Introducing

INDIGO

Beautiful software.

How will you Indigo?

_Invent. Design. Go._

www.seeindigo.com
Features

42 Folksonomies
Path to a Better Way?
Sharon L. Cosentino
This article provides practical tips for librarians using social bookmarking sites and details how the folksonomic site Library Thing may be a great enriching feature to OPACs, mixing grassroots categories with Library of Congress Subject Headings.

50 GLBT Programming at the Dallas Public Library
Lessons Learned
Catherine Ritchie, David Fettke, and Dale McNeill
In 2005, a systemwide committee composed of Dallas Public Library employees began a yearly programming series targeted toward the city’s gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. The author describes the committee’s genesis and the challenges it faced.

55 Open Access and Science
New Paths for Public Libraries
Nadine Dalton Speidel
Details the open access movement in libraries, a movement that advocates for the availability of information, especially scholarly information in the form of research articles and journals, to anyone in need, with minimal restriction.

64 What Do I Hear?
eBay’s Utility in a Library
Joseph R. Zumalt and Alison (Scott) Konieczny
The online auction site eBay can be useful to libraries in many ways. The author provides easy-to-use strategies and tips for using eBay in the library.

Departments

4 News from PLA
Kathleen Hughes

5 On the Agenda

7 From the President
Jan Sanders

13 Tales from the Front
Jennifer T. Ries-Taggart

16 Perspectives
Nanci Milone Hill

25 Book Talk
Brendan Dowling

29 Internet Spotlight
Michael Porter and David Lee King

33 Bringing in the Money
Lee Price

40 Passing Notes
Michael Garrett Farrelly

72 By The Book
Julie Elliott

78 New Product News
Vicki Nesting

Extras

2 Editor’s Note
2 Readers Respond
10 Verso—Keeping It Weird—A City, A State of Mind . . . A Library Program?
41 Index to Advertisers
Editor’s Note

Dear readers:

I hope you were able to attend the recent PLA conference, which by most accounts was an excellent learning experience, leaving attendees excited and rejuvenated. If you were not able to make it, check out the PLA blog (www.plablog.org) to read comprehensive coverage of many of the diverse programs and events that took place during the event.

This issue of Public Libraries also offers a diversity of articles, from a discussion of folksonomies to the open access movement in libraries, from lessons learned in GLBT programming to using eBay in the library, you’ll find a nice mix of library learning. You also won’t want to miss Brendan Dowling’s interview with up-and-coming YA author Abby Sher (Book Talk) and Alison Kastner’s “weird” contribution to our Verso column.

Have you been thinking about writing an article for PL? We’d love to hear what your library is up to. Feel free to contact me at khughes@ala.org with questions or comments. I look forward to hearing about your library!

Kathleen M. Hughes
Editor

Kudos on YA-Themed Issue

My compliments on the January/February theme issue of Public Libraries on young adult services in public libraries. It is really superb, and will become a staple of my YA services class at Queens College’s GSLIS for some time to come. Those of us who have labored in the trenches of the profession on behalf of teens for years (over 30 in my case), often in opposition to our own colleagues’ myopia, are ecstatic to see others share and extend our commitment to this important developmental/age group. It has long been my not-so-humble opinion that YA librarians (or those often serving YAs without the title) are among the most creative in the profession, and this issue underscores that reality. While I can’t afford to retire yet, I can start resting in peace ahead of time, thanks to initiatives like this one. Thanks to you and all the authors for a job well done.—Mary K. Chelton (world’s oldest living YA librarian), GSLIS/Queens College, CUNY
Chaos
Order

Pioneers and leaders of Automated Material Sorting and Patron Self-checkout for libraries.
Any size library. Any ILS. Barcode or RFID technology.

Tech Logic: bringing order to your library chaos.

www.techlogic.com
800.494.9330

Often imitated. Never equaled.
PLA 12th National Conference Draws Thousands to Minneapolis

Nearly 10,000 library staff, supporters, exhibitors, authors, and guests descended on the Minneapolis Convention Center from March 25–29 for PLA 2008. The conference offered attendees a variety of programming focused on key issues such as technology; serving adults, youth and new Americans; gaming in libraries; library design; and collection development.

A series of preconferences were held before the conference, and included a luncheon hosted by author Meg Cabot, best known for The Princess Diaries series. Other preconference speakers included author and Librarian Action Figure model Nancy Pearl in “Book Buzz,” where she lead a lively discussion on some of the best upcoming books with publisher representatives from HarperCollins, Macmillan, Hachette, Milkweed Editions (a local Minneapolis publisher), and Random House.

The opening general session featured philanthropist and author John Wood, founder and CEO of Room to Read, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children in the developing world through the power of education. Wood discussed the inspiration for his organization and his grand vision to provide educational access to ten million children in the developing world through his inspirational and novel approach to nonprofit management. Best-selling travel experts and authors Arthur Frommer and daughter Pauline Frommer spoke to a luncheon crowd of more than seven hundred attendees. The Frommers also shared various tips and recommendations for traveling overseas and within the U.S. on a budget. In front of a packed ballroom, children’s author luncheon keynote speakers, award-winning author Pat Mora and illustrator Raúl Colón (collaborators on children’s favorites Doña Flor and Tomás and the Library Lady), discussed the inspirations behind their work as well as the importance of librarians’ optimistic nature. Other conference speakers included: novelist Louise Erdrich; best-selling author Jacqueline Winspear; actor, screenwriter and audiobook narrator Scott Brick; and Books on Tape Executive Producer Dan Musselman.

Virtual Conference Attracts Librarians Unable to Travel

New to the conference this year was the PLA Virtual Conference. Those who were not able to attend the conference in Minnesota had an opportunity to join their colleagues through the Web. Nearly two hundred online subscribers participated in such activities as live, interactive webcasts and workshops, online poster sessions, access to handouts and other presentation materials, and both general and subject-focused discussion boards. Each day featured five live programs, chosen from the selections available to in-person conference attendees. In addition, the virtual conference featured special events, such as “A Conversation with Nancy Pearl,” an interactive question-and-answer session with Pearl, and “Inside the Author’s Studio,” an author interview program, which featured romance novelist Connie Brockway and mystery writer Laura Lippman and was led by Booklist’s Donna Seaman.

PLA 2008 Hosts Turning the Page Event for PLA Members

Turning the Page: Building Your Library Community prepares libraries with the skills, confidence, and resources needed to create community partnerships, build alliances with local and regional decision-makers, and ultimately increase library funding. This event, generally offered only to Opportunity Online hardware grantees, was available free of charge to PLA members who attended PLA 2008 in Minneapolis, thanks to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Nearly two hundred members attended the two-day learning event, which took place on Tuesday, March 25 and Wednesday, March 26. Visit www.SustainingLibraries.org for more information.

3M Leadership Institute Preconference Offered to PLA Members

Approximately eighty PLA members were selected to attend a leadership institute hosted by 3M on Tuesday, March 25 preceding the PLA 12th National Conference in Minneapolis. The event, which took place at 3M’s famed Innovation Center, gave attendees the opportunity to learn about developing leadership skills and fostering change within their libraries. All costs to attend the leadership institute were covered by 3M.
The conference also offered access to hundreds of exhibiting companies including top book publishers, who showcased the latest in products and services for public libraries and their users. Comedian and author Paula Poundstone brought the conference to a close on Saturday, March 29. For more information on PLA 2008, visit www.placonference.org or visit www.plablog.org to read comprehensive reports of programs, author events, social events, and more.

Jamie Lee Curtis to Keynote PLA President’s Program at ALA Annual Conference
PLA is pleased to announce that actor and author Jamie Lee Curtis will present the keynote address at the PLA President’s Program and Awards Presentation at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in Anaheim, California. The program will take place on Monday, June 30 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Curtis is the author of several children’s books, including Is There Really a Human Race?, It’s Hard to Be Five, I’m Gonna Like Me, Where Do Balloons Go?, Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day, Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born, and When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old’s Memoir of Her Youth.

PLA is pleased to present Curtis through the support of HarperCollins Children’s Books and as part of the ALA Auditorium Speakers Series. A gala, music-filled reception will follow her talk and the awards presentation. For more information on the PLA President’s Program, contact the PLA office at (800) 545-2433, ext. SPLA, or visit PLA’s website at www.pla.org.

2008 PLDS Order Forms Available Online
The Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Statistical Report, a project of PLA, is designed to meet the needs of public library administrators and others for timely and effective library-specific data that illuminates and supports a wide variety of management decisions. Published annually, the PLDS report presents exclusive, timely data from more than eight hundred public libraries across the United States and Canada on finances, library resources, annual use figures, and technology. In addition to these valuable topics, each year’s edition contains a special survey highlighting statistics on one service area or topic. The 2008 PLDS report will be available at ALA’s Annual Conference in Anaheim. Order forms are available on pages 48 and 49 of this issue of PL and also are online at www.pla.org for both the 2008 print version and the PLDS database.

