundaries of each separate organization. Together, they work toward a broad common vision but they contribute by following different pathways.

In addition to these avenues, libraries can also collaborate with other organizations. Through this approach, these other organizations (schools, health centers, literacy organizations, and so on) raise money for projects, with some of the funding directed toward the partnering library.

Coordination of these various streams may seem intimidating at first, and there may be some worry that overlapping fundraising projects may confuse the public. Fortunately, this is not usually a problem, as long as each fundraising effort has a clear identity of its own.

4. Know Your Wish List
Imprint your wish list in your head. It should look like a receipt form with items to the left and prices on the right. This wish list should cover everything you desire—from programs to equipment to new construction—and the price tag for each item should realistically cover all imaginable expenses.

The most important wish list is the one in your head, but there should be another version of the wish list. A printed wish list should be distributed at every trustee meeting, and it should be continually updated. You never know when one of your pet projects will coincide with the unspoken dreams of a potential major donor. The trustees and other library leaders should be encouraged to imprint the wish list in their own heads, as well, so that they’ll be better prepared to make connections as they represent the library in the community.

5. Every Success Creates a New Opportunity
The foundations and government sources that give matching grants mean well. The idea is that they will give you a portion of the needed money for a project on the condition that you raise the other portion from supporters in your community. Foundation leaders often view matching grants as positive tools to encourage institutions like libraries to expand their giving base.

I dislike the way that matching grants formalize an approach that should be considered automatic. All contributions should be viewed as opportunities for matching. In my opinion, every gift should be viewed as seed money. If the library receives all the funding needed to complete a project, then look for ways to redefine or expand the project. For instance, shift a completed capital campaign into the project arena. Or, if you’ve raised funding to start a new program, expand the scope to incorporate new equipment to support the program. The money that was previously raised becomes seed funding for the expanded program.

6. Share Stories
Communities are forged by the sharing of stories. Positive stories can define a library’s identity and suggest its hopes and visions. Conversely, pesky negative stories can reflect poorly on a library, and may travel much faster than the good stories.

Be on the lookout for the good stories, and then consciously work to spread them. Share these stories at meetings, in newsletters, and on the Internet. From top to bottom, trustees to pages, everyone should know a handful of good stories that speak well of the library’s work and build the library’s public image.
7. **Exploit Resources**

Know your collections, and that doesn’t just mean your book collections. Be keenly aware of the pictures on your walls, the sculptures in the garden, the stuffed animals in the children’s section, your special collections, and all the other quirky items that make your library recognizable and unique.

With little effort, libraries can identify real tie-ins with the books and other resources in their buildings. I know of one library with a beautiful fossil, unearthed on the property during construction. It’s been gathering dust in the corner for years, while outside the library the *Jurassic Park* and *Ice Age* movie franchises have raked in billions. The distinctive fossil could have been a centerpiece for promotion and fundraising, but instead it’s just another unexploited resource.

8. **Expand Your Scope**

Private foundations and corporations are routinely asked what areas they are most likely to support. You can find their answers on the Internet and the invaluable publications available through the Foundation Center. In fact, the Foundation Center publishes books that identify private foundations that give to each particular area of support. If you look at these books, you may initially feel discouraged. The number of foundations specifically interested in library support is a tiny fraction of the number of foundations that give to more popular areas, such as children’s programming. But that’s no real reason to be discouraged—instead, it should serve as a wakeup call that there are many foundations open to the idea of supporting children’s programs offered by your library. Expand your scope and you expand your opportunities.

9. **Segment Endlessly**

Databases are a gift. Use them. In the past, far too many institutions have relied on mental databases maintained in the heads of their leaders, only to see their institutional fundraising memory instantly erased by an unplanned encounter with a bus or heart attack. Institutions need real and accessible databases with detailed information on all potential donors, including individuals, private foundations, and corporations. If a potential donor shows a documented interest in children’s programs, health issues, or local history—the library should know this in preparation for that moment when money is needed for children’s programs, a new health care information center, or a room for the library’s special historic collections.

10. **Passion Trumps Planning**

With recommendation number two, I encouraged excessive planning. For recommendation number ten, I encourage discarding planning. With Ralph Waldo Emerson as my guide, I refuse to bow to the hobgoblin of foolish consistency. Creativity should never be held in abeyance to a strategic planning document. When inspiration strikes, a good institution should be able to move with agility. Important as strategic plans are, they must always be viewed as flexible.

Many consultants say that you shouldn’t tailor projects to meet grant guidelines, but I’m happy to disagree. If a new request for proposal, freshly issued by a federal or state agency, strikes the fancy of someone on your staff, then encourage them to creatively mesh their dreams with the opportunity. Passion should always trump planning.

**Bonus Suggestion:**

**Celebrate the Small Successes**

Life is too short to wait endlessly for the big grant that never comes. The small contributions your library receives are reason enough to celebrate.
“Passing Notes” focuses on young adult service issues, including programming, collection development, and creating stronger connections with young adult patrons. The column will address these topics with a humorous bent and an awareness that the key to working with young adults is constant reinvention.

Revisiting the Digital Divide

When I was in library school, lo in the misty dawn times of the early 2000s, the most hyped buzz phrase was “digital divide.” The most common definition being that this was a divide between those with easy access to digital resources like the Internet, databases, and computers in general, and those with little or no access. The role of the library in bridging that gap has been one of the central drives in our profession for ages.

But in an age when even the most basic mobile phone is getting “smart” and computers are more and more ubiquitous for tweens and teens how does the savvy young adult librarian keep up? Hearing the mainstream media yammer on about Twitter or sexting or whatever the latest online fad might be is often grating to anyone who spends time around the young adults at the bleeding edge of end-user tech. In short, by the time Anderson Cooper is tweeting, the ninth graders have moved on.

These new cracks, or fissures, from the digital divide (to further torture a metaphor) often reveal some very unsettling issues. You need look no further than those perennial social media conglomerates, MySpace and Facebook. The rise of Facebook and decline of MySpace in users has trended along lines of race and class. Social scientist Dannah Boyd found that MySpace had suffered a sort of digital “white flight” with many white and affluent users moving to the more “cultured” Facebook. It even reached a point where users of Facebook talked down to users of MySpace, feeling that they were “less educated.”

Again, to anyone say, over the age of thirty-five, the difference between MySpace and Facebook might appear as little more than surface. Facebook has a bit of a cleaner interface; MySpace is a tad more feature heavy. But the cultural signifiers to young adults are rampant.

So, the new digital divide is less about access and more about context. When we talk about social media to young adults we’re almost aging ourselves out of the conversations. Tweens today are more comfortable texting than talking. Information moves among them like a current. What was once
a telephone tree or LiveJournal posting or even a blog is now a message wide and accessible from any number of devices.

When the iPhone hit $99 you may have heard a great and terrible keening rise up from every teenager who had lived the past two years in dire wanting. Suddenly the “Jesus phone” as some pundits called it, was budgeted to move. Sure, it’s a cheapie iPod with not enough storage and the AT&T service plan has reduced me and my girlfriend to communicating via a long string and tin cans, but that’s irrelevant in the face of Tweetie. Or TweetDeck or any other Twitter application that can be gotten for free, or quite close, for the iPhone. Twitter applications plus mobile broadband, plus cheap phones, plus cameras can only mean one thing...porn.

Well, actually a remarkable moral panic about porn is more like it. Search “sexting” on Google News. Any one of a hundred or more small-town and midmarket newspapers, TV stations, and community groups seem to be predicting the moral apocalypse thanks to camera phones and texting, giving kids the tools to become the porn moguls they always dreamed of since the dawn of pubescence.

Except, that’s just not the case. The reality is that the Draconian laws passed over the past few decades by politicians, with a desire to appear ever tougher on crime, have made it possible for a girl to send a picture of herself in a swimsuit to a friend and be an unwitting interstate child pornographer.²

This is not to say that inappropriate, even exploitive, use of digital tech is not an issue. But the breathless fear mongering in the media does not dissuade or prevent such activity one bit.

How do librarians approach this? One suggestion I heard recently involved a bomb-suit made of lawyers. The ability to share information is always going to lead to the sharing of, shall we say, indelicate material. I believe after issuing the famed “Mr. Watson, come here—I want to see you,” Alexander Graham Bell received a phone solicitation regarding his bedroom stamina.

Teaching online safety is one way, teaching online responsibility is another. It’s a mainstay to teach young adults not to share information that might invite harm, but communicating that it’s not the stranger with a windowless van that is the only concern, but rather that they are participating in something akin to a vast social experiment with unknowable consequences on a global scale. And they say science is hard to make appealing.

The digital divide of old is still there. No doubt. For every scheme and dream to populate the world with (almost) $100 laptops and get Wi-Fi for everyone for free, there are still millions left out. Even those who can get online for free might be underserved by poor search skills, oceans of advertising, and spam. The divide for the born digital young adults though, is one of understanding: their parents, educators, and well-intentioned librarians trying to comprehend and protect them from the wilds of territories they are mapping all on their own.

References
TRANSFORMING OUR Image
THROUGH WORDS THAT WORK
PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING

VALERIE J. GROSS is CEO, Howard County (Md.) Library; valerie.gross@hclibrary.org. She is reading Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

Like many of you, I represent my library system out in the community. As part of the board of directors for Leadership Howard County (Md.), I attended a retreat last fall where we were asked to introduce the person sitting next to us, and include something about their work. When Jody, my assigned instructor, asked me, “What does your organization do?” I said, “We deliver equal opportunity in education—for everyone in Howard County.” Impressed, Jody spoke slowly, “Wow . . . I thought you were going to say you loan books.”

Seizing the opportunity, I continued, “Yes, we loan books! That’s the Self-Directed Education pillar of our educational mission. The second pillar is Research Assistance and Instruction—for individuals and groups, the third being Instructive and Enlightening Experiences—the community and cultural concepts.”

Jody’s respect for public libraries increased on the spot. When she introduced me, she repeated my exact words, flooring the twenty-five movers and shakers who, like Jody, had never thought that everything public libraries do is what the world values most.

Now this group holds us in a much higher regard, although they may not know why—but we do! It’s a direct result of the perception created through carefully selected terms—*words that work*.

Perceived Value

While there’s no question that our first-rate collections, e-resources, welcoming facilities, state-of-the-art technology, and outstanding customer service shape our customers’ experiences, words that work engage like nothing else. It’s what causes people—even if they never set foot in the library—to assign our true value to our jobs, work, and profession.

At Howard County Library (HCL), we began experimenting with the philosophy in 2001. We were ecstatic to then discover *Words that Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear* by Frank Luntz, a book that explained the reasons for our—many surprising—successes (read on), and coined the phrase, “words that work.” Luntz’s book also infused us with additional ideas.
Full Credit For What We Do
Many of you have already achieved great success in conveying your value to the community. Regardless of how successful you have been, if I owned an island in Tahiti, I would gladly wager that your library system would experience greater perceived value and an enhanced image by employing the words that work philosophy summarized below after just six months.

I’d bet my island because the concept is incredibly effective. It’s also simple and costs nothing to implement.

In a nutshell, we have immense power over our image and perceived value merely by choosing smart terminology that people understand and value—words that shape the perception we desire for our customers.

By replacing typical library terms and jargon with bold, value-enhancing words and phrases, we have the capacity to transform our image, receiving full credit for what we already do.

What is Valued Gets Funded
Receiving full credit for what we do is imperative because our funders—public entities and donors—invest mostly in what they perceive to be valuable.

To illustrate the concept, consider Evian bottled water. If you have ever purchased Evian, you likely know that a bottle costs three times as much as generic brands.

Why does Evian command a premium price? The reason has little to do with taste. Customers pay more for Evian because they assign greater value to it. They perceive it as higher quality.

If it’s not taste, how does the company accomplish this feat? By shaping its image with words, such as from the French Alps, detox with Evian, rejuvenation, and purity. Desiring to detox and rejuvenate, customers invest.

What can libraries learn from Evian? That:

• Through the language we use, we have the power—without changing anything we do—to transform our image, receiving full credit for our work, which means greater respect, enhanced value, and, above all, increased funding.

• The secret to becoming the Evian of public libraries is as simple as recognizing that it’s not only what we do and how we do it, but how we talk about what we do that commands the value we deserve.

The Power of Words
Note your response if I say to you, “I’m going to give you a nutritious snack.” Now consider your response if I say, “I’m going to give you a delicious snack.”

You likely wrinkled your nose at nutritious while delicious beckoned you to come and get it—two different responses to the very same snack.2

Similarly, gauge your responses to these two questions:

• Which do you value more? A used car or a certified, pre-owned vehicle?

• Which do you support more? Drilling for oil or careful exploration of energy?

These examples show that the words we choose can elicit differing responses to the same thing.

So the point is, let’s use terminology that shapes the views we want in our customers!

Words that Completely Changed an Industry’s Image
Before we consider powerful terminology for libraries, let’s analyze two final Luntz examples of industries that transformed their images with single words:

1. Liquors to Spirits. To move away from an image of fortified wine, drunks, and alcoholism, the liquor industry transformed itself by replacing the word liquor with spirits. The result? Customers now associate the industry with sophistication, where champagne and wine glasses are raised to celebrate in style.5

2. Gambling to Gaming. What brilliant ploy did the gaming industry employ to achieve its revolutionary image transformation? Gone are the gambling days that brought to mind pawn shops, addiction, and destroyed families. The industry moved to the term gaming, which conveys fun, choice, and family vacations! Only the term changed—nothing else: the same cards, the same dice, the same casino advantage. The transformation occurs as the result of “one single, solitary word.”6

The Strongest Word That Works: Education
Like the spirits and gaming industries, we have the capacity to completely transform our image with a single word that is universally valued: education.
While recent discussions in our profession suggest public libraries play an educational role, the transformation opportunity described herein involves positioning all that we do under education. Our business is education—equal opportunity in education for everyone.

In 2001, HCL embarked on a vision to align all program components with education. We began by connecting the library with the commonly understood definition of education by launching A+ Partners in Education, a comprehensive partnership with our schools, built on a vision of providing students with the best possible chance of overall academic success.

Key partnership components include:

- HCL assigning a designated library branch and liaison to each and every school;
- all new students receiving library cards through school registration;
- HCL instructors teaching curriculum enhancement classes at the schools and in the branches;
- teachers submitting assignment alerts to HCL staff; and
- kindergarten field trips to HCL incorporated into the school’s curriculum.

To keep the partnership visible, we hold an annual A+ Celebration, which draws a standing-room-only crowd, to highlight the past year’s successes and future goals, and distribute an A+ Annual Report.

Many library systems across the country work closely with schools, so as a profession, we have progressed in linking public libraries to the commonly understood definition of education, which serves as the launching point to now connect all we do with education.

**Education Definition Expanded**

Once the A+ Partnership was firmly established, we began expanding the education vision to our entire program, positioning all that we do under the complete definition of education, which includes:

- the activities of educating or instructing or teaching;
- information about a subject matter;
- knowledge acquired by learning;
- activities that impart knowledge;
- the process of acquiring knowledge; and
- an enlightening experience.

The Three Pillars

Our educational role is best illustrated by the image of an educational canopy, supported by three pillars that comprise our overall educational mission (see figure 1):

1. **Self-Directed Education** through our collection—from board books to large-print titles—available in print and online.
2. **Research Assistance and Instruction** for individuals and groups. This pillar includes classes, seminars, and workshops taught by library instructors.
3. **Instructive and Enlightening Experiences** through cultural and community center concepts, events, and partnerships.

**Lifelong Learning versus Lifelong Education**

While lifelong learning does not conjure up a bad image, consider replacing the commonly heard phrase with a stronger version: lifelong education.

Consider that one does not hear governors say, “I’m cutting everything except learning.” What one does hear from nearly every elected official is, “My highest priority is education.”

Similarly, although terms such as knowledge and community center are strong, they are even stronger when connected in the same sentence with education, as one of the educational pillars.

Yes, but what about fiction?

Workshop participants in San Bernardino wondered whether fiction books and “entertainment” DVDs fall under the category of education; they quickly reached a consensus that fiction, in and of itself, is educational. (Editor’s note: The author presents workshops on the topic of “words that work” at library events across the country, however they are not professionally affiliated with Luntz.)

Further, the borrowing of books and DVDs for school assignments is clearly education, such as when high school students read Isaac Asimov’s book *I, Robot*, watch the movie, then compare the two. Following this reasoning, an adult’s reading or viewing of *I, Robot* with no required school assignment is also education. Each of these functions falls under clauses two through five of the definition of education as previously noted, and in the first and third pillars of the “Public Libraries = Education” concept.

As a side note, at HCL, we call our entertainment DVDs fiction DVDs, as we do fiction books. Why? Applying the words that work principle, we believe
Aligning Ourselves with Education—Suggested Phrases
Transforming our image by aligning all that we do with education requires that we modify the manner in which we speak about ourselves. Consider using the following phrases to describe your public library (substitute your state, county, or city):

- We are a major component of Maryland’s strong educational system.
- We are a pillar of education.
- We are educators.
- We are partners in education.
- We provide equal access to quality education, regardless of age, background, or means.
- We deliver equal opportunity in education—for literally everyone.

These phrases convey what we do in terms our customers value.

Why Education?
The main benefit of aligning ourselves with education is perceived value. Contrast the views of these two elected officials:

- Bridgeport (Conn.) Mayor Bill Finch: “We are getting back to basics: police, fire, and education. We will not try to be all things to all people. Libraries are not essential services.”¹⁰
- Howard County Executive Ken Ulman: “We are continuing our dedication to quality education. Education is the engine which drives our quality of life. We are fortunate to have a public school system, library system, and community college which are all nationally recognized, but these institutions cannot continue to thrive without strong support from the county . . . I am proud that my budget reflects the high priority I place on education.”¹¹

Ulman has been hearing and reading that HCL is education for eight years—first as a county council member and currently as county executive. He now speaks in these terms, regularly crediting us as a major contributor to education, the driving force of the county’s award-winning quality of life (Money magazine ranks Howard County as one of the top ten most desirable places to live in America¹²).

Another example of greater perceived value is a feature that appeared in the Baltimore-region publication, Corridor Inc. A writer for the magazine interviewed Ulman and three other newly elected county executives. One of the questions posed was, “What’s the number one attribute of your county?” While Ulman’s counterparts answered “its beauty” and “the whole community spirit,” what was the first thing Ulman mentioned? The library system!¹³

A final example: Ulman moved HCL from the community services section in the county’s operating and capital budgets to the education section, along with the school system and the community college. Why is this important? Above all, it is the symbolism. Education—viewed as vital and indispensable—drives economic development and quality of life, and the library is now visibly one of education’s three major components: the school system, the community college, and the public library.

In addition to aligning ourselves with education locally, we can use the same strategy to convey our true value at the state and national levels. In his inauguration speech, President Barack Obama said, “And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age.” Will
public libraries be included next time? Yes, if we move from the nebulous *we help people* and *we do good work* to *we deliver equal opportunity in education.*

**Other Words that Work for Libraries**

**What Does Storytime Mean?**

Several years back, we came across a newspaper article describing a Kindermusik class developed for Howard Community College.¹⁴

Nearly identical to HCL’s Play Partners program for infants and toddlers, the class involved stories, music, rattles, and songs—and abundant social interaction.

What was the difference? There were three: (1) it was called a *class* (as opposed to our *storytime*), (2) it was *taught* by a *teacher* (compared to being *presented* by a *programmer*), and (3) it cost $225 for a fourteen-week session (whereas our admission is free).

Other terms in the article caught our eye, such as that the class teaches “cognitive, physical, social, musical, and language skills,” and “teaches them to be expressive and creative in the thought process.”¹⁵

We began analyzing what *storytime* conveys to someone who has no idea what we do. When asked the question, workshop participants answered “play,” “babysitting,” and “recreation”—all misperceptions that trivialize the educational value and staff member expertise that is involved.

To receive full credit for what we do at HCL, we now say the following:

- **Preschool Classes.** The library’s preschool classes teach creative expression, social skills, listening comprehension, and the foundations of reading through letter and number recognition and vocabulary building.
- **K–5 Classes.** Kindergarten through fifth grade classes teach subjects—including math and science—through children’s literature and creative expression, as well as cognitive, social, and communication skills.

Although the majority of staff members immediately see the merits of migrating to the new terminology, others are a bit nostalgic. One workshop participant in San Jose lamented, “But I like storytime!”

There’s nothing wrong with saying *storytime.* Just know that, to the public, the term conveys less value than *class.*

Those who do not know what takes place in *storytime* will not assign the deserved value to the class, or to the talented instructors required to teach it. What it comes down to is the Evian strategy.

If you find yourself in the nostalgic camp, put yourself in the shoes of your county executive (or mayor, governor, or a taxpayer voting on a tax increase) then ask yourself which you would fund more generously—or cut less—*storytime* or *children’s classes that teach the foundations of reading*?

While old habits die hard, even the press and our customers are now beginning to call what we used to refer to as “storytime” *children’s classes.*

It is also important to note that, although we now say *children’s classes,* the class content, or *curriculum,* stayed exactly the same!

**Beer Appreciation and Happy Hair**

Likewise, what do the terms *program, programmer,* and *programming* mean to the non-library person?

Once again, we can learn from our community college colleagues in our quest for words that work in this area. Their lineup of non-credit classes includes “Beer Appreciation,” “English Afternoon Tea,” “Juggling,” “Creative Gift Wrapping,” and my personal favorite, “Happy Hair.”

The difference between these classes and what we offer the community? As with “storytimes,” it’s terminology and cost.

What they call *classes taught by instructors* who develop *class curriculum,* we refer to as programs presented by programmers who do *programming.*

Also, they charge $65 per class and we don't.

**Titles That Work**

Have you ever heard “I’d love to work in a library so I could read books all day!” We know this is far from reality, but that’s the perception for someone who is not a library connoisseur. We also know that our salaries typically do not reflect our value.

In his March 2007 *Information Today* column, K. Matthew Dames writes, “There are librarians doing library work, and they are compensated well,” emphasizing, “They just don’t call themselves librarians.” Dames suggests *information architect* and *knowledge manager* as possibilities for title replacements that command more respect, and therefore greater associated value.¹⁶

Dames’ thoughts, combined with our words that work efforts, prompted title modifications at HCL. Desiring to address both misperception and inad-
Feature

Transforming Our Image Through Words That Work

Equate value associated with our roles, we now call librarians and library associates information specialists and instructors.

Instructor is immediately understood. Our instructors enjoy their new titles because people now understand and value what they do. No one asks anymore whether they read books all day.

For similar reasons, we now call circulation clerks customer service specialists who work in our customer service department. Circulation to most people relates to health matters. By contrast, everyone understands customer service.

As to my new title, which had been director, the HCL Board of Trustees changed it to CEO for two reasons. The first was that a modified title would enable me to then call the “head of” positions (e.g., head of human resources) what their counterparts are called in business and academic spheres: director of human resources, director of public relations, and so on.

The second was perception of what I do. Prior to the change, when I introduced myself as director, the conversation would continue, “Oh, which department?” While my response (“Oh, I dabble a bit in all of them.”) served to clarify, now my title is self-explanatory, highlighting the role’s business aspects.

Teacher with a Lowercase “t”

While instructor was readily embraced by workshop participants, teach and teacher generated greater discussion. While some noted that library staff members are not certified, and therefore not teachers, others countered that not only are we teachers with a lowercase “t,” but also that teachers in private schools and professors at colleges and universities are not necessarily certified. Like us, they are simply experts in their fields. In addition, many professions, such as personal trainers who teach exercise classes, are experts referred to as instructors and teachers.

At a Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators conference last year, one attendee commented that adjunct faculty members who teach non-credit community college classes hold no particular standardized credentials, with knowledge of the subject matter being the hiring requirement.

At HCL, we have experienced greater respect for our staff since we switched from programmer to instructor. One of our goals with A+ Partners in Education is that students in K–12 view HCL staff as adjunct faculty. We know we are beginning to reach our goal when children call us their library teachers and say the favorite part of their day is library school.

Educators

In addition to referring to our HCL staff as teachers and instructors, we are now working toward calling ourselves educators. We find that when we do so, the general public assigns greater value to all that we do (we even won Educator of the Year—read on).

Some of you are already calling yourselves educators. For instance, after confessing in his Information Today column that he gave away his secret on how to land the coveted first-in-line spot on Southwest Airlines flights, Steven M. Cohen added, “Of course, I told them how. After all, I’m an educator.”

How Much Do You Charge?

At HCL, we now say that our instructors develop curriculum and class content and teach classes, seminars, and workshops for children and adults on a wide variety of topics.

I described our classes, seminars, and workshops with this terminology for a Rotary Club presentation. The club members were mesmerized. At the end, a hand shot up with the question, “How much do you charge?” My answer? “No charge! Your taxes, well invested.”

Know How Your Library Salaries Measure Up!

Consult ALA-APA Library Salary Data Tools for Credible, Industry-Specific Information for Your State and Region

Robust database and print tools with current salary data for more than 65 Librarian and Non-MLS positions in public and academic libraries.

Easy to use Salary Database – http://cs.ala.org/websurvey/salarysurvey/salary/surveyform/form.cfm

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Base your management and career decisions on real salary data.

Get the Real Numbers! You need accurate data for:

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“…an additional resource when presented with the challenging issues of salaries.” — Sara Zumwalt, Litchfield, IL

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29 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009
A Good Start
Although most public libraries still call classes *programs*, the terms *classes, seminars,* and *workshops* are beginning to surface. For example, the Morris County (N.J.) Public Library and Chicago Public Library assign value-added terms to their initiatives for adults, such as *classes, seminars, workshops,* and *events.* Many more libraries do as well, and it is likely that some are beginning to substitute *children’s classes* for *storytime,* and *programs* and *instructors* for *programmers.*

If you haven't already, consider taking the plunge. You'll be surprised at the added value that will immediately be assigned by the listener, just by changing some words.

Ten Rules
To improve the effectiveness of our communication, in addition to incorporating value-enhanced terminology, Luntz sets forth “The Ten Rules of Effective Communication.” If you incorporate even some of these concepts into a presentation or writing piece, your message will be more effective. The rules are:

1. **Simplicity**—use small words.
2. **Brevity**—use short sentences.
3. **Credibility** is as important as philosophy.
4. **Consistency** matters.
5. Offer something new.
6. **Sound** and texture matter.
7. Speak aspirationally.
8. **Visualize**.
10. Provide context and explain relevance.

Do consider reading Luntz’s explanation of all ten rules. We can benefit from them all—especially rule 7, “speak aspirationally,” as ours is a profession that tends to have a “woe is me” outlook. Because most people do not like negativity, we are, in essence, sealing our own fate. Let’s reverse the trend!

Seven Phrases to Lose from Our Lexicon
Open almost any library journal and you’ll see something relating to our being undervalued and underappreciated. Words that work, combined with *speaking aspirationally* is far more effective, as the tactic teaches our audience value in an optimistic fashion—and everyone loves optimism.

To copy late comedian George Carlin’s famous “seven words you can’t say on TV,” let’s agree as a profession to never again say the phrases:

- We must remain relevant.
- Our future is uncertain.
- Nobody values our jobs.
- No one knows what we do.
- People think the public library has no value.
- The library’s relevance is shrinking.
- We might be extinct in twenty years.

Let’s strike negativity from our lexicon, replacing pessimism with positive, upbeat, and optimistic assertions.

The strong terminology included here, as well as the weak-versus-strong list that follows, can assist you with creating new, optimistic replacement statements. For instance, instead of saying, “We must remain relevant,” how about asserting, “As a major component of education, we continually aspire to reach new heights.”