CPLA Courses Scheduled Throughout 2008
The Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) program is a voluntary post-MLS certification program for public librarians with three or more years of supervisory experience. However, librarians do not have to be enrolled in the certification program to take advantage of CPLA courses. This series of continuing education programs meets both the requirements for CPLA certification and the needs of librarians wanting to enhance their managerial skills. The nine PLA-sponsored CPLA courses are designed to give public librarians a solid foundation and working knowledge of core functions performed at the administrator-level, and include workshops focused on strategic HR, budget and finance, management of technology, planning and management of buildings, marketing, current issues, fund-raising, politics and networking, and serving diverse populations. Seven courses are scheduled for the remainder of 2008 in locations around the country. New courses are being scheduled regularly. Visit www.pla.org for complete CPLA information.

PLA Announces Dates for 2009 Spring Symposium and 2010 National Conference
The PLA Spring Symposium will be held April 2–4, 2009 in Nashville, Tennessee at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel. The symposium will feature intensive day-and-a-half long workshops focused on subjects pertinent to public libraries and public librarians, as well as an opening general session, an author luncheon, and area library tours. Registration and housing will open in early September 2008. Stay tuned to www.pla.org for more information.

PLA 2010, the 13th National Conference, will be held in Portland, Oregon, March 23–27, 2010. Visit the PLA website periodically for additional information.

On the Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALA Annual Conference</td>
<td>June 26–July 2, 2008</td>
<td>Anaheim, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALA Midwinter Meeting</td>
<td>January 23–28, 2009</td>
<td>Denver, Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA Spring Symposium</td>
<td>April 2–4, 2009</td>
<td>Nashville, Tennessee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
$2,500 grants now available
Application Deadline: July 15, 2008

The ALA Public Programs Office is pleased to invite public library applications for Let’s Talk About It: Love and Forgiveness programming grants.

Participating libraries will promote and present a five-part literary discussion series led by a local scholar and based on one of three themes. Successful applicants will receive training for the library project director at a national workshop, program and promotional materials, and a $2,500 grant to support program costs, scholar honoraria and travel to the workshop.

Themes include:
- Love and Forgiveness in the Presence of the Enemy
- Love, Forgiveness, and Wisdom
- Love and Forgiveness in the Light of Death

Applications are due July 15, 2008. To download an application and complete guidelines, visit www.ala.org/publicprograms. To request an application by mail, or with questions about applying, email publicprograms@ala.org.

At a time of such love, such rapture, such self-sacrifice, what do any of our quarrels and affronts matter? I love and forgive everybody now.

– LEO TOLSTOY. WAR AND PEACE
Happy spring! It’s late enough that even those of you in the icebound north and east should be seeing a few signs of the thaw. Here’s to spotting that robin and crocus leaf real soon!

Recently, I was catching up on some professional reading and came upon a treatise from the ever-opinionated John (“LJ”) Berry. His remarks, published in the February 15, 2008, Library Journal are titled, “The Vanishing Librarians.” He opines that librarians are quickly becoming a dying breed, that personal service and one-on-one conversations are being replaced by self-serve desks and automated responses. Further, he states that OCLC has taken over the cataloging function, and that a small in-house selection team or (horrors!) vendors are actually selecting the bulk of titles to be added to local collections. To come full circle he states that since libraries need fewer and fewer professional librarians on staff, management itself can now pass to non-professional librarians serving as CEOs. (Witness both Kansas City Public Library and Memphis Public Library and Information Center.) While I am not so naïve as to assume that I might change the mind of the illustrious Mr. Berry, I would offer the following for consideration.

First, let me say that I am a product of a very strong public-library-focused graduate program at Indiana University. In addition, I defined myself as a professional early on in the game and have spent decades supporting the profession and its attendant organizations, both state and national. I believe that our work is a profession and that it requires specialized knowledge and understanding. However, do the changes Berry notes signal the death of that professionalism? I don’t think so.

One of the reasons users love their libraries (especially their branch libraries) is the personal contact and familiarity they feel when they enter. How can we promote that? Even enrich it? Many library leaders have turned to a reduction of rote tasks to lighten work loads and free up face time with customers. Installing self-serve checkout stations, automated computer reservation systems, and headset telephone devices that operate wirelessly and thus prevent staff being tethered to a service desk—all these create the freedom for personal attention and response. Surely the ability to work one-on-one with our users makes us better librarians, not weaker ones.

When you talk about professional duties, the most visceral response often is elicited by any change to the holy ground of book selection. Librarians have traditionally and faithfully evaluated their communities, defined needs and levels of interest, and been able to secure the titles and subjects needed.
We’re good at that. We’ve been trained to do it well. But, like many efforts, book selection often falls under the 20/80 rule: 20 percent of the result demanding 80 percent of the effort. That is to say, many of our purchases are relatively standard-issue: bestsellers, known authors, continuations or series, local writers, and the like. These additions need no deliberation, users expect to find them on our shelves, and we’re happy to fill that expectation. Why not, then, follow the successful lead of our friends in the bookstores and set up templates for buying these titles? Let the professional selectors spend their calories evaluating the total scope of the collection and determining its appropriateness today. Not historically, today. Skimming off the listings of must-haves does not, in my opinion, weaken the work of the selector; it merely gives time and space for real concentration and evaluation.

And what of the most egregious crime—hiring a non-librarian as executive director? Troublesome? Yes. Fatal? Probably not. We all know that every library needs different leadership styles and skills dependent on its current development path. Some directors are fundraisers and builders, some strong on planning and staff development, some good at maintenance and solidarity. I’ve watched for years as large institutions traded one library leader for another as their needs changed. Ours is a very incestuous profession: directors know each other, share insights and opinions, and sometimes even suggest the right fit for a job. Sometimes those who lead library boards or municipalities feel a stronger business approach is needed, or someone with political ties that serve a different clientele, or whatever. Does filling a library executive director’s job with those qualifications make that leader any less viable to the community being served? I’m not sure it does. What I do know is that a traditionally trained professional librarian has a broader understanding of our issues, concerns, and possible solutions. Such a person also has (one would suppose) a strong background in library trends and best practices. Would such a person be a solid, strong choice as library leader? Of course. Is such a person the only choice? Probably not. Now, maybe it’s time for directors to take a look at library leadership and determine if our own vision is becoming a bit too myopic. Food for thought.

At the end of the day, I am not threatened or frightened by current directions and alterations within the profession. For years we’ve asked our users to adapt to changing formats and methods of delivery. We’ve asked staff to alter the way they perform for greater effectiveness and efficiency. Certainly libraries as institutions have evolved and reinvented themselves throughout the last fifty years. The challenge is for us as a group to meet the changes imposed upon us, fashion them to meet our strategic goals, and thus enhance—not undermine—the qualities that we believe make us the professionals we are. 

FROM THE PRESIDENT

PUBLIC LIBRARIES
What’s the next best thing to having a techie at your library?

Using a FREE MaintainIT Cookbook, packed full of ideas, tips, and techniques from libraries across the country, of course!

Look inside the Joy of Computing: Recipes for a 5-Star Library:

**WIRELESS**

“The wireless network is on a totally different network — actually, two different networks—because every wireless access point that we have is divided into two areas, the public and the private. Both of those are on separate networks from the public terminal network. Now, the user never knows that. I mean, it still gets them to the Internet, it still gets them to the same services that they’re trying to get to, they just don’t realize that they’re on totally different networks.”

*Jim Bustin*

*Auburn Public Library, AL*

---

**PRINT MANAGEMENT**

“We found out how to add a new printer to the computer from our Internet Services Department. And one library printed up this information sheet for patrons on how to add and connect to a printer wirelessly.” (Instructions inside!)

*Eliza Wingate*

*Mendocino County Library, CA*

---

**LAPTOP CHECKOUT**

“All the systems are security engraved in numerous places, and all serial numbers are kept in our database. To stop them from walking out of the door, I have placed visible and not so visible security tags on them that will trigger the alarm system when they are taken out of the building. We do not allow patrons to take them outside. The laptop bags also have two or three security tags in them, so if someone does try to steal one, they would have to find at least six or seven tags to get over all the security!”

*Terry Caudle*

*Madisonville Public Library, TN*

---

Your experiences count. Take a moment to get in touch and tell us about your library. Remember, what may be “that’s nothing” to you may be an “aha!” to someone else!

Get in touch: maintainit@techsoup.org

The MaintainIT Project is a part of TechSoup (www.techsoup.org), a nonprofit serving fellow nonprofits and public libraries with technology information, resources, and product donations. The MaintainIT Project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
Keeping It Weird

A City, A State of Mind . . . A Library Program?

People who move to Portland, Oregon, inevitably fall in love with the place. Though frequent rain is not one of its most endearing qualities, it might well be the reason why there are vibrant subcultures happily growing like mold in the grey corners of the city. Two librarians created a library program based on the quirkiness of their city.