Focus on Results, Not Process
Luntz also describes the greater effectiveness of focusing on results, rather than process. For instance, in a survey he conducted, 51 percent of responses favored raising taxes for *law enforcement* compared to 68 percent in favor of higher taxes to *halt the rising crime rate.*

In the library world, we too can enhance value by focusing on results. To illustrate, many of us like to say that we *promote the love of reading.* While not a bad phrase, a stronger statement would combine the phrase with the results of *increased reading, improved academic achievement, economic advancement,* or *enhanced quality of life.*

The most effective elevator speeches focus on results. A succinct one you might consider using is: Who are we? We are partners in education. What do we do? We deliver equal access to quality education for all, regardless of age, background, or means. Why does it matter? Because education drives economic advancement, enhancing quality of life.

Strong, Intuitive Value-Enhanced Terminology
The typical library terms (see table 1) that tend to trivialize our value were transformed by workshop participants into stronger, value-enhanced, intuitive words and phrases, applying the words that work...
philosophy. Substituting the stronger terms at every opportunity, combined with a strengthened alignment with education, will begin to shape in your customers the image that you desire.

A Work in Progress
At HCL, we continue to align ourselves with education. We also continue to look for opportunities to substitute stronger, smarter words wherever possible. The latest substitution occurred while reviewing a monthly statistics report. We considered the effect of substituting research assistance for the information questions category. If you were a county executive, mayor, or governor, which would you be more likely to fund? We decided to make the edit.

Results
To give you a sense of the effectiveness of words that work, here are sample results at HCL (population 275,000) since we began our quest to transform our image and enhance our value in 2001. By positioning the library as a major component of Howard County’s strong educational system and by incorporating value-enhanced terminology that people understand:

- Visits have soared 189 percent (934,000 in FY01, compared to more than 2.7 million in FY09).
- Items borrowed have increased 83 percent (3.6 million in FY01, compared to more than 6.6 million in FY09).
- Operating budget increases have reached record levels (e.g., a 68 percent increase in seven years, with no new branches; in FY09 the increase bolstered salaries by 10.5 percent).
- Capital budget increases have surged as well (an additional planned 142,000 square feet of library building space where before it was zero).
- Friends of HCL budget has increased more than 500 percent.

Table 1. Value-Enhanced Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undervalued/Misunderstood</th>
<th>Stronger, Value-Enhanced, Intuitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>storyline, storytime room</td>
<td>children’s classes, children’s classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>program</td>
<td>class, seminar, workshop, event, initiative, project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programmer, programming</td>
<td>instructor, teacher, facilitator, curriculum development, instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help, serve</td>
<td>enhance, improve, advance, increase, teach, tutor, instruct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outreach</td>
<td>community education, marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertainment</td>
<td>life-enriching, fiction (as in “fiction DVDs”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recreation/leisure</td>
<td>life-enriching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooperation</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, hold, offer</td>
<td>teach, instruct, lead, present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information (best sometimes)</td>
<td>education, research (stronger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference interview</td>
<td>research needs assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage/promote reading</td>
<td>increase/improve reading, improving academic success/achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juvenile</td>
<td>children’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circulation</td>
<td>customer service, borrowing, loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ready to learn” or “ready at five”</td>
<td>we teach the foundations of reading, social skills, and creative skills (some suggested “ready at three,” etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emergent literacy</td>
<td>childhood education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circulation clerk</td>
<td>customer service specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>librarian/library associate</td>
<td>information specialist and instructor, research specialist and instructor, educators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Hours of operation expanded by thirty-seven hours a week, including year-round Sunday hours at our two largest branches.
• Awarded Howard County Educator of the Year (library educators included in the pool of candidates, along with teachers, faculty members, and principals, a direct result of calling ourselves educators).
• Awarded Howard County Nonprofit Business of the Year.
• Moved from the community services section of the county’s budget into the education section.
• HCL ranks first in the nation among the great public library systems.20

Conclusion
Through words that work, we have the power to transform our image and to command our full value. We are education. We are indispensable. We always have been. The difference is that we will now be perceived as such—and perception is everything.  

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2. Ibid., 206.
3. Ibid., 259.
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6. Ibid., 129.
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The PLA Reader for Public Library Directors and Managers Now Available

Specifically designed to accommodate the frantic pace of the busy public library professional, the first title in this new series from PLA provides clear and accessible insight into the most relevant topics and complex challenges in the library world today. The PLA Reader’s collected writings span the gamut of hot topics and challenges facing today’s library directors and managers. Chapter coverage includes: advocacy basics, tips for retaining high-performing employees, improving directorship, library communication, intellectual freedom matters, reference services, technological applications, and more.

A SPACE FOR MYSELF TO GO
EARLY PATTERNS IN SMALL YA SPACES

WHILE young adults (teenagers) are routinely recognized as constituting nearly 25 percent of the nation's public library users, the vast majority of libraries devote more space and design attention to restrooms than to young people. Worse, there are currently no consistent or established metrics, no evaluation criteria, few conceptual standards of best practices, and little consistency in the methods by which we collect empirical evidence about young adult (YA) spaces. This study is the first systematic attempt to both collect and analyze empirical data on libraries’ recent trend toward providing greater spatial equity for YA library service.

Library buildings, like all public spaces, represent and manifest community ideals about who counts and what activities matter. In particular, American library buildings and resource allocations are championed as symbols of broad and open democratic access. The theoretical foundation of this study is the notion that young people should be considered part of the civic community and that libraries should express this value in the designs of their public spaces.

One result of longstanding de facto institutional preoccupation with collections is that conventional library standards continue to conflate YA space with the mere shelving of YA materials. These practices rely most commonly on a meager allocation of shelf space within or adjacent to children's sections or on repurposed paperback racks relegated to out-of-the-way corners and alcoves. Sometimes YA magazines and other materials appear in the children's section, sometimes they are interfiled with adult materials, and frequently the criteria (if any) for these assignments are obscure. Such ad hoc practices have existed in libraries for decades.

Meanwhile, the demand for YA services is rapidly changing. As increasing numbers of young people gravitate to the more adaptable “spaces” of virtual and immersive worlds, as well as to ever-cheaper, ever-smaller, ever-more-versatile communication and information devices, libraries will face keen competition to attract them into their public spaces.¹

The study in this article examines the experimental practices of ten small library YA spaces to identify patterns and establish what they can teach us about their relatively early adoption and design. Examining these pioneers reveals that libraries have increased the variety and access to resources and invite more youth participation in the process than was evident in young adult services of the past. This study also finds, however, that libraries still dedicate a proportionately small amount of space to young adults and demonstrates
the need for establishing more sophisticated methodological practices in executing, measuring, and evaluating these spaces in order to move beyond institutionally defined and privileged aesthetics.

**Literature Review: YA Spaces in the Library Context**

While early strides in the evolution and description of YA spaces have been beneficial in terms of awakening the field to a historic inequity, there exists no systematic, evidence-based research, guidelines, methods, or metrics to facilitate developmentally appropriate YA spaces. There is no scholarly research connecting young adults to the civic spaces libraries represent for their communities.2

Historically, libraries have considered young adults entitled neither to space for their needs nor an equitable share of common environments. Classic Carnegie buildings, for instance, are simply bifurcated: children on one side, adults on the other. Service barriers for young adults can be seen in the physical aspects of generation after generation of new and refurbished library buildings, policies, and procedures, and in the ways in which young people socially experience libraries, “as aristocratic, authoritarian, unfriendly and unresponsive.”3 Unfortunately, the consequences of policies and design—underutilized resources and negative youth perceptions of libraries—are then interpreted as reflecting youth apathy, or even antipathy.

Even so, there is growing consciousness of the decades-long inequity toward young adults as libraries begin to explore ways to enhance their value to the public by providing young people with age appropriate spaces.4 The Los Angeles Public Library’s landmark TeenS’cape project (2000);5 the subsequent introduction of “YA Spaces of your Dreams,” a feature in every issue of *Voice of Young Adults* (VOYA) (see appendix A);6 the appearance of a guide to redecorating YA areas;7 and the very first “post-occupancy study” of any young adult space in library literature appearing in 20068 have all prompted greater realization among libraries that YA spaces represent an essential part of the broader continuum of uniquely democratic and age-integrated public spaces that libraries offer their communities. Indeed, the most recognized YA services practitioner, Patrick Jones, noted that the emergence of YA-specific spaces ranked among the most exciting innovations in the field: “libraries . . . are saying this service is important, and they want to profile it. This is a huge change.”9

Nevertheless, most libraries have been slow to take into account the spatial implications and opportunities for youth inherent in this swiftly changing landscape. What fledgling efforts have been made to date proceeded without data or history, systematic guidelines or evaluation methods to establish best practices, skill capacities, institutional infrastructure, or theoretical grounding. Even under the best circumstances in which libraries attempt to advance the recent service paradigm of “youth development” involving some degree of youth participation, the results are seldom distinguishable from conventional institutional designs.10 Libraries may, for instance, ask architects or designers, librarians, and sometimes young people to come together as a team to create a spatial solution. However, a kind of “uninformed triangle” then develops. Architects frequently know little about the functioning of libraries or how young people enact public space; librarians generally do not possess architectural backgrounds and do not know a great deal about young people and spaces; and young adults usually know little about the functioning of library design or architecture. What develops from this triangulated ignorance, even under the best circumstances, seems destined to produce mediocrity.

Thus, lacking YA spatial knowledge, libraries frequently design and enact spaces in ways that contradict or conflict with nearly every aspect of normal and developmentally appropriate young adult public behavior. The consequences of these institutional deficits are that libraries, inadvertently or not, create what I have elsewhere described as a “geography of no!”11 Libraries create spaces in which youth are told no for doing or wanting things entirely appropriate for young people, such as sitting convivially in small groups. Instead, libraries enforce one-to-a-chair policies and then hold youth responsible for breaking rules.

This lack of capacity with regard to YA space nests within a much larger research problem in YA librarianship. As pointed out in her seminal historical review of youth services research, Christine A. Jenkins states, “If . . . library programs and services for children is insufficiently studied . . . programs and services for young adults is nearly nonexistent.”12 Accordingly, and informed by predominate and erroneous media representations (that is, the routinely exaggerated, inaccurate, and unsupported claims about youth in adult nonfiction literature, popular culture, and the media), libraries institutionally convey a belief that young people present more problems than they are worth.13 Given these circumstances, it should come as no surprise that librar-
ies have, for a variety of reasons, rather ignored the spatial needs of youth.14 Libraries need and deserve research on how to better serve young adults.

Among the many relevant questions the field needs answered, this study inaugurates only a first step by assessing what some early adopting libraries have attempted to do when they have redesigned and reallocating a portion of their existing public spaces to serving young adults. In particular, this study examines the self-reported spatial outcomes of ten of the smallest YA spaces (as measured by square footage) profiled in VOYA between 2001 and 2008. Studying the small YA spaces is a logical beginning for systematic analysis because it is more likely how a larger number of libraries would begin experimenting.

Methods
Since 1999, the most important independent journal in young adult librarianship, VOYA, has published a regular feature entitled “Young Adult Spaces of Your Dreams” profiling YA spaces in libraries across the county. The journal has used a common and consistent submission guideline required of all profiles (see appendix B). These profiles thus serve as a qualitative source of comparable data during the years in which libraries first began to experiment institutionally with spatial considerations specifically for YA library users. The six additional supplementary questions asked of the participating libraries were intended to deepen and update the information contained in their published profiles. The categories of analysis are derived from the original published spatial profiles and are critically engaged in the discussion section of the study. Both the data presented in the published space profiles and in the follow-up survey are self-reported by respective library staff, rather than by an outside evaluator.

As a condition of publication in “Young Adult Space of Your Dreams,” VOYA has consistently required specific data about published profiles on specific YA space, including the following information:

- description of the library’s location;
- the size, shape, and layout of the YA space;
- décor;
- unique attributes;
- types of seating and tables;
- types of shelving units;
- presence of computer workstations and technological resources;
- collection size, types of resources, and arrangement of and housing of the collection within the library;
- circulation and YA traffic statistics;
- description of the community and YA population;
- hours of operation;
- staffing levels;
- the date the library opened and the date of the YA renovation/redesign;
- description of teen participation in the design process; and
- illustrative comments from young adult library users, if any.

Libraries furnishing the appropriate data may opt either to draft the profile narrative or have the journal develop the final narrative for library review.

The ten libraries reporting the smallest YA spaces by absolute square footage in profiles published from 1999 through 2007 were selected by the author.15 These ten libraries were sent a brief, supplementary follow-up survey,16 which included the following topics:

- square footage of YA space and of entire library facility (including YA space);
- description of YA collection scope (i.e., range of content and format);
- does the library provide dedicated staff (yes/no); if so, provide description of staff;
- provide specific breakdown of seating options (table and chairs, couch, ottomans, beanbags, booths, stools);
- did the library collect benchmark (service) statistics prior to YA space upgrade?; and
- did the library conduct a post-occupancy study or other outcome measures?

Findings
The data summary gleaned from the VOYA survey, together with the supplementary survey for this study, shows the average YA area measures approximately 500 square feet; is open to some degree for 52 hours per week; has one “dedicated” staff member; and is evaluated by various benchmark, circulation, and traffic statistics (discussed later) (see table 1).

Spatial Proportionality
Each library’s allocation for YA spaces was calculated by dividing the square footage of the YA space by the square footage of the entire library. Based on these proportionalities the averages were calculated for the
ten subject institutions. The proportion of YA space ranged from just under a half percent (0.45 percent, Schaumburg, Illinois) to a high of nearly 4 percent (3.84 percent, Fortuna, California) of total facility size, yielding an average of YA spaces of 2.22 percent of total facility square footage (see table 2).

The eight-fold range in YA space allocation proportions emphasizes the degree to which no accepted or empirically based practices have yet emerged. In fact, there appears to be something of an inverse relationship between a library's overall size and the square footage reported in these YA spaces. That the smallest of the facilities reported allocating the largest proportion of space to young adults, while the largest facility reports allocating the least amount of square footage, may indicate something either about economies of scale or other, unknown priorities in the allocation of YA space.

### Resource Allocation

Resource dedication was examined in two ways. First, the study examined “material resources,” constituted by collection size and scope, as well as the availability of computers and televisions. The “operating resources,” on the other hand, were constituted by the reported hours of service and an assessment of the level of dedicated staffing (see table 3).

With respect to “material resources,” collection size ranged from 500 to 4,500 items. In narrative responses most libraries reported YA spaces housing varied collections including fiction, nonfiction, magazines, and multimedia items. One library indicated that YA materials were housed outside of the YA area in response to youth preference. None of the subject libraries reported YA spaces featuring a television or video monitor. And due to the wide variation in the reported number of computers libraries made available in their YA spaces, a pattern was difficult to discern from these data. Fully one half of the subject libraries reported that no TV, video monitors, or computers were available in their YA spaces.

In terms of “operating resources,” the subject libraries reported hours of youth access to the YA space ranging from 17 to 81 hours per week (see table 4). The unit of measure used in the VOYA profiles employed the term “staffing” to identify personnel.

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**Table 1. Data Summary for Ten Libraries with Small YA Spaces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Category</th>
<th>Average for Responding Libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YA space size (estimated square feet)</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA collection size (material holdings)</td>
<td>2,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of access to YA space (weekly)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated YA staffing (in FTE, from supplementary survey)*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA staffing (in FTE, from data)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA circulation (annual materials moved from shelves)**</td>
<td>12,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic (average daily visitation)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* based on an average of eight numeric responses, excluding mere “yes” responses.  
** average of seven libraries providing numbers

**Table 2. Library Square Footage Allocation for Ten Small YA Spaces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library (Ranked by YA Allocation)</th>
<th>YA Space (Square Feet)</th>
<th>YA Space As Percent of Total Library Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>495</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assigned to the YA space. The supplementary survey used the more specific term “dedicated staff.” Library size did not correlate with YA staffing resources.

Youth-Friendly Features

The summary of efforts by libraries with small YA spaces to use youth-friendly features to attract young people and offer a more youth-centric atmosphere shows that seven of the ten subject libraries reported some degree of display exhibits and merchandizing of library materials in such a way as to be appealing to YA audiences in YA spaces (see table 5). It is assumed that these practices can range from simply mounting ALA “READ” posters, or commercially available graphics containing images assumed to be of interest to young people, through a more active and systematic approach to promoting and merchandizing library materials to young readers.

In terms of decorating YA spaces with artistic expression, six of ten libraries reported exhibiting some kind of art, while four reported that they currently do not. Of those that do, most exhibit what was considered to be “teen produced” artwork. While none of the subject libraries specified their definitions of what constituted youth art, this form conventionally ranges from posting youth poetry and other writing to more elaborate exhibits of graphic artworks and even youth-curated displays.

Only three of the subject libraries reported working from a specific design “theme” when building their YA respective spaces. Of those that did report enacting their YA spaces with particular themes, the Schaumburg (Ill.) Library designed a sports theme, the Leominster (Mass.) Library designed a space to honor YA fiction author Robert Cormier, and the Blue Island (Ill.) Library utilized the functional tech and multimedia space design. Larger libraries tended to be more likely to adopt design themes but were not more likely to report other features.

Youth Engagement/Leadership

For the purposes of this analysis, youth engagement is broadly defined as any purposeful attempt to include young people in the development of spatial redesign. As reported both in the original VOYA profiles and in the follow-up surveys, most libraries now attempt to involve young adults in the design project at some point and to some degree.

All subject libraries reported youth participation or engagement in the design process (see table 6).

Table 3. Summary of Material Resources in Ten Small YA Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Computers</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>YA fiction</th>
<th>YA nonfiction</th>
<th>YA graphic novels</th>
<th>YA magazines</th>
<th>YA audiobooks</th>
<th>YA books on tape</th>
<th>YA books on CD</th>
<th>YA browsing material</th>
<th>YA magazines</th>
<th>YA nonfiction</th>
<th>YA fiction</th>
<th>YA graphic novels</th>
<th>YA nonfiction</th>
<th>YA graphic novels</th>
<th>YA magazines</th>
<th>YA audiobooks</th>
<th>YA books on tape</th>
<th>YA books on CD</th>
<th>YA browsing material</th>
<th>YA magazines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>nine</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Books, videos, and magazines, including popular fiction, series, assigned high school titles, animé, manga, graphic novels, YA/FIC/DVDs, books on tape, nonfiction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>All YA fiction is in the room. YA nonfiction is shelved with the adult collection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Fiction, including graphic novels, magazines, audiobooks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Fiction (hardcover and paperback), nonfiction in specific areas of teen interest (including sexuality, substance abuse, college prep, graphic novels and comics, sports, poetry, and biography; Japanese manga and animé on DVD), music CDs, magazines, popular series, romances, horror/suspense, classics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>2,521</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Fiction, nonfiction, graphic, CDs, books on tape, books on CD, magazines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>two</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Books, graphic novels, magazines, nonfiction browsing. Teen multimedia is in the AV section, which has more formats.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>three</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Hardcover, trade, and mass-market paperbacks, audiobooks, nonfiction, graphic novels, browsing material and magazines, including television and music tie-ins, craft books, college, health/body, jobs, dating, poetry, biography.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>YA fiction, graphic novels, nonfiction, including section covering health issues and other more controversial topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Books, DVDs, BCDs, zines, magazines.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Paperbacks, graphic novels, audiobooks, hardcover books, special new titles display.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
All libraries reported soliciting either Teen Advisory Group (TAG) or individual youth input in the design process, though only one library reported using both. More specifically, six libraries reported involvement of a formal youth leadership body in the design process, and five reported soliciting individual youth input in the design process.

While much more detail could be learned about the nature, scope, and intensity of the youth engagement noted here, the prevalence of reported youth participation in these library space projects marks a significant achievement among the recent innovations advocated by the field’s chief professional association, the Young Adult Library Services Association. While the call for increased youth participation in the delivery of youth services has deep historical roots in the field, it has only been since the late 1990s that professional YA specialist practitioners have officially adopted it as a standard of practice.18

**Seating**

Because seating options and variety provide young people the largest amount of potential freedom and creativity in a given library space, they contain important implications for how youth envision and enact space and spatial behaviors. Also seating has been found to represent one of the most conflicted spatial features with respect to young people and institutional aesthetic preferences.19 Thus, seating was examined in detail as a summary illustration of YA space development. Libraries were asked to report on the presence and range options that appear in their YA spaces from among the following choices: table and chair combinations, couches, ottomans, beanbags, booths, and stools (see table 7). While the traditional table and chair option remains by far the dominant seat-

---

**Table 4. Summary of Operating Resources of Ten Small YA Spaces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Name (Ranked by Hours)</th>
<th>Hours of Access to the YA Space/Week</th>
<th>Staffing (FTE)</th>
<th>Dedicated Staffing (FTE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>17 (after school only)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Table 5. Youth-Friendly Features of Ten Small YA Spaces**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library (Ranked by Size)</th>
<th>Displays/Merchandizing</th>
<th>All YA Materials in YA Space</th>
<th>Art/Teen Art</th>
<th>Design Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes/Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No/No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No/No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No/No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes/Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No/No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ing option currently reported for YA spaces, subject libraries also reported considerable variation in their respective approaches. Nine of the ten subject libraries reported offering standard tables and companion task chairs as might be found in traditional library furniture supply catalogs. Nevertheless, ten libraries also reported offering YA library users either stools or booth seating options. Unlike tables and chairs, which limit users to sanctioned numbers and postures, stools and booths offer young people a wider array of flexibilities to reconfigure their interactions to support various individual, arranged clustering, and collective social experiences.

While the VOYA profiles and the supplemental survey did not exhaust the full range of possible seating options (floor seating and carpet-covered risers, among others, were not offered as possible options) the subject libraries collectively did report the presence of at least five different possibilities. One library reported offering users only tables and chairs in its YA space. But fully eight offered at least two or three different seating options. The least frequently reported type of seating offered was beanbag chairs.20

### Outputs and Evaluation
The present study attempted to gain insight into how libraries defined and evaluated the degree of success their respective YA spaces achieved. Subject libraries were examined for their attempts to evaluate their redesigns through the collection of materials circulation or “traffic” statistics. Libraries were also probed for measurements taken prior to the redesign of their YA space (so-called “benchmark statistics”) as well as for any systematic consideration of young adult evaluation at some

### Table 6. Youth Leadership in YA Space Design and Operation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library (Ranked by Size)</th>
<th>TAG Group Involved in Design</th>
<th>Other Youth Input</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7. Seating Configurations in Ten Small YA Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libraries (Ranked by Seating Options)</th>
<th>Tables/Chairs</th>
<th>Couches</th>
<th>Ottomans</th>
<th>Beanbags</th>
<th>Booths</th>
<th>Stools</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>avg. 2.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
point after the redesign of the new spaces (so-called “post-occupancy”) evaluation.

Probing the data for even the traditional output measures (circulation and traffic), however, proved problematic (see table 8), as did more advanced metrics such as benchmark statistics and post-occupancy studies (see table 9). These standard approaches to assessing YA space usage proved inconclusive due to the current lack of precision in the definition of terms. Libraries reported circulation activity of YA materials in small YA spaces both in raw numbers and in percentages. In raw figures, for instance, circulation activity in the ten libraries ranged from 8,280 to 18,977 and bore no discernable relationship to library size. Two libraries reported circulation as a proportion of total circulation. But what does the term “circulation” measure?21 Does it mean materials borrowed on the library card of a young adult, materials borrowed only from those shelved in the YA space, or any materials the library had designated as “young adult” or even “youth” shelved anywhere in the library? Further, there is no standard in determining the length of time over which circulation is measured.

The term “traffic” was similarly problematic. Traffic could indicate the number of youth in the library at any given time, the aggregate total of youth in the library over a period of time, the number of youth sitting only in the YA space (ignoring youth in other parts of the library), and various other interpretations. Nor does traffic delineate hourly, weekly, or seasonal fluctuations in use. Tables 8 and 9 display some typical statistics as they are reported by libraries, reiterating the difficulties in interpreting some current measures.

With respect to terms such as “benchmark statistics” and “post-occupancy study,” the methodological challenges prove even more complex. Benchmark statistics include the imprecision mentioned previously that afflict circulation and traffic statistics as well as potential confusion about what is being used as the benchmark—that is, the status of youths’ library patronage prior to the design or redesign of the YA space. For example, if the library in question did not offer young adults a space prior to the library redesign, then benchmark statistics could conflate the respective experiences of a brand new library, an existing library without a prior YA space, and an existing library with a prior YA space. To be meaningful, each of these scenarios would require different kinds of benchmark statistics and precisely qualified interpretations that were not possible within the scope of the present study.

Finally, the concept of conducting post-occupancy studies is entirely new to YA space evaluation. To date there has been only one conducted on any YA space, and that was for a new branch library building designed with a purpose-built YA space.22 Thus the profession would appear to be in need of developing clear protocols if it is to meaningfully evaluate the experiences of the intended users of new YA spaces.

In addition to the “yes” or “no” responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library (Ranked by Size)</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Traffic</th>
<th>Benchmark Statistics</th>
<th>Post-Occupancy Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster, Mass.</td>
<td>16,660</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinellas Park, Fla.</td>
<td>8,280</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>18,977</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swampscott, Mass.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>9,800</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>15 percent*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>40 percent*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* circulation numbers not provided.
Definitions differed for circulation metrics, traffic patterns, and even seemingly standard measures like constituency demographics. In the larger sense, it was also clear that a great deal of confusion reigns regarding what post-occupancy evaluations do. The responses reported here concentrated largely on quantified library output measures rather than on any research conducted among the YA space users themselves.

### Table 9. Examples of Benchmark Statistics and Post-Occupancy Summaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library (Ranked by Size)</th>
<th>Benchmark Statistics</th>
<th>Post-Occupancy Study Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schaumburg, Ill.</td>
<td>Number of teens in building at particular times; circulation</td>
<td>We do this on a continuous basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown, Ky.</td>
<td>Circulation statistics and census statistics</td>
<td>Circulation statistics and teen programming/attendance statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrville, Ohio</td>
<td>I wasn’t here at that time. Our library was been remodeled and before the remodel there was no YA space.</td>
<td>Statistics are now kept—until the remodel there was nothing—we do output studies and monthly/yearly stats on circulation/use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Island, Ill.</td>
<td>Not formal stats, but we knew the young adults didn’t have a space to work on collaborative/group projects or learn 21st Century and critical-thinking skills. We felt this was doing a disservice to our young adults.</td>
<td>We take a count each day of the number of teens who use the space. Statistics: Approximate teen head count in Tech Annex for 2008: 1,974 with a breakdown in population of: 24 percent white, 25 percent Hispanic, 51 percent African American. Held 117 programs in the Tech Annex and 830 teens attended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayzata, Minn.</td>
<td>Not collected.</td>
<td>Not collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass City, Mich.</td>
<td>Not collected.</td>
<td>Not collected. Just viewing the usage was more than validation that we did the right thing. Also the comments about all of the new YA materials has been great. Another benefit has been the young adults that use the area feel very comfortable in coming into my office and suggesting new titles or series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortuna, Calif.</td>
<td>Not collected.</td>
<td>We looked at circulation statistics (YA) and people count.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion
This study represents the first attempt to develop an assessment of current library practices in offering YA space. The decision to study the smallest YA spaces in terms of square footage was made because it is likely that more libraries mirror these smaller efforts than much larger YA spaces. Also, in surveying small YA spaces the profession collectively gains a preliminary peek into the early experimentation that has thus far accumulated in this relatively new dimension of young adult services.

While the experimentation with YA spaces has begun only recently, some early patterns are clearly discernable from examining the smallest ones:

1. **Spatial proportionality**: The average small YA spaces represent only 2.2 percent of their hosting library's total square footage, the largest occupying less than 4 percent. Larger facilities did not necessarily assign or reassign a larger proportion of space to young adults. The average size of small YA spaces was 495 square feet.

2. **Resource dedication**: Subject libraries reported dedication of both material and operating resources to YA spaces. Collection size varied greatly, though all libraries reported offering a variety of materials. Many small libraries reported not having computers, video monitors, or televisions dedicated to young adults, and the number of dedicated computer workstations varied widely. There was also a large range of dedication of staffing and hours of operation.