How weird is your community? I was on my typical commute from home to my library job in downtown Portland, passing the usual suspects—on the Broadway Bridge I paused for a coffee with Shift to Bikes, a group that provides breakfast for bike commuters; I passed the Elvis impersonator who busks on the corner across from Powell’s City of Books; I listened briefly to the group of men who sing gospel music kitty-corner to the library.

At the reference desk I noticed that the School and Community Resource Action Project (SCRAP) was gathering in our meeting room—they focus on recycling paper waste materials for art education. Later in the day a patron asked to see our zine collection, which reminded me of the Independent Publishing Resource Center, an organization that helps people publish their creative work. Back at home reading the paper, I noticed that the Sacred Harp Singers were inviting people to sing with them at the pub around the corner. It suddenly occurred to me that the whole of Portland should be a library program. With so many interesting and odd organizations, why not a whole day of showcasing them?

Our library’s strategic plan emphasizes outreach to the community, the library as a meeting place, and educational opportunities for everyone. A day of highlighting local organizations would fulfill all these goals. And then there was the added plus of not having to pay a lot of money for the program. We would invite groups to come and talk about what they do and why. People would learn about their community and perhaps join these organizations. As my colleague Stephanie Miller and I solidified the plan, we decided to emphasize hands-on activities. We really didn't want the kind of event where exhibitors sit all day, bored out of their minds, waiting for someone to ask a question. We also didn't want to confine the activities to our meeting room, away from the life of the library. Instead we wanted to hold it on all three public floors. Ideally, we'd put groups near the sections where they would be shelved if they were books.

We decided early on to focus on nonprofits and to avoid organizations with religious or political affiliations—we couldn't afford to leave anyone out
if we opened that door. We planned for a couple of crowd-drawing events to ensure that people would enjoy themselves and stick around to visit the tables. As an added bonus, Stephanie came up with the idea of giving away reusable book/grocery bags printed with the library’s logo and “Keep Portland Weird.” Reusable bags are all the rage in green Portland.

So we had a plan—now to find the participants. Luckily, one barely has to scratch the surface of Portland to get to the “weird.” Our original list included The Zoobombers—a group of guerrilla bikers who head up to the zoo five hundred feet above the city, only to “bomb” down the hill at top speed. We have a local chapter of the Cacophony Society, a group dedicated to Dadaistic events, because . . . well . . . just because. They are best known in Portland for SantaCon, in which Santa-clad members go on an extended pub crawl. Portland’s Bicycle Transportation Alliance not only advocates for bike commuters, but also hosts the World Naked Bike Ride each year. And then there’s the Oregon Friends of Jung, the Dixieland Jazz Society (devoted to the preservation of traditional jazz), the Portland Ukulele Association, the Old Library Studio (helping kids to compose, record, and produce their own music), the Carnivorous Plant Society, and so on. The only real issue would be to narrow down the field to fit them all in.

We compiled our list and sent out invitations to the party. The responses were enthusiastic. Soon we had a lineup that included robots, self-proclaimed computer geeks, urban chicken keepers, wild-food foragers, calligraphers, and zinesters. Due to the generous support of our Library Foundation, we were able to hire a couple of big acts to perform during the day to keep up the momentum: the band Sneakin’ Out would provide their eclectic mix of heavy metal and pop tunes performed on mandolin, bass, glockenspiel, and typewriter; the Portland Ukulele Association would give mass ukulele lessons to all comers. There would also be yoga instruction and a demonstration by the Urban Berbers, a belly-dancing troupe.

We were content with the lineup, but not everything was to go so smoothly. Problem number one: As it turns out, the slogan “Keep Portland Weird” is actually owned by Music Millennium, a local music store. They got the idea from Austin, Texas. “Keep Austin Weird” began as a way to encourage people to shop locally. Music Millennium thought the idea would work well in Portland and produced t-shirts and bumper stickers, many of which can be seen on cars in the city. The name seemed ideal for our festival, and our research showed that the trademark had expired. Reasoning that the slogan had entered the Portland lexicon, we plowed ahead. To our surprise we got a letter from Music Millennium a week before the festival asking us to describe the event. Apparently, the copyright was still active on the state level. When the owners understood the spirit of the festival, they graciously granted us a one-time use of the phrase “Keep Portland Weird” for one dollar.

Problem number two: We didn’t have a lot of money for newspaper ads. We decided to rely on posting to blogs, craigslist, and promoting the event on our library website. We hoped that the catchiness of the title and the appeal of our participants would generate publicity. The bet paid off. The Oregonian published...
a lengthy story about the upcoming festival titled “Keep Portland Weird? That’s the Slogan—Don’t Wear it Out” that gave us some much needed public relations. We tried to forgive them for indulging in predictable stereotyping when the author wrote, “Keep Portland Weird” will hit what may be the ultimate in mainstream: The Multnomah County Library is holding a festival to celebrate the concept.” Later, just to rub it in a bit, she posed the question, “Should ‘Keep Portland Weird’ backers really be celebrating the fact that the phrase is now so mainstream it’s being embraced by librarians? If everyone is weird, is anyone?” Although we weren’t that keen on being thought of as the “ultimate in mainstream,” we decided to embrace the “all publicity is good publicity” philosophy.

There were a few other hiccups: The Cacophony Society, the organization given to random acts of oddness, decided at the last minute not to come. In some ways it was a bit of a relief, given that we weren’t quite sure what they planned to do, other than their stated intention of “messing with people.” We had given them the green light to mess with people all they liked as long as they complied with our rules of behavior. Come to think of it, that might have been the determining factor in their absence.

The City Repair Project, a grassroots initiative to make Portland more livable, wanted to hand out free tea and asked to be near a bathroom where they could wash mugs. As a large urban library, we cringed at the thought of someone washing dishes in our public restrooms—we provided paper cups instead. They opted not to give out the tea rather than commit the sin of using disposable containers. And we weren’t aware until they were waving in the air that the Urban Berbers, the belly-dancing troupe, uses swords in one of their dances. Luckily the audience left with all body parts intact.

Looking around on the day of the event, we were thrilled with the response to the festival. Approximately seven hundred people learned how to find fiddleheads in the wild. They learned about keeping chickens in the city. They admired the costumes of the Regency society ladies, who gave away free fans. Quite a few brought their own ukes to the ukulele lessons, which ended with a rousing rendition of “Have You Seen the Ghost of Tom?” Kids crowded around the talking robots, and many people walked away with a sample of their names written in calligraphy. Stephanie and I were both exhausted and pleased, but we did manage to stay up for the segment about the festival on the 11 o’clock news—a time when most “mainstream” librarians are safely tucked away in bed.

Portland likes to wear its weirdness on its sleeve, but perhaps your own community is hiding a wealth of weirdness that is waiting to be tapped. Now that we’ve recovered somewhat from the event, we’re thinking about another one. After all, we’ve barely scratched the surface. What about the Barefoot Hikers? PDX Dorkbot? The American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers? The Portland Cello Project? The Church of Craft? Well, you get the picture.

References
2. Ibid., 1.
3. Ibid., 15.
West Oakland Library Shuttle Is Launched

Children in West Oakland, California, are riding a free shuttle to the library. The West Oakland Library Shuttle Program, initiated in September 2007, transports preschool and kindergarten students, teachers, and parents from their schools and preschools to the West Oakland Branch of the Oakland Public Library (WOB/OPL). Without the program, the children would have to pay bus fare or walk up to a mile to reach the nearest public library.

The West Oakland Library Shuttle is funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission through their Lifeline Transportation Program (LTP). LTP is designed to improve transportation for low-income people in the San Francisco Bay Area. Alameda County Congestion Management Agency Executive Director Dennis Fay states, “The flexibility of the Lifeline Transportation Program makes it possible to address the transportation needs of low-income residents in innovative ways. We are pleased to fund the West Oakland Library Shuttle Program to provide a critical transportation link between Oakland residents and the library.”

The $150,000 program is expected to transport more than 1,500 children, parents, and schoolteachers to the library over three years. The students will be picked up by bus from two elementary schools and eight preschools and transported to WOB/OPL on special buses. Oakland Librarian Catherine Francioch states, “The program has a ripple effect. Once the children come to the library, we see them returning with their siblings, parents, and grandparents.”

When the children are at the library, the librarian and her assistant conduct special story times to expose them to the joy of books and reading. During their visits the children also learn how to use the library and discover the other resources it has to offer. Francioch states, “Studies have shown that being exposed to the library at a young age helps ensure the children’s future success. The program is an ideal partnership between transportation agencies and educators.”

The West Oakland Library Shuttle is the successor to a previous grant-funded effort that the library instituted several years ago. For more information, contact Catherine Francioch at (510) 238–7352.

Immigrants Start a New Chapter

The Lexington (Ky.) Public Library has embarked on a two-year project to help recent immigrants become engaged citizens. The project is funded by a $50,000 American Dream Fund grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and will involve programs both at the library’s Village Branch and throughout the community.
“Starting a New Chapter” focuses on four areas of improvement: information services, improved coordination of services, a new mobile computer lab, and youth development. The project will address these areas by way of:

- monthly sessions on a variety of topics in an effort to connect immigrants to services available to them;
- eight new laptop computers that will allow the Village Branch to expand training. Classes will focus on studying for the GED, acquiring American citizenship, computer skills, and English as a Second Language; and
- ten sessions presented to youth using Aikido to teach self-confidence, virtue, and health. Each session will last eight weeks.

A part-time community services coordinator will be hired to manage Starting a New Chapter. For more information, contact Doug Tattershall, marketing department, at (859) 231-5515.

The Knight Foundation promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of twenty-six U.S. communities. The Knight Foundation is the American Dream Fund’s sole contributor. For more information, contact Larry Meyer, vice president of communications, at (305) 908-2610.

Read a Bestseller without the Wait!

Several best-selling titles have been selected and offered at all six locations of the Des Moines (Iowa) Public Library as part of the library’s Bestseller Express program. For just one dollar, these titles may be rented for one week. There will be no reserves and no renewals on these selected titles. Only two Bestseller Express books may be checked out at a time per customer. Customers willing to wait can still follow the usual procedures to reserve their copy.

For more information, call the Des Moines Public Library at (515) 283-4152 or visit www.desmoineslibrary.com.

Project Backpack

Knott’s Kids Project Bookpack, one of Jefferson County (Colo.) Public Library’s children’s literacy programs funded by the Jefferson County Library Foundation (JCLF), provides books to dozens of children who might not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy them. Project Bookpack brings books to children in care centers such as safe houses, transitional housing, and specialized daycare.

“Most of us take a book for granted; we can check one out at the library or buy one,” said John Walsh, director of JCLF. “Some kids in our community don’t have that luxury. Project Bookpack, a joint partnership between the library and Library Foundation, makes books available to these children so they can also experience the joy of reading a good book.”

Currently there are eight backpacks in circulation and each holds twenty books. Project Bookpack visits schools and programs with higher percentages of children who qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Knott’s Kids Project Bookpack expands the curiosity of children ages 6–12 through books, story times, and activities. For more information, contact Jackie Powers, director of public information, at (303) 275-2203 or e-mail jpowers@jefferson.lib.co.us.

Volunteer Speed Matching at the Library

In order to help nonprofits rethink their volunteer offerings to attract baby boomers, the Northland (Pa.) Public Library hosted a Volunteer Speed Matching event. They decided that a speed match event would be a fun way to help match local nonprofits in need of volunteers with community members looking for meaningful volunteer opportunities.

The event was scheduled on a Friday night in the summer (when the library was closed to the public) and was advertised as a wine and cheese social (a special occasion permit was requested from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board).

After enjoying late afternoon snacks and wine, interested boomer volunteers spent about five minutes in a speed interview talking with up to sixteen various agencies to learn more about volunteer opportunities at each organization.

Twenty-seven people showed up for the event, and the responses from agencies and attendees were overwhelmingly positive. The timekeeper rang a bell to start the first session. After three minutes, the bell would ring again and it would be time to move on to another agency. The bell continued to ring at three-minute intervals until the event was over an hour and a half later. At the end of the event, there were twenty-five potential volunteers.
Pierce County Library System Shares Story with Kids Worldwide

From Kenya, Japan, and Chile to Graham, Parkland, and Bellingham in Washington State, children throughout the world shared the same story on the same day during the fall 2007 We Share a Story program.

Pierce County (Wash.) Library System (PCLS), in cooperation with Bellingham Public Library, sponsored this celebration of reading and worldwide community. On November 13, 2007, students in kindergarten through sixth grade in classrooms worldwide shared a story and participated in an international art project.

“The concept is to connect children throughout the world with a common bond,” said Judy Nelson, youth services coordinator for PCLS. “Whether a child is sitting in a dirt-floor classroom in Liberia sharing one copy of the book or in a desk in a school in Pierce County with copies of the book for each student—all the kids will connect to share information, a story, and artwork.”

We Share a Story participants read the award-winning folktale, Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia, by Won-Ldy Paye and Margaret Lippert. The tale is a delightful story about cultural diversity and highlights uniqueness and the importance of cooperation.

Following the worldwide reading, the students did an art project, decorating paper body parts—head, body, and legs. The children then separated the body parts and mailed them to PCLS.

Teen volunteers will sort the paper body parts and then mail parts from one part of the world back to another by spring 2008. Thus, kids in England may receive paper heads from children in Morocco, paper bodies from kids in Brazil, and paper legs from kids in Pierce County. Then the students will fit the new body parts into a whole body.

Participating classrooms are located in Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Denmark, England, Ethiopia, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, Rwanda, the United States (Washington State), Venezuela, and Zambia.

For more information, contact Mary Getchell, PCLS communications director, at (253) 536-6500, ext. 136, or e-mail mgetchell@piercountylibrary.org.
To MLS or Not to MLS?

That Is the Question

There has been much debate among those in our profession about the need for an MLS degree. Some question whether or not library schools are doing enough to prepare students for the challenges they will face and the roles they will fill as they enter the workforce. Many question whether or not enough technology is being taught to students. Many of these same people question whether or not actual experience working in a library may perhaps better prepare one to work in the field. Others stand by the importance of the degree, noting that while hands-on experience may be gained on the job, it is only in library school that one learns the cornerstones of belief that public library services are based upon. Still others question the cost of earning an MLS degree given the salary those librarians will be receiving for their efforts. And there are those who still yet argue that the cost of the degree makes it virtually impossible for us to attract diversity into the field. Take a look at what some of your peers have had to say on the subject, and then decide for yourself.

Library Schools Need to Beef Up Offerings

JILL MCCONNELL, MLS, ASSISTANT REFERENCE LIBRARIAN, LAURI ANN WEST MEMORIAL LIBRARY, PITTSBURGH; MCCONNELL@EINWORK.NET

Considering I’m still paying on the loan that helped me get my MLS seven years ago, I’m reluctant to say that having an MLS isn’t necessary. After some thought, though, I have to admit that I don’t think it is in many cases. There are many people working in libraries of all sizes that do not have this degree and yet are very successful at serving the needs of their constituents. Library schools often miss the boat when it comes to course offerings, so an MLS graduate doesn’t necessarily have the skills and knowledge that it takes to perform well in an actual library setting. With the exception of systems librarians, the MLS degree is often superfluous in the day-to-day activities of a public services or technical services librarian.
Having the MLS is not tantamount to being a good librarian. There are several members on staff at my library that do not have the MLS degree but who are very good at what they do. One staff member is a cataloger while the other two are department heads. And then there’s the staff member with the MLS who can’t even figure out how to use the copier half the time. So, an MLS does not a good librarian make, in my opinion. Instead, a good librarian is one who possesses a certain type of personality. He or she is friendly, intelligent, curious, tenacious, knowledgeable, and creative. No amount of education is going to instill these qualities in a person; he or she must be born with them.

Another reason why I don’t think having the MLS is necessary is the fact that much of what I do on a daily basis wasn’t even taught at my library school. Courses in public administration, marketing, public relations, and Web publishing would have been extremely helpful to me in the various positions I have held in public and academic libraries. Instead of being properly trained and educated in these areas, I’ve had to learn on my own by trial and error, which can be costly in both time and money.

It’s been a while since I have taken any library classes, so I thought I’d check to see if I’m way off base on this point. Unfortunately, a quick peek at my alma mater’s current course catalog confirms my fears that things really haven’t changed all that much. It lists one class in Web publishing and none in any of the other areas. I can’t speak for all MLS programs, but it appears that at least one school is more concerned with foundations of librarianship and information systems than course material that is actually applicable to working with the public on a daily basis in a library.

I am glad to see my alma mater step it up a bit as far as information systems courses are concerned. I do think having an MLS degree in this area is important. All of the behind-the-scenes work that goes on in libraries requires a lot of technical knowledge and ability. An advanced degree in this subject area is necessary so that libraries can remain on the cutting edge and provide their customers with the information they need in whatever format they need it. That’s probably why the MLS has often been upgraded to the MLIS with the emphasis now on the Information part of the degree program, whereas other areas of the profession have been glossed over.

Having said all of that, I don’t regret spending the time and money it took to get my MLS. I have enjoyed every single one of the positions I have held in libraries since receiving my degree. I would not have even been considered for those positions without it. For those who ask me what it takes to be a librarian, I tell them you have to have a master’s degree in library science. Those people are always at least a little bit impressed, and I am reminded about how proud I am to be a professional librarian who has the right to add MLS after her name.