3. **Youth-friendly space**: Libraries reported conscious efforts to appeal to the interests of young adults, including displays and exhibiting art in YA spaces and, in two cases, consistent thematic designs. Narrative descriptions indicated that libraries attempted to build, offer, and make accessible library materials based on YA preferences. YA collections, for instance, can be found both within the YA space and in the library's larger holdings.

4. **Youth participation**: All subject libraries reported being sensitive to the need for youth participation (however defined) in the design of YA space, from advisory groups to individual input.

5. **Seating options**: Most subject libraries emphasized traditional table/chair seating and reported relatively little variety in available seating options.

6. **Impact and evaluation**: While the majority of libraries reported being aware that their efforts to reassign space to young adult users should be evaluated, there is little consensus about appropriate assessment tools, practices, and methods or even consistent definitions of terms.

Possible Futures for YA Space Research
Given that the development of purpose-built YA library spaces is still new to the field, we are learning a great deal from the early practices of libraries’ small YA spaces. This study identifies a considerable number of issues we need to address. The data presented within the scope of this inaugural attempt to collect and assess new library practices generate at least three additional sets of questions and concerns that suggest parameters for subsequent research on YA spaces. First, greater precision and consistency is needed in the measures used to evaluate new YA spaces; second, a broad range of daily and practical issues deserves identification and further study; and third, research methods require more precise specification and execution. These parameters are detailed next.

Imprecise Metrics
We need to identify, define, and consistently measure library use and evaluation metrics. As mentioned previously, what we call “spatial metrics” currently suffers from variance and imprecision. What does “hours of operation” actually mean? Are “materials circulation” statistics or patron head counts sufficient or adequate? What are the best “benchmark” statistics from which to compare and contrast new YA spaces with previous YA spaces or lack thereof?

What post-occupancy measures tell libraries what they need to know after a space has been created or redesigned?

Similar ambiguity is evident with respect to assessing YA space staffing patterns. What do libraries’ numbers quantifying YA “staffing” mean? Staffing FTE estimates can range from paraprofessional being “available,” to professional staff assigned to “cover” that area of the library, youth-service professionals for both children’s and YA services, or a fully trained YA specialist with full-time responsibilities dedicated to YA services. Nor do we learn from current data how a new YA space impacts the services, development, and responsibilities of staff serving young adults.

Imprecision is likewise apparent with respect to how library materials are displayed and merchandized. These practices can range from permanently
posting commercial images (such as advertising posters) through more elaborate and constantly changing youth-produced artworks and exhibits. Merchandizing can mean everything from a 1950s hardwood book “trough” through more sophisticated shelving and display practices.

Further, how do we evaluate the procedures by which YA-space media (in its constantly changing modes) are selected or not selected? How do libraries determine the extent to which youth are involved in establishing and executing designs of their YA spaces? In terms of youth art, how were exhibited items selected? How long do exhibits last? How were exhibits evaluated? Similar questions could be asked of libraries reporting that they designed their YA spaces with themes. Knowing specifically what libraries mean when they discuss displays and merchandizing techniques, art exhibitions, and themed designs can help identify both common practices and potential areas for future training and staff development needs.

On the topic of the need for more definitional precision, this study reveals the need for better definitions of “youth participation” in the process of YA space design. The broader term “engagement” has been used to register a variety of options. Currently, youth participation can range from one-time opportunities for individual input to substantially more intensive collaborations involving multiple interactions with professional library staff, administrators, outside funders, library support organizations, and design professionals. While this study’s data find that professionals in the subject libraries report understanding the need for young people to be involved, the imprecision in identifying different approaches, levels of youth participation, and the quality of those engagements render the current concept rather ineffectual. Libraries also would be well-served by learning more about the demographic implications of what young people participate in the design and redesign process. Who were the youth involved and how do they compare with the local demographics of race, class, gender, language, and immigrant status? Each of these aspects of local youth social experience may influence how space is defined and enacted.

**Practical Issues**

The second broad potential for rich research lies in helping libraries respond to practical issues as they move toward more spatial equity in young adult services. The current data do not address many of the common issues, concerns, challenges, and problems these subject libraries faced when re-designating valuable library space for YA services. We do not learn from these data, for instance, about the motivations that lead libraries to reassign or newly designate space to YA services. We do not learn about the obstacles libraries face or how they overcome them in terms of staff development, training, and professional preparation. What resources do libraries call upon for assistance, insight, and guidance? What specific training do library staff require in preparing to develop new YA spaces?

Further, because YA courses in library schools conventionally concentrate on collections, few students would have been likely to have encountered instruction on the importance of space equity or how to enact it. If libraries are to continue recognizing that young adults are entitled to meaningful and equitable spatial allocations, then engaging the complex topic of space and its connections to services, programs, building relationships with young adults, and evaluation measures would require more systematic concentration than is in evidence today.

Taken together, currently available data must be treated with skepticism. The supplementary survey the authors distributed to the subject libraries asked for the percentage of YA space compared to the square footage of the entire facility, focusing only on the smaller YA spaces. Would a better comparison of square footage be to a library’s children’s space? What patterns and practices might emerge if analysis turned to examples of institutions that redesigned larger spaces for young adults? We might even ask about the degree to which square footage of space represents a measure of effective service. In other words, does a YA space’s larger square footage translate into more equitable and appropriate library service?

Seating options were specifically examined based on the assumption that seating was among the more important aspects of a YA space. Is this assumption true? If not, what are the more important measurable features of a YA space?

This study examined only the small YA spaces profiled in VOYA. Thus, the subject libraries reflect self-selected institutions that could well be expected to exhibit enthusiasm about their efforts. Libraries were not selected at random to determine if, whether, or how they have enacted a separate YA space. Further, as there is growing evidence that libraries outside of the United States also are experimenting with purpose-built spaces for young adults, can we begin to ask what informs those designs and evaluations?
Research Method Challenges
The wide variety of imprecise and ineffectual measures evident in these data point to the need for greater sophistication in the research methods libraries employ when approaching young people as legitimate sources of evaluative information. Much of the data examined in the current study rely on a comparative analysis of published, self-reported YA space profiles. Thus these data are limited to traditional top-down library input and output measures and privileged largely by institutionally defined preferences. As detailed previously, these measures (such as “circulation” or “traffic”) leave a great deal to be desired when trying to assess the degree of a successful YA space from the bottom-up point of view of library users. While the VOA profiles examined here serve as a source of research data, they were brief, largely anecdotal, and lacking in larger systematic contexts and circumstances.23

To be sure, these YA space profiles do often provide brief affirmative contributions from YA library users. But the systematic need for greater qualitative data from library staff, administration, and young people also is apparent if this research is to produce effective leadership and guidance to future design efforts. Issues in this regard encompass the changing meanings of library space for young adults, library staff, and the broader public. It also begs historical questions of meaning as well. If young adults now are being considered library users entitled to a more equitable share of library space, how were libraries perceived by young people, library staff, and the broader public before this view developed?

Conclusion
This first systematic research on library YA spaces offers us a good deal. After a detailed examination of ten relatively small early experiments it is clear that the field is building capacity and exhibiting a higher degree of spatial equity for young adults. The question engaged here attempts to excavate what we can learn from these early adopters to further a discussion based on the analysis of empirical data. This study suggests that libraries with fairly modest spaces have focused on increasing YA access to printed materials (offering sizable collections and improving service hours) and incorporating a higher degree of youth participation (through a variety of mechanisms and promoting youth art). While these efforts represent clear advances from historic practice and legacy, this study also points out a preference for continuing institutionally determined aesthetics, a pattern of dedicating a proportionately small amount space to young adults, and the considerable methodological challenges that remain with respect to measuring practices, techniques, and evaluative procedures before broader generalizations will be possible.

Acknowledgements
The author would like to express appreciation to students in the YA services seminar at San Jose State University’s School of Library and Information Science between fall 2006 and spring 2008, and especially to graduate research assistant Nichole Branch and Dr. Mike Males. The research was funded partially by a National Leadership Grant award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. 


References and Notes
1. Further, the rapid increase in nontraditional school environments also will impact library services, such as the alternative, continuation, and small school site movements, combined with the nation’s growing population of homeschooled youth. See Gilbert Q. Conchas and Louie E. Rodriguez, Small Schools and Urban Youth: Using the Power of School Culture to Engage Students (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2008).

2. This current study expands upon concepts initially presented at the 2008 International Federation of Library Associations satellite meeting. See Anthony Bernier, “Making Space for Young Adults: Three Stages Toward Success,” International Federation of Library Associations, Satellite Meeting, Montreal, Canada, August 6, 2008, http://ifla.queenslibrary.org/IV/ifla74/satellite-7/Presentation_Bernier.pdf (accessed Sept. 17, 2009). One recent study explicitly called for research on YA spaces, while a study just a few years prior did not mention YA space as a feature that would attract young adult users. See respectively Amy Alessio and Nick Buron, “Measuring the Impact of Dedicated Teen Service in the Public Library,” Young Adult Library Services 4, no. 3 (2006): 47–51; Kay Bishop and Pat Bauer, “Attracting Young Adults to Public Libraries,” Journal of Youth Services 15, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 36–44. Nor is there even research


6. VOYA is published bimonthly by Scarecrow Press. The articles feature examples of library space redecoration projects submitted by practicing young adult librarians.


10. For details on “youth development” see Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), “Young Adults Deserve the Best: Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth” (July 2005), www .ala.org/ala/yalysa/profdev/youngadultsdeserve.htm (accessed Aug. 19, 2009); YALSA, New Directions for Library Service to Young Adults (Chicago and London: ALA, 2002); DeWitt-Wallace-Readers’ Digest Fund, Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development (New York: The Wallace Foundation, 1999).


13. For a sampling of the more-received books consistent with this claim, see Mary Pipher, Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls (New York: Ballantine, 1995); James Garbarino, Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them (New York: Free Pr., 1999); Rachel Simmons, Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls (Orlando: Harcourt, 2002); Kenneth V. Hardy and Tracey A.


15. These libraries, located primarily in rural and suburban regions of the country, reported opening their new YA spaces between 1999 and 2007. The specific libraries are: Fortuna, California; Swampscott, Massachusetts; Cass City, Michigan; Wayzata, Minnesota; Blue Island, Illinois; Orrville, Ohio; Pinellas Park, Florida; Schaumburg, Illinois, Leominster, Massachusetts; and Georgetown, Kentucky.

16. Of the ten libraries originally selected, five returned the supplementary survey and five did not respond after two attempts at contact (see appendix C). The supplementary survey was then sent to libraries reporting the next smallest YA spaces until both a VOYA profile and a supplementary survey from a total of ten libraries were obtained.

17. During the follow-up surveys some libraries reported a larger collection size than was reported in the original VOYA article. This raises the question of whether libraries increased collection size in response to youth demand after opening a YA space or if there are other variations in the reporting of materials.

18. YALSA, “Young Adults Deserve the Best; YALSA, *New Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*; DeWitt-Wallace-Readers’ Digest Fund, *Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development*.


20. While libraries often anecdotally report “bean bag chairs” as problematic for durability, there are many other good reasons to avoid these as seating options. See Galen Cranz, *The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body, and Design* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).


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**Appendix A: Further Reading**


“Teen Lounge, Pinellas Park Public Library, Pinellas...”
Southard Leaves the Public Library Association

Greta K. Southard, longtime Public Library Association (PLA) executive director, resigned her position as of Aug. 31, 2009. She had been PLA’s executive director since 1996. Southard was selected as executive director of the Boone County (Ky.) Public Library, assuming the post in September 2009.

“Greta has been an outstanding executive director for the Public Library Association,” said PLA President Sari Feldman. “We are particularly fortunate to have had Greta’s leadership and relationship-building skills to foster the Turning the Page program through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We will work closely with the American Library Association leadership on a national search to bring an executive director to advocate for public libraries and the PLA.”

Appendix B: VOYA Submission Request Data

- Location of YA space
- Size in square feet
- Shape
- Layout (including separate room, own entrance, sections, staff work space, quiet study area)
- Décor (including color scheme, windows, walls, posters, signs, display areas)
- Unique attributes
- Types of seating and tables
- Types of shelving (including square feet of each)
- Computer workstations and technological resources including catalog, databases, word processing, Internet access, and computer games, and listening/video stations
- Collection size
- Types of resources in the collection
- Arrangement of collection (i.e. Dewey/LC)
- YA circulation
- Housing of YA materials elsewhere in library
- Description of YA population and community (including middle and high schools served)
- Hours of operation and if these hours differ from the library
- Traffic after school and on weekends
- Staffing, including title and full time/part time
- Date building opened
- Date of renovation
- Description of planning process (including how long it took and who had input)
- Date of opening and opening festivities
- Teen participation (including teen advisory council, teen volunteers, discussion groups, summer reading, website designers, homework help/tutoring, occasional/ongoing programs)
- “True Confessions”
- Teen comments

Appendix C: Libraries Surveyed for Supplemental Survey

1. The original survey selected the ten smallest YA spaces for study, to which five libraries responded:
   - Fortuna, Calif.
   - Swampscott, Mass.
   - Cass City, Mich.
   - Wayzata, Minn.
   - Blue Island, Ill.

2. The following five originally selected libraries selected failed to respond to two supplemental survey contact attempts and were dropped from the study:
   - Hammond, Ind.
   - Frederick, Md.
   - Edmonds, Wash.
   - Lancaster, Penn.
   - Cuyahoga, Ohio

3. These libraries, the next smallest in the VOYA survey, were then selected and returned the supplemental survey:
   - Orrville, Ohio
   - Pinellas Park, Fla.
   - Schaumburg, Ill.
   - Leominster, Mass.
   - Georgetown, Ky.
LEVERAGING Funding TO ENHANCE BROADBAND ACCESS

MARY ALICE BALL was an Assistant Professor at Indiana School of Library and Information Science while conducting this research. She serves as Chair of the Telecommunications Subcommittee for ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy; maryaliceball@yahoo.com. She is reading *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow and *Foul Matter* by Martha Grimes.