What Is the Importance of the MLS Degree in Today’s Public Library World?

BARBARA ADRIANOPOLI, DIRECTOR, BRANCHES AND EXTENSION SERVICES, SCHALMUMB (ILL.) TOWNSHIP DISTRICT LIBRARY; BARRHA@STD.LORG

I have thought about this question now for some time. Actually, it has even haunted my sleep patterns. Having been a librarian for more than thirty years, I am looking at passing on my love for the library and its patrons to a younger generation. What do libraries need in this new era of podcasts, vodcasts (video podcasts), and avatars?

The public will not see us as important when they look at cutting their tax dollars, if we don’t stay abreast of their needs. Library schools are the only place where this total knowledge can be attained. I look at the new librarians and know that they will not only come out knowing the jargon of the day, but also the meaning of making the libraries 24/7 operations.

It is invaluable for patrons to learn that they can access magazine articles, consumer needs, professional needs, and books from their home computers. These are available because a librarian knew the electronic resource needed and how to use it. The library goes out and teaches how to download E-books, videos, and music—the new collection that is added to the limited space a building might offer. We have homework help as well as tutorials meeting in our libraries. We work with the schools to provide supplemental reading for the programs, and some of us are fortunate to have school systems that make sure a copy of each textbook is available at the local libraries for the many who sometimes are challenged. The new generation is computer savvy and looks to the computer for answers. Who would know what is available and what is good but a librarian who is constantly keeping up with what is new and the best for patrons? You don’t get this from a bachelor of arts degree, or a master’s in another field. The total knowledge of what is available on the Web, electronic resources, blogs, downloadable
materials, and books, or where to go for the information, is really only focused upon in an MLS degree.

We know that each generation brings new needs and often obtains information differently. Instead of records, you download; instead of reading a book, many like to download and then listen while running off to the gym or traveling to and from work. The generation and socioeconomic gap that is getting wider even in this country can only be bridged by libraries offering computers, discussion rooms, homework help, and all of the resources many would be without except for us. The library is there to offer this new world. It cannot be dated. There are still ink print readers and parents who love curling up on a big chair and reading a book to the young. We can attract these patrons with inviting places to come—a parent sitting down next to the “hungry caterpillar” reading the story to her child can’t be beat for a total experience!

The MLS degree offers the technology and the resources, as well as the love of the book to its graduates. They offer a total package wrapped in the ribbons of freedom, equal access, and privacy. We can’t reject these qualities and pay for less. When you pay for less, you get less.

A Library Degree Does Not Competency Warrant

BWS Johnson, Albany, New York; mhelman@illinoisalumni.org

I suppose I never took the paraprofessional chip off of my shoulder. I was perfectly miserable in my library assistantship, but so was everyone else in that hellish work environment regardless of educational credentials. Most of what took me fromgruntled to disgruntled was the nagging insistence from the director and management that I get my piece of paper making me a bona fide librarian before taking part in any decision making or collaborative work. To this day, I use librarian to refer to someone who meets my personal mark and degreed librarian to differentiate the country club of the laureated.

The quality of the degree itself is only an approximation of the combined effort the school and the student put into it. So, to paraphrase, library degrees are all equal, but some are more equal than others. This was my thinking when I snubbed the local, barely accredited library school for a shot at distance education through one of the top-ranked library schools. It was also my thinking that I could at least cut someone a bit of slack for the snobbery of shunning high school graduates in favor of bachelors of the arts since their training took four years to complete. I never could reconcile why a degree one can (and I did) earn in one year’s time would make such a difference. We aren’t talking 120 credits—we’re talking thirty-five to forty. Folks that complete a run of four basic library techniques training courses run small libraries in Massachusetts, and frankly, the ones I’ve witnessed do a fine job of it. Yet some of the best and brightest of this lot feel deeply ashamed that they didn’t run the marathon. In the golden days, one could take a test to become a certified librarian. Someone with an arts or science education most likely has enough in terms of information literacy to research at will. Anyone with research skills, regardless of what ilk of diploma they have, ought to be welcome in our profession.

At some point in time, doesn’t tacit experience gleaned from providing excellent service in a library trump explicit time bent over a book? Isn’t ignoring a wide swath of our own workforce censorship in its own right? What about folks that get the diploma but who then sit on it, never to read professionally again?

Putting stock solely in a piece of paper is astounding to me in a profession whose core values seem to indicate that anyone can learn anything at any time through their public library. I am devastated, but unsurprised, when I visit libraries of any sort and more often than not witness the ravaged, old, mangy, professional collection. Why do we bar access to the treasures of our own field? It was quite the golden ticket at $27,000 or so (though of course worth every cent for my particular school). At least very modest progress is being made toward providing meaningful assistance. At the time I went, I was quick to point out I could have applied for full rides in classical philology, but that nothing substantial was out there for LIS. Thank goodness for the Library Services and Technology Act.

I have to cede that most library schools impart an acceptable minimum standard skill set. I am stubborn, and I had done a lot of research before applying, so library school did not change my field philosophy. I did learn a lot more, but I believe strongly that if I had caved and gone to the local school, I wouldn’t have learnt much more than I already knew when I got there. Since students and schools vary widely, the MLS was not a big factor for me when it came time to hire someone. It is more important to find an employee who interacts appropriately with patrons and is willing to learn new things, than where they had been in life or if they could afford to pay the gatekeeper.

This obsession with the MLS has another deep problem. I truly believe that it, more than any other
The importance of the MLS or any of its iterations in today’s public library world is to make sure our degreed librarians have a basic understanding of the theoretical underpinnings, history, and basic tools of our profession.

thing, contributes to how very white our field is. It disturbs me to think that we’re adding another hurdle to diversity in advocating so heavily for the importance of the library school degree.

At the end of all of this fuss, surely that extra hoop would be worth a little jingle in the pocket, yes? No. At today’s costs, it’s ludicrous to go back to school late in one’s life to speak nicely to someone else’s insecurity in their own knowledge. After all, if you’re so sure that your degree means that much, you won’t harass other folks that don’t have one, will you?

I’m only thirty, I’m assertive, I chose this field. I could afford the toll it took on my bank account. I could afford the privilege of not giving a whit about my salary. I might even go on to a Ph.D. if some school out there is silly enough to take me on. I well realize how easy I’ve got it. The sad truth of the matter is that the math in books like Tamara Draut’s *Strapped* (Anchor, 2007), Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Bait and Switch* (Metropolitan, 2005), and Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever’s *Women Don’t Ask* (Princeton, 2003) lead to a depressing conclusion that the fight is upstream to make that piece of paper pay for itself, particularly if one is no longer in the prime of one’s life.

Until all of the library school gates are open to all and the Council on Accreditation abandons the political machinations that point to wide disparities in the quality of education, I’ll continue my tirade about the hypocrisy of the degree.

**Yes, But**

**John C. Sandstrom, Manager, Collection Development and Acquisitions, El Paso (Tex.) Public Library, jsang713@yahoo.com**

What is the importance of the MLS degree in today’s public library world?

The importance of the MLS or any of its iterations in today’s public library world is to make sure our degreed librarians have a basic understanding of the theoretical underpinnings, history, and basic tools of our profession. The process of getting an MLS is where we learn the importance of serving all parts of society, from the homeless man whom no one wants to be around to the finest scions of high society. It is where we learn the ins and outs of, as well as the importance of, reference interviews and providing a variety of access points in our cataloging. It also gives us a common vocabulary to further develop and serve our profession.

Is it worth the expense to earn the degree?

Yes! If you really want to understand what it means to be a librarian, if you truly want to have the best tools at your disposal to serve the public, if you want to be a leader in a dynamic and rapidly changing field, you need to have the basic understanding that only comes with having your MLS. That said, will you ever get rich being a librarian? You probably will not. Will you ever be paid what your degree is worth? Maybe—we are working on it. But the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a difference in people’s lives can be worth it all.

Do students come out of library school with the knowledge required to do the job? I did not. Most of the new MLS librarians I have worked with did not. But then, neither do a lot of professions. If medical doctors got out of school with all the knowledge required, why would they have internships and residencies? If accountants got out of school with all the knowledge required, why are there additional certifications they need to get? I believe that the goal of an MLS, like most advanced degrees, is not to make sure you have all the knowledge required to do the job, but to make sure you have the knowledge of the tools needed to learn the job quickly and efficiently.

So the question I would ask is, “Do students come out of library school with the basic knowledge to be able to learn the job?” Most of the time the answer is yes, but there are exceptions. Who has not run into the newly degreed librarian and found out they got through school without ever learning how to catalog a book, without having knowledge of how to use the Library of Congress Subject Headings, or without being able to construct a basic Boolean search statement? These and other gaps are of concern.

Are there important subjects that are not being covered in degree programs? There are three areas that I believe need additional coverage in degree programs. These are:
• **Collection Management**—The new librarians I have been working with seem to have a woeful lack of knowledge not only about how to decide what to purchase for a collection, but also how to judge whether the existing collection is a “good” one and how to keep a good collection in good shape (i.e., weeding).

• **Library Administration**—Twenty-plus years ago I got my MLIS with one course in basic library administration, which had virtually nothing to do with how to run a library. The new librarians I am interviewing today have the same problem. It is my belief that anyone getting an MLS should be able to read a budget report; develop a budget; write, understand, and apply library policies; handle an upset patron; and train someone else to do the same. I made some major mistakes in my first positions because I didn’t have these skills and it was assumed I did.

• **Library Law**—A good introductory course and overview of library law would be very helpful as both continuing education and as a foundation course for a degree. Not a course that is state specific, but one that goes over the fundamentals of different library funding models and governance, privacy law and how it applies to libraries, copyright law and how it can affect libraries, what the federal government can ask you to do and what warrants they need to provide before you do it. Those types of issues were not covered at all in my degree program and don’t seem to be covered well with the new librarians I have been interviewing.

Should an internship be a required part of the MLS degree program? If you are not currently working in a library, then yes, an internship should be a required part of the MLS degree program. Not a capstone project, but a full internship where you go into a library and spend time working in all the departments, professional and nonprofessional. If you are currently working in a library, hopefully you got this introduction as part of your orientation. As a public librarian, the new MLS holders need to be able to work circulation, reference, technical services, and administration. They need to be familiar with all parts of the library, the good, the bad, and the ugly. Getting your degree and discovering that you are not interested in the day-to-day work of being a public librarian is a guaranteed way to regret how you spent your money and time.

Is the MLS really necessary at all? In public libraries, you can become accomplished in almost any facet of library work without having a degree. But to understand how each part of the library fits together into a greater whole and how that whole fits into the community at large needs the breadth of background that (hopefully) comes with having an MLS. I will not say that it is absolutely required. We all know the paraprofessional that has the best grasp of the big picture as well as the professional librarians who are so narrow they cannot function outside of their specialties. But in general, having an MLS will give you the needed background knowledge that nonprofessionals have to develop on the job over many years of experience.

**Caught in the Middle**

JoAN NESLUND, ELLENSBURG (WASH.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; NESLUND@ELLENSBURGLIBRARY.ORG

A decade ago, I gave some very serious thought to getting my MLS. As a hardworking paraprofessional, I had miraculously worked my way up the library ladder and was now serving as the head of reference and computer support at my small public library. My director, once she had decided to split the children’s department and the reference department, knew that the budget could not support another MLS employee in the library, so she chose me to head up the area. I will never forget the day that she looked at me, placed a packet of information in my hands and said, “You are now the head of reference.”

I was so excited and pleased. I have a tendency to take everything very seriously, so I took it upon myself to study everything I could about public library reference skills and work. At the time, I had a habit of staying on the computer late at night so I devoted two hours of my time each night in reading, perusing, and studying all that I could about the skills of information technology in public libraries. I jumped into the job with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn it all.

Along with the position came a small computer lab and the beginnings of our website. These, too, were absorbed with focus and enthusiasm. The structure for my own teaching came mostly from informational and library electronic discussion groups and library websites. I became a site guru and developed a vast set of organized bookmarks. I viewed this promotion as a huge gift and wanted to prove that I, a parapro, could do the job as well as a staff member with an MLS degree.
My current director was supportive of my learning and encouraged me to represent the library on many statewide library projects and committees. I helped develop a statewide public library portal, served on committees that developed both Washington State’s Consumer Find It page (http://finditconsumer.wa.gov) and the Washington State Library’s digital reference consortium, which has now migrated to OCLC’s Question Point service.

It was at this point that I decided that I would investigate an MLS degree. I was learning so much and wanted to learn more. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that because of my home schooling, I had learned too much. I was way ahead of the game in what MLS schools were teaching. I was on committees with the some of the top people in my state. I was on the cutting edge of libraries, computers, and the “information highway.” An MLS at that time would have been nothing more than a membership card into an industry that I was already very involved with. My husband was not excited to move at that point in our lives, we had two children at home and our lives were (and are) very happy. I made the decision to not get the MLS and to continue on with my career as a paraprofessional in my public library.

In retrospect, all of this learning and experience has served me very well. I feel very competent in my job, which is much as it was ten years ago, only greatly expanded. Our computer lab now has nineteen computers in it, our website is complex, I teach Internet and computer classes on Saturdays and a few evenings, and the ever-changing reference work has now turned into mostly Internet and computer how-to's with a smattering of “true reference questions” in between.

Since my decision to not pursue the MLS degree, the University of Washington (UW) invited Mike Eisenburg to head up what is now UW’s “I” (Information) School. This program is progressive and just what I was looking for at the time. Mike and Joe Jaynes have created a hands-on, in-depth program for students seeking an advanced degree. As I approach my fifties, the economics of the MLS program has changed. My children are now grown and I have other fish to fry, as they say, if I choose to leave my job here. Economically I don’t believe I could pay off the cost of the MLS before I retire.

Here I am several years later, still staffing the reference desk, running the computer lab, teaching classes on the Internet and computers, and learning all that I can about libraries and reference. I imagine that I will continue to do so as long as I can still work a computer. I love this work; this work is my life. I do not have my MLS but I challenge anyone with one to find fault with my work. Library work is fun and always changing. Without an MLS, I find that I do not have some of that old-school thinking that I see in some librarians. I am open to change, I seek change, and I love to try something new.

The future holds so much for libraries and librarians. Unfortunately, most who aspire to the experience still have to get that piece of paper that says they are qualified to do the job as a professional librarian. Library and Information schools today are progressive and cutting edge. Students are encouraged to do exactly what I did in my learning—get out there in the real environment and read, learn, and ask questions. As I serve on statewide committees today, I do so right along with “I” School students.

The library of today is very different than it was ten years ago. I encourage all I meet to look into libraries as a career. I am pleased to be able to share my story and say to others that “you can do it without an MLS.”

A Library without Librarians—Hard to Imagine

SUSAN STRUNK, DIRECTOR, PALATINE (ILL.) PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT; SSTRUNK@PALATINELIBRARY.ORG

While there are plenty of really good library employees without an MLS serving patrons in exceptional ways, it’s hard for me to imagine a library with no mastered librarians. It is true that the roles of professionals and paraprofessionals in libraries have changed and in fact continue to evolve. We’ve seen this evolution in other professional fields such as medicine, psychiatry, and law, so it shouldn’t surprise us that librarians would need to adapt in order to
meet the changing needs of the communities served, be they working in academic, public, or private libraries. Still, libraries without degree librarians? I don’t think so!

I once argued that paraprofessional job descriptions should include the requirement of a bachelor’s degree because candidates for those associate positions who possessed the degree were more likely to come prepared with the kinds of experience and knowledge necessary to perform competently in that job. So, too, would I argue that a candidate with an MLS degree is going to come in prepared with the baseline of knowledge (and with any luck, experience) to effectively perform in the role of leader, coordinator, analyst, trainer, planner, and information provider required of those filling librarian roles of any sort.

I believe a number of supervisors would agree with me. Over the years, when discussing the roles of professionals and paraprofessionals, I’ve had many a department head express, “Give me an MLS anytime” or “I’ll take a librarian right out of school” as we were discussing how best to fill an upcoming or existing vacancy. The overarching reason would always be that in their experience, the MLS graduate, all other abilities and skills aside, would essentially always show up for the new job knowing the basics of provision and assessment of library service. A shorter learning curve means consistently better service for patrons, not to mention an easier means consistently better service for the trainer. When I first met with my advisor after signing on for library school, I asked about the option of a practicum and how that might work. The professor told me very few students took that option as most were already working in a library at some point prior to completion of the degree. While I firmly stated, “That’s not for me,” sure enough, as my course options dwindled to one per semester, I found myself working nearly two years before earning the MLS. There’s no doubt in my mind that being able to apply what I had learned and was learning afforded me the opportunity to be very well prepared for my first job as a librarian, and in fact, my first professional job was as a supervisor in a children’s department. The MLS job candidate with work experience virtually always presents better on paper and in an interview than those candidates without experience. There’s a reason why job ads will often say the successful candidate must have a “working” knowledge of various elements of the job. So, absent some work experience, I definitely feel it’s worth the time and investment to include an internship in one’s degree program.

Speaking of investment, only the potential MLS candidate alone can determine if the expense incurred earning the degree is worth it. Since we all have our own value systems, it would seem that, as with any decision, one must weigh the pros and cons. The ability to foot the bill for an advanced degree, the need or desire to secure a full-time position, the odds of getting a full-time position upon graduation, and the passion one feels for serving in the field of librarianship are a few of the considerations. As we well know, sometimes the passion for working in a library setting trumps the possible negatives. Thank goodness for the wealth of passion we experience in libraries around the world!