WENDY KNAPP is Supervisor of the Professional Development Office at Indiana State Library; wknapp@library.in.gov. She is reading *Last Puzzle & Testament* by Parnell Hall and *Sailor’s Start-Up: A Beginner’s Guide to Sailing* by Doug Werner.

In a world when library collections were all available in paper or celluloid formats, a librarian’s only telecommunications concern was whether the phone line was working. With the growing reliance on digital resources available over the Internet, the challenges facing library directors are much more complex. Online content ranges from electronic journals and books to multimedia sound and video files. In order to deliver these resources to the public, libraries must have adequate computing power and robust Internet connections. As library directors allocate an increasingly significant portion of their budgets to technology, they still must maintain the collections and services that are at the heart of their institutions. Recognizing the problem for directors in optimizing limited budgets, the Indiana State Library (ISL) established the Public Library Internet Consortium (PLIC) in 2006 as a means for public libraries to leverage state and federal funds to maximize their broadband connectivity. The survey discussed here was an effort to assess the benefits of aggregating demand through the consortium to see if the state’s investment was worthwhile and to better understand the impact on member libraries. The findings, part of which are presented here, may be of special interest given the current economic crisis, when library funding is under greater scrutiny, and also because substantial federal funding is available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).¹ Library directors across the country may find this research helpful as they consider the merits of joining a statewide consortium or a regional library cooperative.

Public libraries currently derive most of their non-local funding through two federal programs enacted over a decade ago. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 authorized the establishment of the E-rate program, which expands the Universal Service Fund to support telephone and Internet service for public libraries and
schools. The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) was mandated later in 1996; LSTA funds are distributed to states and then administered by state libraries. The impact that these programs have had on public libraries and their Internet connectivity is amply detailed in the extensive research conducted by John Bertot, Charles McClure, and their colleagues and will not be repeated here.3

Bertot, McClure, Jaeger, and Ryan developed an idea for a civically engaged library called “Successfully Networked Public Library” (SNPL) that influenced this research because it accurately captured the thought that by building upon a strong technological foundation, libraries could offer their communities an array of resources and services far richer than in the past.4 The critical function libraries play in society, especially one beset by economic uncertainty, is clear from the frequency with which newspapers have highlighted them in the last year. “Looking for Employment: Libraries are Bustling with Job Hunters,” “Economic Woes Boost Library Use for Job Resources,” and “Business Brisk at Area Libraries: In Bad Times, Free Resources Are a Hot Commodity” are just three examples of stories reporting on people’s reliance on libraries during hard times.5 Most libraries are struggling to keep up with the increased demand and so it seems especially timely to investigate libraries in Indiana using the concept of SNPL. Other research that informed this study was conducted by the American Library Association (ALA).6 One of ALA’s major findings was that by aggregating their demand for broadband Internet connections, libraries of all sizes, but especially small- and medium-sized ones, reaped multiple benefits that could not be realized if they operated independently.

ISL founded the PLIC so libraries could achieve the advantages of high-speed Internet access without having to pay prohibitive costs. By consolidating the connectivity needs of libraries throughout the state on a network managed by Education Networks of America (ENA), ISL was convinced it could achieve economies of scale. (Economies of scale refers to reductions in unit cost as the size of a facility, or scale, increases.) ENA negotiates with a variety of telecommunications providers serving Indiana on behalf of member libraries so that they have speeds of at least 1.5 Mbps (megabits per second).7 Currently 63 percent of Indiana’s public library districts are PLIC members. ISL hoped to learn more about the impact of PLIC membership so that it could more persuasively reach out to the remaining 37 percent so that more of them would join PLIC.

Research Method
Researchers from Indiana University School of Library and Information Science–Indianapolis and ISL developed a survey around the primary research question: Do the benefits of aggregation justify the investment of state library resources in establishing and maintaining a library cooperative to support Internet access? The heart of the question examines the pros and cons for individual public library members. An e-mail message serving as a cover letter was sent to the director of each public library in Indiana with a link to the twenty-three question survey on the SurveyMonkey website.8 U.S. mail was used to deliver paper copies of the letter and survey to eight directors without e-mail addresses. Three mailings were used and eventually a response rate of 65 percent was achieved, with 154 directors out of 239 completing the survey.9

An examination of completed surveys showed that there was a 68 percent rate from PLIC members and a 59 percent rate from non-members. PLIC members represent 63 percent of all Indiana public libraries and 66 percent of the survey respondents, while non-members are 37 percent of all public libraries and 34 percent of respondents, statistically identical numbers. Results were cross-tabulated and distribution tables generated to determine the frequency of responses for each survey question, with chi-square tests performed on selected tables.

**Table 1.** PLIC Members and Non-Members by Type of Internet Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Internet Access</th>
<th>Dial-Up</th>
<th>DSL</th>
<th>Cable</th>
<th>Leased</th>
<th>Municipal</th>
<th>Satellite</th>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members (102)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Members (52)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (154)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The key variable in the study was PLIC membership and the first aspect examined was connectivity. Answers allowed for more than one type of access; overall PLIC members were shown to have faster connections (T1 or higher) than non-members (see table 1 on previous page). Grouping dial-up, DSL, and cable together as types of older, slower solutions, and leased line, satellite, and fiber as types of newer, faster ones there is a clear difference between consortium members and non-members. Respondents that are PLIC members favor faster technologies to older by 56 to 23 percent, while non-members rely on older choices to newer ones, 73 to 23 percent.

The survey also asked each director what the library’s bandwidth is, fully recognizing that a library director’s primary concern is whether the Internet is operating properly, not what its speed is. Not surprisingly then, 20 percent of the directors responding did not know the library’s bandwidth. As shown dramatically in figure 1, 81 percent of PLIC members versus only 36 percent of non-members have bandwidth of 1.5 Mbps or more.

As mentioned earlier, the E-rate program is an important source of funding for public library Internet connectivity. The difference in responses between PLIC members and non-members on whether they filed for E-rate discounts is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, non-members were half as apt to apply as not apply for E-rate funding, while figure 2 shows how ready PLIC members were to take advantage of its applying for them.

The disparity between PLIC members and non-members on E-rate applications is more pronounced in figure 3, which illustrates committed and dispersed funding amounts using data retrieved from the Schools and Libraries Division website. Indiana libraries received relatively little funding before PLIC was created. Since that time, however, the change has been dramatic. In PLIC’s first year, its members collected roughly five times the amount of E-rate funding as those libraries that had not joined. In 2007, its second year, PLIC members obtained $1,087,439 to non-members $60,791—almost eighteen times as much, a clear indication that the consortium benefits its members and, by extension, the residents of members’ communities.

The survey asked questions related to services to the public and to external partnerships, essential aspects of being a SNPL. Wireless access is a newer service that libraries offer to their communities, sometimes because the number of workstations available cannot accommodate the demand or because the electrical infrastructure of the building facility is outdated and sometimes merely because it is seen as a necessary service in today’s highly networked world. When evaluated in terms of which libraries are not offering this service, non-members (37 percent) outnumber PLIC members (19 percent). From the opposite perspective, 80 percent of consortium members have wireless networks compared to only 62 percent of non-members. The relationship is statistically significant at 0.0132. The correlation between wireless access and E-rate applications is even more significant (0.0012) at the 0.05 level, with 80 percent of libraries, regardless of their membership in PLIC, having applied for E-rate discounts.

Findings about computer training were inclusive: the first question to address this asked it in the context of library programs, and the second

Figure 1. PLIC Member and Non-Member Bandwidths
in terms of partnering with external agencies. Answers were not in agreement from one question to the other. There is a great demand for one-on-one training now because of high unemployment in Indiana. Respondents noted conducting computer training in a range of formats, from personalized and on demand to formal and more structured. What was clear was that only six public libraries had arrangements with the statewide Ivy Tech Community College system or with Indiana's Department of Workforce Development to jointly offer formal computer classes to their residents, and that consortium membership did not influence the responses.

What was more striking was the relationship between bandwidth and formal computer training and between bandwidth and external partnerships. Libraries with bandwidth of 1.5 Mbps or higher conducted 85 percent of computer classes and were the only organizations to create alliances with external agencies (two with Ivy Tech, five with Workforce Development, and sixteen with a range of community-based organizations). In addition to conducting computer training some public libraries offer college, career, or small business counseling, although the relationship with PLIC membership was not especially distinctive with 26 percent of members providing counseling to only 22 percent of non-members.

When all program offerings are examined, it reveals much more about Indiana’s public libraries readiness to be assessed as SNPLs. Although all libraries responding to the survey offer different

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**Figure 2. E-rate Applications by PLIC Membership Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Members (N=102)</th>
<th>Non-members (N=52)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Directly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLIC Applied on Behalf</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, didn’t apply</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know or No response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. SLD Funding of Internet Access for Indiana Public Libraries**

- **PLIC Committed**
- **PLIC Dispersed**
- **Non-PLIC Committed**
- **Non-PLIC Dispersed**
- **Pre-PLIC Committed**
- **Pre-PLIC Dispersed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members/Non-members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
programs to their communities, the most common one is children’s storytime (90 percent of PLIC and non-PLIC members) followed by the computer training addressed previously. What is striking is that so few libraries offer career and employment (13 percent of PLIC members and 6 percent of non-members) or small business counseling (10 percent of PLIC and non-PLIC members). In the last year libraries may have expanded their programs to respond to high unemployment and economic insecurity, but even if all have done so, the gap between the most traditional of offerings, storytime, and those focused on working adults can still be expected to exist, albeit smaller.

The relationship between bandwidth and program offerings is illustrated in figure 4, confirming the findings just discussed and also the earlier insight that respondents did not know their bandwidth. It also shows that non-traditional program offerings aligned with the concept of SNPL are consistently offered by libraries with bandwidth at or above 1.5 Mbps. The difference as it relates to small business counseling is most pronounced; libraries with bandwidth higher than 1.5 Mbps outnumber those less than 1.5 Mbps by approximately five times.

Discussion and Summary
Given current trends in the Internet and publishing worlds, adequate broadband capacity is critical if libraries are to continue offering their patrons a full array of available information resources. Having an Internet connection alone does not guarantee access to resources if there are too many simultaneous users or if the requested resources use large amounts of bandwidth, as in the case of video files or games. Slower telecommunications technologies (dial-up, cable, or DSL) may be fine for residential use but are inadequate in multiuser environments such as libraries, while newer technologies (T1 or satellite) enable faster and more stable communication, with fiber networks recognized as offering the most robust connectivity. Still, the implementation of any one of them could be challenging in particular locations—such as inner city, rural, or mountainous areas.

Therefore the telecommunications infrastructure is essential if libraries are ever to become SNPLs and deliver electronic resources and online services alongside traditional library offerings. The federal E-rate program funding has played a critical role in enabling Internet connectivity in the nation’s public libraries. In order to better understand the complex interplay of these factors on the American public’s ability to equitably access information, public library directors across Indiana were surveyed to assess the state of their Internet connectivity, funding, programs, and partnerships. The primary goal was to evaluate whether the differences, if any, between PLIC members and non-members were positive enough to justify the state library’s continued investment.

Initial survey questions asked about type of Internet access, with answers allowing for more than one type, and about level of bandwidth or speed. Overall PLIC members were shown to have faster connections (T1 or higher) than non-members. Grouping dial-up, DSL, and cable together as types of older, slower solutions, and leased line, satellite, and fiber as types of newer, faster ones there is a clear difference between consortium members.
and non-members. Respondents that favor faster technologies are 56 percent PLIC members to 23 percent non-members, while those relying on older technologies are 23 percent PLIC members to 73 percent non-members. Municipal and other types were not considered because the technology employed is not clear. More than twice as many PLIC members have bandwidth of 1.5 Mbps or more. At the highest levels of bandwidth there are both member and non-member libraries, with non-PLIC libraries predominating at speeds of 1.6 to 45 Mbps. There was no discernible difference according to population size. It could be a case of Internet service providers giving free access or discounted pricing to public libraries, or the fact that the market rates for densely populated areas may be less expensive than the postalized or flat rates charged by PLIC. More analysis would have to be done in order to draw a firm conclusion.

One of the most striking differences between consortium member and non-member libraries is in E-rate funding for Internet access. Perhaps due to the simple fact that PLIC manages E-rate applications for its members, the surge in this important source of funding has been exponential among consortium libraries, bringing millions of dollars into the state—far more than the federal monies captured by non-members. Currently, only 63 percent of Indiana’s public libraries belong to PLIC, so the potential for obtaining even more federal E-rate dollars is very real.

There was also a strong correlation between a library’s filing for E-rate funding and its providing Internet access over a wireless network. Of all responding libraries with wireless networks, 80 percent have applied to the E-rate program. PLIC member libraries offer wireless access much more often than their non-member counterparts, which may help them stretch connectivity beyond a limited number of workstations.

Survey respondents did not have a good record on engaging in community partnerships to offer training or counseling, a key element of becoming an SNPL. However, findings did demonstrate a correlation between bandwidth and partnerships, with libraries that have speeds of 1.5 Mbps or greater offering 85 percent of formal computer classes. These libraries were also the ones that had active partnerships with Ivy Tech Community College and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Small business counseling was more than five times as likely to be offered by libraries with bandwidth of 1.5 Mbps or more than by those with lower speeds. It is not a surprise that respondents favored the traditional program offering of children’s storytime over all other services because reading to children does not require any technology, infrastructure, or Internet connection. Nevertheless, if libraries are to expand their profile in their communities and serve the needs of a full range of patron types then non-traditional, Internet-dependent offerings are advisable. The fact that these services are designed to serve taxing, voting adults can only increase the benefit for libraries.

**Recommendations**

Only the most unusual public library does not have to constantly consider budgets and funding. Cooperative arrangements such as Indiana’s PLIC ease some of these concerns by using the power of numbers to negotiate lower charges for Internet connections. In areas where there are multiple telecommunications companies having one Internet service provider, such as ENA in Indiana’s case, the burden of negotiating to get the best pricing and service is eliminated. ENA provides invaluable technical and user support to PLIC member libraries, offering a level of expertise that would be impossible to match at any but the largest or most highly funded institutions. Managing the E-rate applications process is one of PLIC’s most valued services as attested to by the high rate of use by consortium members. For small- and medium-sized libraries especially, consortium membership can pay big dividends.