Passion alone won’t do the trick though, so library schools need to make sure that in addition to standard core courses, they are offering opportunities for MLS students to experience coursework in planning, analyzing, buildings and maintenance, organizational management, and human resources management. Librarians are likely to be supervisors and project managers in today’s libraries and so will need to be prepared beyond the basic services. Library schools might look to the Certified Public Library Administrator program now offered by ALA for a glimpse of what librarians turned administrators, managers, and supervisors will need in the way of extended knowledge.

The librarian who holds an MLS degree and works in libraries is like the conductor of an orchestra who must know how to read music, play the instruments, what beat and tempo is appropriate for the piece at any given time, and how the appropriately played music sounds. Like the conductor, the librarian, no matter what role he or she plays, but especially when in the role of supervisor or director, must have a broad understanding of how libraries work, what makes them work, what good service looks like, and what exceptional library service can mean in the lives of those who live within the service area.

I suppose one might argue that a library could be run without librarians and that good service could be provided with not so much as one MLS on staff and that persons without an MLS could be trained to run the library in a perfectly fine manner, but given the number of outstanding MLS librarians I’ve had the
The librarian who holds an MLS degree is like the conductor of an orchestra who must know how to read music, play the instruments, what beat and tempo is appropriate for the piece, and how the appropriately played music sounds.

I am fortunate to have earned both an MLS and an MBA. I completed my MLS in the 1990s and completed the MBA in 2005. Part of the reason I went back to school to get a second master’s degree was because my career in libraries was not advancing as I had planned. I hoped that an additional degree would put me in a position to achieve my career goals, and so far, I think that strategy is working. An MLS is important but it may not be enough.

One thing that strikes me in terms of comparing both educational experiences is that the MBA program was ten times more rigorous. The MLS program is one that is ALA-accredited and well respected, but in retrospect, the rigor just was not there. I can’t speak to other MLS programs, but my impression is that if these schools want to turn out individuals who can compete in the broader market place, they are going to have to create curriculums that are much more demanding. The key component, in my opinion, is information technology.

Currently, I am employed as Continuing Education Coordinator at the New Mexico State Library. I work with approximately ninety public libraries throughout the state. Most of the library directors and staff I work with do not possess an MLS degree. My job is to assist them where they need help, and through educational programming, fill in the knowledge gaps in terms of their understanding of library services and information systems. Mostly I find these individuals to be highly competent. Experience counts for a lot! But I also understand that the MLS provides a broader view and context for understanding library services. The MLS is not essential if you want to work in a library. But if you want a career in libraries you need an advanced degree, preferably an MLS. Many employers require an MLS. In a bigger public library or library system, only those individuals who have earned an MLS will advance to the better jobs and management positions. Without the MLS you will be forever stuck in paraprofessional purgatory.

But MLS programs need to move into the twenty-first century. Subjects such as cataloging and reference services are increasingly becoming less relevant. Reference transactions are down because people are finding information for themselves on the Web. And the library catalog no longer reflects the real information environment. Libraries will become less focused on collecting and organizing tangible objects and more focused on pointing to information resources that reside outside of the library.

Librarians today and in the future must understand the entire information ecology: the sources of information, the different media of information, methods of information transmission, findability, information architecture, information systems, and telecommunications. They also need to know about telecommunications law, intellectual freedom and censorship, copy and intellectual property rights law.

And there is the cultural component that libraries represent: libraries as information commons and librarians as advocates for free and open access to information resources and information literacy. I think MLS programs are very good at teaching about library culture.

The MLS degree may prepare you to work in a library environment, but I don’t believe it is preparing students to be competitive in a global economy. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn’t. If I were advising someone today, I would recommend an advanced degree in computer science, business, or law over an MLS. And if you are really set on a career as a librarian, an MLS plus an additional advanced degree may be necessary.
A 741.5 travel through time...

...with a happy ending. Made possible by Dewey numbers.

Updated regularly, the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme is ready for research journeys far and wide, to magical lands—in multiple languages, online and in print. Get Dewey today and generate more happy endings for your public library.

Order now at www.oclc.org/dewey/story/

It’s a big world. We’ve organized it.
“Book Talk” provides authors’ perspectives on libraries, books, technology, and information. If you have any suggestions of authors you would like to see featured in Book Talk, or if you are interested in volunteering to be an author-interviewer, contact Kathleen Hughes, Editor of Public Libraries, at the Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; khughes@ala.org.

Sitting Down and Spilling My Guts Out
An Interview with Abby Sher

Abby Sher is a writer and performer in Brooklyn, New York. She started out her career at Chicago’s famed Second City theatre, performing and writing four revues there. She has written and performed for NPR’s Wait! Wait! Don’t Tell Me and appeared on Late Night with Conan O’Brien and HBO’s Sketchpad. Her first young adult book, Kissing Snowflakes, was published in November 2007 by Scholastic and her next book, a memoir, will be published by Scribner in 2009. Her writing has appeared in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Redbook, Heeb, and Every Day with Rachel Ray, among others. For more information, please visit Sher’s website, www.abbysher.com.

Public Libraries: You had a pretty long career as a performer before you were published. How did you come to writing?

Abby Sher: That is a mystery to me as well. I come from a writing family. My mom was a writer and an editor. So I just grew up in a household where for Hanukkah or birthdays I would get journals, and I totally resented it at the time, of course. So I think from an early age I was into diary writing, at least, or journaling. In high school creative writing was always my favorite class. I got into performing arts in high school also and then in college I was kind of straddling the line between them both. I went to the University of Chicago and there’s not really a theater major or theater department there. So I got something nebulous called the humanities degree, which I guess makes me human. But mostly I studied writing and literature. I was also really into languages and I studied Russian. So all that to say I guess it was innate in
me that writing was a practice that I would always enjoy, just sitting down and spilling my guts out.

At Second City and doing improv it was a great challenge. I think I really tried to force myself to be this comedic writer and whenever I did that it backfired horribly. I never brought in a script where people were like “Ha!” They were like “Wow! This is disturbing.” So I never wrote the kind of writing I thought I was supposed to be doing. So I think improv helped me in the way that I didn't have to write it down. So it could be funny in the moment and if I remembered it and wanted to take it somewhere else that's great. But I was never one to sit down and write scenes like some of the greats there.

I moved away from Chicago, and again I was like, “I must belong somewhere on staff as a writer” but I couldn't get my packets to work anywhere. And the one thing that soothed me was that I still enjoyed writing serious stuff. So I started submitting some things to be published in magazines and newspapers and it kind of blossomed from there.

**PL:** So how did you come to writing a YA book as your first novel?

**AS:** This is also a great lesson in just not knowing what's next for you. I wrote a piece about having an affair with an older man, actually, nothing young adult about it or nothing PC. about it, that's for sure. And it got published in *The New York Times* “Modern Love Poems” in 2006. And a friend of mine who I had grown up with—I hadn't really been in contact with her but I had heard about her through the grapevine, and she was working for Scholastic. She had made her big break in editing, being Meg Cabot’s editor for *The Princess Diaries*, so she had made a name for herself and Scholastic had brought her on board to head up their young adult department. She had read my piece in the paper and she said, “Abby, I think you have a young adult voice.” And I was like, “really?” So I wrote her all these ideas and once again they were very dark, very “Girl-thinks-she-is-a-lesbian-and-wants-to-kill-herself-mom-is-dying-of-cancer.” I was like, “I am going to tackle every single problem a young adult can have in one sitting and be hilariously funny, too.” So I brought them to her and she was like, “Uh, not so much.” So we called it a day and we sat down and had coffee.

Later on we met again just to check in with each other and she said, “I wish I had one more winter romance this year.” And it was kind of like her checking her to-do list and then she was going to leave the office and I said, “I'll do it!” And she said, “You know what? Can I get back to you on that?” And it was that simple. It was definitely not what I thought my first novel would be. And now I’m working on something completely different and while I love it I’m like, “Oh young adult world—it's so much fun.”

**PL:** Would you be interested in writing another YA book?

**AS:** Oh definitely. I would definitely do that in the future. I actually have a little community online of young adult-ers. I have this MySpace page (www.myspace.com/dearsnabby) where they write in about books and I ask them questions and that's been really fun. And I’ve been doing some talks at schools, which I love. So I definitely want to write another one. I also feel more freedom now because Scholastic trusts me now so I can sort of venture out into more darker territories. I mean, my book's pretty fluffy. I have a great editor but she definitely had to tell me to be fluffier a couple of times. She was like, “Remember this is silly, this is fun.” So I’m definitely looking forward to that.

I just sold my memoir to Scribner. I’m working on a very heavy book and there’s nothing young adult about it. Which I always wanted to do so I couldn't be more grateful or thrilled but there are definitely days where I’m like, “Oh it would be really nice to be on the bunny slope right now.”