Federal E-rate funding affords an important tool for public libraries as they seek to make Internet resources available to their users. Newly enacted ARRA legislation designates $7.2 billion for broadband and is yet another opportunity for public libraries to improve their current connectivity. Grants will be made through both the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) ($4.5 billion) and for the Rural Utilities Service ($2.5 billion) with no less than $200 million earmarked for community computing centers, including public libraries and community colleges.11

As community anchor institutions, public libraries are strategically positioned to benefit from these programs if they submit persuasive and well-conceived applications. The Gates Foundation filed comments with the NTIA asserting that ARRA funds should be used to connect public libraries, schools, and community colleges at speeds of 100 Mbps.12 In allocating grant monies, the government will reward those applicants that collaborate with other organizations; libraries can partner not just with libraries but also with other community agencies and businesses. Cooperative efforts will be viewed as more cost effec-
tive than individual ones. Due to their extensive use of the Internet and to ALA's outstanding education and advocacy resources about the ARRA, librarians are very likely among the most knowledgeable in their areas on this topic. If they hope to continue making information available to all Americans, then librarians need to take a leadership role in their communities and guarantee that broadband is made available. Just like ALA, libraries, consortia, and professional organizations at the state level, as well as regional library cooperatives, offer valuable support for these efforts.

ALA has compiled resources for how public libraries can use the ARRA funds for their communities, available at www.alash.org/knowyourstimulus. As the funds become available at different times, there will be ample opportunities for public libraries to cultivate partnerships with other libraries, organizations, and businesses to build out the best technology infrastructure for each community. Each state is coordinating efforts of governmental units to best utilize the funds, and this information can be obtained through your state library agency, which may be able to assist you in finding partners with similar goals. Guidelines for the grant opportunities from both of the federal government agencies responsible for administering the ARRA funds are available at www.recovery.gov. Public libraries should start by reviewing the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program from the NTIA website, www.ntia.doc.gov/recovery/index.html, and the Rural Utilities Service's Rural Development Broadband Program at the recovery.gov website for potential expansion of services and technology upgrades.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to ascertain if the benefits gained by membership in the PLIC were sufficient to justify continued investment by ISL. The concept of a SNPL became an important focus of the research because it articulates the model of a twenty-first century, connected institution that is always conscious of its role within its local community, bringing vital resources and services to residents and businesses. Without adequate broadband connections, public libraries will not be able to fulfill this role. Recognizing its obligation to support public libraries accomplish this goal, ISL established PLIC and the return on investment has been significant, bringing proven benefits to individual member libraries and to state residents. ISL anticipates that this research will convince more Indiana libraries to join the consortium.

Indiana's libraries still have not achieved full SNPL status, although a few are well on their way. The current economic situation, including high unemployment in the state, has reinforced the importance of partnering with non-library agencies and industries to support job seekers and small business owners. The technology and telecommunications that underlie a SNPL can be daunting, in terms of both money and expertise, for most public libraries. Consortium membership will alleviate the need to allocate limited resources to infrastructure when it could better fund library staff who can deliver direct patron resources and services to the local community. Membership pays off in the long run by allowing libraries to focus on their primary mission and letting others who are better suited to the tasks provide network management, technical support and training, and strategic planning. The consultative function of consortium employees is particularly helpful in supporting libraries as they apply for external funding.

The case of Indiana is not an anomaly. Whatever the type of aggregation, whether it is available as a statewide consortium or a regional library cooperative, the benefits of belonging far outweigh the costs. This research demonstrates that libraries that want to leverage limited budgets while improving their connectivity should not hesitate to join a consortium.

**References and Notes**


8. A copy of the survey is available upon request from Wendy Knapp, wknapp@library.IN.gov.

9. In 2008, two libraries consolidated so the state now has 238 public libraries instead of the 239 surveyed.


Nominate a Colleague or Library for a PLA Award

Visit www.pla.org to nominate a colleague or a public library for a PLA Service Award and read full award descriptions. The deadline to apply is December 1, 2009.

- Advancement of Literacy Award honors contributions to the advancement of adult literacy.
- Allie Beth Martin Award honors range and depth of knowledge about library materials.
- Charlie Robinson Award honors risk takers, innovators, and change agents.
- EBSCO Excellence in Small or Rural Public Library Service Award honors excellence of service.
- Gordon M. Conable Award honors a demonstrated commitment to intellectual freedom.
- Highsmith Library Innovation Award recognizes innovative and creative service programs.
- Polaris Innovation in Technology John Iliff Award honors technology use and innovative thinking.
- Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product Award is designed to provide a public library the opportunity to build or expand a collection of either or both formats.
- DEMCO New Leaders Travel Grant is designed to enhance the professional development of new public librarians.

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**Crash Course in Teen Services**


Once I went to buy supplies for an event at the library. I asked the store clerk, “Do you have any balloons?” And he said, “What is balloon?” Donna Miller, author of *Crash Course in Teen Services* seems to be answering the question: What is teen? One of her subheadings is actually “Who are these strange creatures” (1). Miller informs us that teens travel in packs and they may generate increased noise levels. If this is new territory for you, by all means, you should read this book and take notes. However, if you already know what a teen is, you might be disappointed.

This book is divided into roughly six parts: what are teens, the reference interview, collection development, readers’ advisory, programming, and teen-friendly spaces. The chapters are short and easy to read. You might be tempted to read this book if you have no library experience and are thinking about becoming a YA librarian. My suggestion to you—volunteer instead. It’s by physically talking and interacting with teens that you can learn the most. This whole book can be boiled down to this quote, “Staff can show respect by taking requests for assistance seriously and giving 100 percent effort whenever providing any type of service to teens” (8). But you probably knew that already. Some things just can’t be explained, so I went to another store to buy balloons.—Kacper Jareki, Librarian, Queens (N.Y.) Library

**Teddy Bear Storytimes: Ready-to-Go Flannel and Magnetic Storyboard Programs That Captivate Children**


Most young children enjoy teddy bear stories. This book, a valuable resource for teachers, librarians, or other educators working with toddlers, kindergartners, or first or second graders, is intended to help adults provide an enjoyable story program, using flannels and the magnet board as a story prop. A novice or seasoned storyteller can easily adopt ideas found in the book. It is a single, unique source providing materials, resources, and instructions on storytelling with flannels and a board.
Yousha, a children's librarian and storyteller with more than ten years experience in New York City public libraries, presents twenty story programs in the book, focusing on the daily life and activities of the bear family. Teddy Bear is the central character. A few examples of the story programs are: pirate adventure, playing baseball, going to the circus, and going on vacation. Each will surely capture the attention and imagination of young children. One very useful feature of the book is its supply of story scripts and patterns of cutout pictures for all characters and story pieces, including their exact measurements. For each story program, Yousha begins with a completely mounted picture, which is followed by a brief introduction. Then comes a list of story characters and story pieces. She also offers directions on mounting specific pictures as the story gets read. Additionally, she suggests related read-aloud books and ideas for playful activities.

Another very good feature of the book is its organization and ease of access. Theme and subject indexes, as well as lists of figures and patterns allow the user to find a theme, a topic, a pattern, and a figure with very little time and effort. The appendix contains patterns for all story programs. Furthermore, an attached CD includes all of the patterns and full-color figures featured in the book, and interestingly, these patterns can be sized to fit a story-board, and also cut and pasted into a word processing file.

In summary, the book is very readable and well-organized, filled with useful information and valuable suggestions for presenting a fun and lively Teddy Bear story program. Beginners will be able to tell stories, captivating their young audiences, if they diligently follow the advice and instructions given by the author. It may take time to prepare pictures, but with these story aids, storytelling will turn lively and enchanting. No doubt, it is a worthy project for a storyteller.—Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty member, GLIS Queens (N.Y.) College

A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books, Supplement to the 7th Edition


A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books was first published in 1982, and since then a new edition appears every three to five years. As thousands of new picture books come off the press annually, there exists a need of having a supplement to capture the titles published in the gap between two editions. Thus, this supplement to the seventh edition of A to Zoo becomes an indispensable tool for providing information about new titles published in 2005, 2006, and 2007. It is a valuable reference work for the professional to look up bibliographic information, use as an aid to develop a collection, or give readers’ advisory. Indeed, it is essential in the library reference section. Library educators and other professionals will also find it useful when conducting research on children's literature.

This supplement contains 2,451 titles, cataloged under 769 subjects, using the same subject headings as those employed in the seventh edition. The supplement is divided into five sections: subject headings, subject guide, bibliographic guide, title index, and illustrator index. The subject headings section is an alphabetical listing of main headings, subheadings, and cross references. It provides a quick reference to the subjects used in the subject guide. The subject guide lists authors' names alphabetically under appropriate subject headings and subheadings, followed by titles. In the bibliographic guide, authors in boldface are arranged in alphabetical sequence, followed by title, illustrator, publisher, publication date, ISBN, and related subjects. The subject guide and the bibliographical guide form the bulk of the book. The title index contains a sequential list of titles followed by authors' names in parentheses; illustrators are listed in order in the illustrator index, followed by their titles.

One useful feature of the book is its ease of use. The five sections mentioned earlier provide five approaches to easily identify a particular author, title, illustrator, or a book. Another merit of the book is its text design, which features boldface, space at proper places, and appropriate font size to ease reading and searching. Pictures of adorable little animals adorn the space at the beginning of each alphabet in the subject guide and the bibliographical guide.

Authors Lima and Thomas have had extensive experience with picture books as librarians. Lima has been the main compiler of all seven editions of A to Zoo since its inception in 1982. Thomas, an elementary school librarian, is new to this massive work. All in all, the supplement used in conjunction with its main edition is a valuable and useful reference tool for children's librarians and teachers in primary grade who want to keep information accurate and current.—Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty member, GLIS Queens (N.Y.) College
Hosting a Library Mystery: A Programming Guide


Do you want to introduce your library’s resources to a variety of library users in a fun and cost-effective manner? Are you looking for a creative outreach program or for a different way to market your library? In Hosting a Library Mystery: A Programming Guide, Elizabeth M. Karle explains how mystery events can be used in many types of libraries. She gives examples of mystery scripts and presents clear instructions on how to set up an event, all the while inspiring her readers to be creative.

In part one of this book, Karle, drawing from her experience as an academic librarian who has hosted mystery events, clearly explains the process by which one of the events at her college was designed and carried out. She then explains how a public library could adapt this event and gives tips on how to present your own event. Part two of this book contains five sample scripts complete with clues, puzzles and answer keys, suggested library locations to use, and suggested audiences.

Karle’s enthusiasm for this type of programming is clearly evident throughout her book. Her step-by-step instructions, checklists, and other detailed planning tools make the reader want to host such an event. Although she has used her mysteries in an undergraduate setting, Karle persuades the reader to consider how mysteries can be effectively used by adult, young adult, and children’s departments in a public library setting, as well as in school libraries. Whether the goal is orienting new patrons to a library, or information literacy for children and young adults, library mysteries can be a fun way to reach out to library users or support existing information literacy goals.—Sarah Hammershaimb, Adult Services Librarian, West Chicago (Ill.) Public Library District

Best Books for Boys: A Resource for Educators


Teachers and librarians have long known that many boys do not like to read as much as most girls and that their reading performance lags behind girls. Boys often say that they cannot find books that appeal to them. This work, one in the Children’s and Young Adult Literature Reference series, is a timely and useful resource for educators to motivate boys (reluctant boys, in particular).

Zbaracki, an educator at the elementary school and university level, recommends 401 titles for boys in grades three through ten. To select these titles or entries, the author has drawn from several sources, including his own experiences in teaching children’s literature; personal dialogue with boys about their reading; suggestions from his colleagues, friends, teachers, and librarians; and also consultation of professional journals. Indeed, he has been diligent and comprehensive in searching from a broad base for titles that will appeal to boys. He looks at the issue of reluctant readers from both perspectives of the professional and young male readers.

The author classifies all selected entries into eight genres: humor, realistic fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, poetry, graphic novels, nonfiction, and modern classics. Each genre is further divided into two to five sections, with poetry being the only exception. All entries contain annotation, bibliographic information, ISBN numbers, pagination, and the targeted grade level. The information provided in the entries is appropriate, clear, and easy to understand. It may not be necessary, however, to subdivide each genre, as the book is not a big tome. Furthermore, such subdivision could be confusing as to the clearcut definition and division of the type of books. For instance, realistic fiction and historical fiction both have a “novel” section under them. It would be helpful if Zbaracki could give some enlightenment about the reason and methods behind such a classification.

The titles included in the book will hopefully capture boys’ attention and interest. Jon Scieszka, a well-known children’s book author and strong advocate for boys reading, wrote the forward to the book, which seems to add some weight. No romance is found; instead, books about humor, adventure, fantasy, and nonfiction are selected to suit boys’ needs. One unique feature of the work is its currency and appropriateness of the selected authors and titles. The selections are comprised mostly of contemporary books for boys, with the majority published in the 2000s, and even a few in 2009.

Another unique feather of the book is its indexes—author, title, and subject, which enable the user to look up a certain type of book by a certain author, on a certain theme or a subject area, easily. The subject index, especially, is extensive and detailed. Scanning through the indexes, one quickly notices that

Best Books for Boys: A Resource for Educators


Teachers and librarians have long known that many boys do not like to read as much as most girls and that their reading performance lags behind girls. Boys often say that they cannot find books that appeal to them. This work, one in the Children’s and Young Adult Literature Reference series, is a timely and useful resource for educators to motivate boys (reluctant boys, in particular).

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one of Zbaracki’s favorite authors is Gordan Korman.

The purpose of the book is to provide a resource for teachers and librarians to motivate boys to read. Graphic fiction, still frowned upon by some professionals, is given a place in the book, and the Captain Underpants series is also included.

In conclusion, this is a valuable and practical resource for teachers and librarians to guide reluctant boys toward proper books, and turn them into happy readers.—Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty member, GLIS Queens (N.Y.) College

Readers Respond

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job ads and applications online can get a jump start.

- **Housing:** Programs to help homeowners facing foreclosure; prospective/new homeowner workshops.

- **Health:** Preschool screenings before and after storytime; healthy cooking classes for parents and families; coordinating with school districts to fund lunches and before- and after-school snacks at the library during out-of-school times; posting and distribution of local medical and health services.

How can we make our service models even more worthy of shrinking public dollars? We can leverage our assets by coordinating with other community-based organizations and governmental agencies.

- Perhaps you’ve partnered with the local Head Start to host monthly family gatherings in your community room because they don’t have a space large enough.

- Maybe the local employment bureau refers their clients to your library because you’ve dedicated workstations for job seekers.

Funders favor organizations who share resources for the greatest benefit of their constituents. Identifying and taking advantage of shared resources and missions can translate into a more secure position when funding streams run low.

Who are likely partners? They are any departments funded by your organization, such as fire, police, and parks and recreation departments. Other partners could include school districts, clinics, chambers of commerce, faith communities, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other social service organizations.

Who will fare better during these tough times? Library systems that have stopped measuring their worth by their circulation statistics. They have learned their real value is demonstrated in their responsiveness to their communities, going beyond traditional library services to provide local service gaps, such as:

- Help with homework after school—very few school libraries are open after 3 p.m.

- Assistance with online forms and tests, including dedicated workstations and reserved hours for library users to complete paperwork that is only available online.

- Access to the community bulletin board and resource database that promotes services offered by all the other local organizations.

What can we all do to make our library systems more recession-proof?

- If you haven’t yet, consider revamping programs and services to align with services your funding agency deems essential.

- Shore up connections and relationships with neighbor organizations, especially those with shared missions.

- Gather and broadcast the stories, photos, and yes, numbers, that help demonstrate how critical your services are to your constituents.

Let’s step up and tell everyone: Public libraries provide essential services and deserve to be at the front of the funding line.—Pat Downs Bright (pat.downs@sdcounty.ca.gov), Principal Librarian, Youth Services, San Diego County Library, and President of the California Library Association’s Children and Young Adult Section

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“In general it can be said that a nation’s art is greatest when it most reflects the character of its people.”
— Edward Hopper

Just for Public Libraries! Find inspiration for library programs incorporating the Picturing America collection at Picturing America for Public Libraries a new, online community featuring programming resources and opportunities to share and collaborate.

Visit Picturing America for Public Libraries at www.programminglibrarian.org/picturingamerica to find:

- programming ideas for youth, family and adult audiences
- digital versions of selected images to enhance your programs and presentations
- audio files, easily downloaded to create a compelling audio tour of the Picturing America collection

- professionally-designed, print-ready promotional materials for you to customize and use to promote your Picturing America programs
- online learning sessions, discussion forums, information on upcoming grant opportunities and more!

Access these resources to bring the power of American art and history to your community through programs featuring the Picturing America collection. For more information, visit www.programminglibrarian.org/picturingamerica.

Picturing America is a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities, distributed in cooperation with the American Library Association. The Institute of Museum and Library Services has provided major support for Picturing America programs in public libraries.
The following are extracted from press releases and vendor announcements and are intended for reader information only. The appearance of such notices herein does not constitute an evaluation or an endorsement of the products or services by the Public Library Association or the editors of this magazine.

LibraryThing for Libraries
www.librarything.com/forlibraries

LibraryThing for Libraries allows libraries to enrich their online catalog with Library 2.0 applications, using data from the public LibraryThing database of forty million records. Features such as tags, recommendations, reviews, and ratings for materials in the library catalog result in a more user-friendly experience for patrons.

LibraryThing for Libraries offers an easy way to upgrade the online catalog experience for patrons—libraries can enhance their catalog with just a few lines of HTML. LibraryThing for Libraries works with any OPAC and requires no back-end integration.

New Kid’s Catalog Interface from LibLime
www.liblime.com/products/yakpac

YakPac, LibLime’s new kids’ Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), can be adapted to work with any integrated library system (ILS). It was developed both as the kid’s interface to a Web indexing project, and as the children’s OPAC for an ILS.

YakPac is based on research investigating how today’s computer-savvy youth use the Internet. The result is an elegantly simple search interface. YakPac has integrated, safe chat because studies find that kids are more likely to interact with peers than use a standard library catalog to find information. YakPac’s animated links are designed to make exploring the OPAC fun.

OPAL: Online Programs for All
www.opal-online.org

OPAL is a collaborative effort by libraries and other organizations of all types to provide Web-based programs and training for library users and library staff members. These live events are held in online rooms where participants can interact through Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), text chatting, synchronized browsing, and more.

Everyone is welcome to participate in OPAL programs. Usually there is no need to register. Nearly all OPAL programs are offered free of charge. Examples of OPAL public online programs include book discussions, interviews, special events, library training, memoir writing workshops, and virtual tours of special digital library collections.

Libraries and library-related nonprofit organizations of all types are encouraged to become OPAL institutional members. Participating OPAL libraries develop and deliver online programs, events, and meet-
ings using software from Talking Communities.

Begin Smart Books
www.beginsmartbooks.com

Begin Smart is a developmental publishing program designed to encourage the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of babies and toddlers. Begin Smart is not just another book program. It addresses children's need to take in information through all of their senses—eyes, ears, fingers, mouths, and noses—and to manipulate objects as much as possible.

Begin Smart Books are carefully leveled by age and ability in six-month increments—the Begin Smart program will expand the emerging motor and cognitive skills of children from birth to two years. The collection includes board books, touch-and-feel, lift-the-flap, and novelty formats.

Generations on Line Software Helps Bridge Generational, Cultural Gaps
www.generationsonline.org

Generations on Line (GOL) recently launched software that aims to reduce the digital divide and engage elderly Spanish-speaking Americans in the online world.

GOL Español, made possible in part by a grant from IBM, is based on GOL's self-teaching on-screen tutorial that has been used in English in more than 1,300 senior centers, retirement homes, and public libraries throughout the country since 1999. The uncluttered, elder-friendly interface guides the user through basic applications like free e-mail, Web searches, and useful links.

Language Learning Software Designed for Public Library Circulation
www.rbfilm.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=rb.transparent

Recorded Books’ unique Library Edition USB drive format with multiple user license allows Transparent Language software to be circulated an unlimited number of times to an unlimited number of patrons outside of the library.

Transparent Language Library Editions focus first on vocabulary and second on using words and phrases in an immersive, whole-language learning experience. These proven learning methods help users build all their language abilities.

The Library Edition USB drive language software is engineered to circulate outside of the public library. The durable USB drive software comes packaged in sturdy, library-quality packaging and is immune to the scratching, cracking, and chipping common in CD software.

Text a Librarian: Text Message Reference Solutions
www.textalibrarian.com

Text a Librarian is an easy to use text messaging solution that enables libraries to set up cost-effective short message service (SMS) reference services.

Librarians respond through a Web interface—no mobile phone needed. Text a Librarian works with existing e-mail and instant messaging/chat systems (Meebo, Pidgin, and so on). It is secure and mobile carrier certified. No hardware, software, or mobile technology expertise required.

World Book Develops Online Public Library Edition
www.worldbook.com

While World Book has provided online resources to public libraries for many years, the World Book Public Library Edition is designed specifically for the public library environment. It provides a comprehensive online reference database for all ages, homework resources, audio and video content, tutorials, e-books, and an extensive collection of digitized historical works.

The three core modules of the World Book Public Library Edition include:

1. World Book Online Reference Center provides adult users with access to the entire World Book Encyclopedia as well as hundreds of thousands of primary source documents and complete e-books from American, Canadian, British, juvenile, and world literature genres.

2. World Book Online Info Finder provides more than 40,000 encyclopedia and reference articles to help school-aged patrons with homework and research.

3. World Book Online for Kids featuring easy-to-read articles, engaging multimedia, science projects, and interactive games and tools designed to encourage younger children to explore and learn.
Ingram Launches New e-Content Platform for Libraries

www.myilibrary.com

MyiLibrary is a new e-content aggregation platform for public, academic, and professional libraries around the world. This platform offers organizations the ability to acquire and access digital content on an individual title, publisher-specific, or subject collection basis, based on their unique requirements and resources.

With more than 175,000 titles currently available, covering all major disciplines, and an additional 5,000 titles being added monthly, MyiLibrary is one of the fastest-growing and most comprehensive online e-content platforms on the market today.

The easy-to-navigate user interface allows for fast access to electronic information. This is supported by flexible authentication, comprehensive search and retrieval capabilities, and the ability for individual users to annotate and store searches and notes for access at a later date.

WAN Optimization Made Easy

www.exinda.com

The Exinda wide area network (WAN) optimization appliance allows organizations to instantly gain deep visibility into all network activity and identify why applications are performing poorly on the WAN. Providing network visibility, control and optimization in a single, affordable, plug-and-play appliance, Exinda allows organizations to rapidly identify bottlenecks, control recreational traffic, and intelligently accelerate applications.

Brodart Offers New Lending Library Options

www.brodart.com

Brodart has teamed with Public Information Kiosk (PIKinc.) to offer library patrons a convenient way to access material—through library vending-type machines called the Lending Library.

The Lending Library distribution machine, developed by PIKinc.,

Certification!

If you have...
• An MSLS degree (ALA-accredited, or accredited by the national body of another country)
• At least three years supervisory experience

Move your career to the next level!

Certified Public Library Administrator Candidates gain skills in:
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• Management of Technology
• Organizational and Personnel Administration
• Planning and Management of Buildings
• Current issues
• Fundraising
• Marketing
• Politics and Networking
• Service to Diverse Populations

For more information, visit www.ala-apa.org/certification/cpla.html or call 800-545-2433, x2424. Reviews are quarterly. See the website for details.

candidates say...
“I am more confident and better prepared.”
“I believe I would not have been able to advance in this profession without this class.”
“The course enabled me to see what other libraries are accomplishing or struggling with.”
delivers popular titles in remote locations such as park-and-ride lots, transportation stations, shopping malls, grocery stores, recreation centers, and other public places. Using the machine—set up much like a traditional vending machine offering snacks or candy—a library customer merely scans his or her library card, chooses an item to borrow using corresponding buttons on the machine, and receives the item through the door located at the bottom.

The machines will offer a rotating collection of the latest popular material, through a subscription from McNaughton, a division of Brodart, which offers high-circulating library materials. Based on the type of plan the library chooses, library cardholders will be able to access popular paperback or hardcover books, DVDs, Spanish-language materials, or audiobooks for either adult or young adult audiences.

**FireSign Digital Signage in Libraries**

[www.firesign.net](http://www.firesign.net)

FireSign digital signage captures the attention of your visitors and builds community awareness of new resources, announces special events, encourages lifelong learning, and directs patrons to upcoming activities.

FireSign has an intuitive user interface that makes it easy for library staff to update images, text, and schedules from virtually any location. The custom database connections further reduce the need for staff involvement by automatically pulling information into the library’s FireSign system.

**ProQuest Announces New Digital Library Resource for African American Genealogical Research**

[www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)

ProQuest announces a new digital library resource dedicated to the unique needs of African American genealogical research. Scheduled to be available in fall of 2009, ProQuest African American Heritage provides key genealogical and historical records specific to tracing the lives of African Americans. The resource includes a critical set of research and social networking tools that address the common genealogy need for research guidance, personal assistance, and mentoring.

**3M Library Systems Introduces Digital Signage for Libraries**

[www.3mdigitalsignage.com](http://www.3mdigitalsignage.com)

3M Library Systems announced the release of 3M Digital Signage, a communication platform that allows users to upload content to a secure portal and create an online schedule for the displays. The information will be displayed within minutes of the completed schedule and can be programmed days, weeks, months, or years in advance.

Media content options for this communications system include MP3, Flash, URLs, and QuickTime. Additionally, the 3M Digital Signage will be installed by 3M Library Systems trained technicians who ensure the system is set up and operating properly, making the transition to digital signage as easy as possible.

**TeachingBooks.net Launches Free Resource Center on Authors and Illustrators**

[www.teachingbooks.net](http://www.teachingbooks.net)

On the eve of the fortieth anniversary celebration of the Coretta Scott King Book Award, TeachingBooks.net is launching the Coretta Scott King Book Award Curriculum Resource Center, a free online resource center for educators, libraries, and families, featuring more than 250 original recordings with the award-winning authors and illustrators, as well as hundreds of lesson plans. The resource center was developed to assemble teaching materials that connect the award-winning books to the curriculum in any classroom, and to add a multimedia dimension to reading activities for any library, academic, or book enthusiast.

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Twenty years ago, this breed didn’t exist.
Now it’s 636.728.

Twenty years ago there were no books, videos or periodicals that even mentioned the lowly labradoodle. Because back then, the breed didn’t exist. Now, labradoodles find their happy home at 636.728. New concepts come into our world all the time—like fuel cell vehicles, online social networks and yes, even labradoodles—and Dewey editors keep pace with all of these updates and much, much more.

So if you want your catalog to stay up with the times (and not go to the dogs), sign up today for a free trial of WebDewey at www.oclc.org/dewey/dogs/.

It’s a big world, we’ve organized it.
LIFETIME GUARANTEED LIBRARY BINDING
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POPULAR, HIGH-CIRCULATING TITLES
CATALOGING GUARANTEED
PREBIND-ON-DEMAND

In your library, popular titles get a lot of wear-and-tear and eventually require maintenance, tape, and glue to hold them together, or worse yet they have to be replaced. Paw Prints will free you of buying replacements due to overuse by offering you a lifetime guarantee for the binding! All materials and methods used to create Paw Prints meet or exceed the Library Binding Institute standards.

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Paw Prints editions are found by entering “Paw Prints” in the Publisher search box in the Title Source™ 3 or School Selection ordering databases. Titles are in stock for quick fulfillment on your orders, and new titles are always available.

All Paw Prints titles are selected based on their popularity for libraries, such as high-visibility authors or series and graphic novels. However, if your library would like an additional title to be available as a Paw Prints edition just let us know at PawPrints@btol.com.