**PL:** Even though you describe your book as fluffy, there are still darker elements in it. Sam, the main character, often lets her anger get the best of her and can be pretty unforgiving of others. Did you want to portray a more realistic version of female adolescence?

**AS:** Yeah, definitely. One of the biggest problems I had was with the cover. I’ve gotten such good feedback on it and it was just so funny to me. When I first saw it, I said, “She's not that pretty. You can't make her that pretty!” And they were like, “Abby, we have to sell books, I’m sorry.” And I said, “But the point is she has flat hair and she doesn’t wear things that are pink.” I say it very clearly in the first page! I’m still learning to speak up for myself and it was a great lesson. I really wanted her to have some girly fun, but I also know that I got turned off by that stuff at that age because I wanted somebody who thought ugly thoughts like I did.

**PL:** Your book nicely captures the transient nature of teenage relationships, where Sam has these perhaps life-changing encounters with people she might never see again.
She has her first real love interest with Eric, but we’re left not knowing if they’ll ever see each other again. At the same time, she has had a major break with her lifelong best friend, Phoebe, and the reader doesn’t really know whether that will be reconciled.

AS: I definitely wanted it open-ended, mainly because I couldn’t resolve it for myself. I’m still having fights with my teenage friends. They just don’t end that quickly. As far as the Phoebe thing, I think what I really want to write about next is girlfriend friendships and how really hard they are, even when you’re older. But writing *Kissing Snowflakes* reminded me of how troublesome [relationships] are around that age, so I felt that was super important that that didn’t end too resolutely. As far as the Eric thing, I definitely wanted there to be hope that they would see each other but realistically he lives up in a lodge in Vermont. So is it totally going to happen? I have no idea.

PL: Alcohol use and abuse seems to be an underlying theme of the book as well, with Sam using a fake ID, dealing with a friend’s mother’s death in a drunk driving accident, and even having monitored drinking with adults. Did you want to show the different ways alcohol affects teenager’s lives?

AS: I think it was pretty unintentional. The thing is, I had a very nerdy childhood so I didn’t take my first drink until I was twenty, I would say. And I’ve run the gamut from over-drinking to underdrinking, whatever you want to say. I felt that it was important that she be exposed to it because I felt it would be a check-out for a lot of girls if Sam wasn’t thinking about it or doing something about it. It’s funny because since then that’s the one thing that could deter a book club from [choosing] it or a certain library from carrying it, if they think the kids are too young to [read about] that. That doesn’t bother me. I think that kids are exposed to alcohol and I know that’s how I grew up. My mom was very much, “I want to give you your first drink. I don’t want you to have a bad experience. I know someone’s going to offer it to you so why not [have] it be me?”

PL: Can you talk about the memoir you’re writing?

AS: It’s really exciting. I had a pretty serious illness as a kid—I guess I’m still struggling with it sometimes. The book’s about how it helped me in the end through a lot of trauma in my life, namely losing both my parents and some aunts and uncles, and how this psychological disorder brought some order to something that was nonsensical to me. It takes a lot out of me to write but I really love writing it and I feel like I get to make sense out of some things that never made sense to me before. And that again was a really wonderful process—selling it was a really wonderful process, I have a great agent who totally believes in me. It was a very different process than the young adult book because [that] was assigned to me basically and this one I had to sell. So I had to do a long proposal and map out exactly what was going to happen. And proposals are pretty intense on that sort of thing—they’re sixty pages and really mapping out exactly what you want to say.

PL: Are you still performing on *Wait! Wait! Don’t Tell Me*?

AS: I’m not unfortunately. They cancelled that segment. Before I left Chicago actually they did some sort of audience poll and not enough people understood what we were
doing, and we were like, “What don’t you get?” We would take the week’s news and we would write scenes that would satirize the big news-makers, and people would have to guess what the scene was we were reenacting. But I think it was a little too much brainpower for the radio, so they were like, “Ixnay on the its-kays” so we were out of their seats. But that was actually really helpful to learn how to spit something out without getting too attached to it.

PL: How has being a performer influenced your writing, and vice versa?

AS: I think that’s the biggest thing, I can’t take myself too seriously. I gotta put it out there. I think when I spend time away from the stage that’s when I get into, “Oh, I better edit this really beautifully before I hand it in.” And while it’s good to edit your stuff, you just can’t make everything so precious—that’s the gift of improv all over again. It also makes me yearn for deadlines, to send things in and not worry about rejection. I find writing rejections completely different than performing rejections also. I don’t know why. Somehow I feel much better with writing rejections, so far. So far—that’s my caveat. I’m like, “Well at least they read it.” Sometimes I think you go into an audition and you’re like, “They just saw that I had brown hair and decided they didn’t like me! Wait, give me another chance!” If you write something and you feel it’s ready to send then it’s their decision if they want it or not. So in that way I think performing has helped me, just to take myself less seriously.

Also, I think it really helps me in that I do a lot of muttering when I write. I say what I’m writing out loud without really knowing it. So in that way things have to make sense in a sort of monologue. And that just helps me. Even if a word has too many syllables for me I think I pick up on it more frequently because I say it out loud.

PL: What roles have libraries played in your life?

AS: They’ve offered refuge and delight. It’s funny, the first performance I ever did was in a library. In sixth grade we did a performance of Alan and Naomi, a sweet book about these two kids who grew up during the Holocaust. I was nurse number five or whatever and it was the most nerve-wracking experience of my whole life and I loved it. Our librarian directed the whole thing and guided us through it, and I think that experience helped me assume that the library was a safe space and a creative space. And even if I don’t use them that much—I’m kind of ashamed I don’t use the libraries of New York more often than I do—I’m so proud of my library card. I put them in the most prominent spot in my wallet so that when I open up my wallet everyone sees I’m a library member. I don’t know what that’s about, but it’s hilarious to me.

---

**ALA Cultural Communities Fund in Home Stretch to Raise Matching Funds**

Since 2003, the ALA Public Programs Office has worked toward building the nation’s first and only endowment to support libraries in establishing and expanding cultural and community programming. This endowment—the ALA Cultural Communities Fund 9CCF—will support public, academic, school, and special libraries as they conduct top-notch humanities programs. Begun with a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the fund now totals more than $1 million, contributed by an impressive list of individual and corporate supporters.

The fund is in the final phase of raising matching funds for the NEH challenge, but needs pledges of $310,000 by July 31, 2008. Member support is urgently needed to take full advantage of this opportunity to leverage funds from NEH.

Funding from CCF will support the creation of annual professional development opportunities for librarians, turnkey national model programs, and a wealth of program planning and presenting resources designed to build and enhance programming capacity at the local level. These activities will strengthen the ability of libraries and librarians to respond to community needs for cultural programming.

For more information or to make a contribution, visit www.ala.org/ccf.
Can We Help You?

Librarians rock! Skeptical? Then check out ReadWriteWeb’s “Threatened by the Internet? Music Biz Should Rock Like Librarians.” What else can you learn on ReadWriteWeb (a widely read blog focusing on emerging tech trends and analysis)? Would you believe “Sexy Librarians of the Future Will Help You Upload Your Videos to YouTube?” Really—I jest not.

The same month both ReadWriteWeb articles were posted, the Pew Internet & American Life Project released “Information Searches that Solve Problems: How People Use the Internet, Libraries, and Government Agencies When They Need Help.” Fast forward to January of this year and the release of “Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future” by the Joint Information Systems Committee at University College London.

Yet in spite of the great press, we learned from the statistics in these articles that our communities may not be turning to us for search help as much as we would like. Are you ready for some stats? Hold on, here we go!

Come Visit Any Time

The Pew Internet & American Life Project’s “Information Searches that Solve Problems” provides some interesting quotes to start us off. “Faced with a problem in the past two years that they needed to address, about one in eight adults (13 percent) say they turned to their local public library for help and information.”¹ Thirteen percent, or one in eight, doesn’t seem like a very high number to me, especially when you see where those other seven adults did turn: the Internet, TV, and radio all rank higher than librarians.

The second quote (also from the Pew report) focuses on the number of adults visiting a public library. “Major finding: 53 percent of American adults report going to a local public library in the past 12 months.”² The report doesn’t specify frequency, just that a visit occurred some time in the past year (maybe they visited once to pick up a tax form).

So while this report does show a slim majority of American adults visiting the library, it also indicates that they visit for some other reason than using library services to help answer some of life’s burning questions. The study included dilemmas like: “Needed information about property taxes or income taxes” and “Made a decision about schooling, paying for education, or getting training for yourself or for a child.”³
What do you make of this stat? “Eighty-four percent of respondents use search engines to begin an information search . . . 1 percent begin the search on a library website.”4 It makes a lot of sense that the majority of an individual’s searches would be done from the patron’s home or work computer. They might not think of the library website as a first point of origin for searching and other information needs. However, what might we do to encourage and promote searches that begin at the library’s website? As we begin to create useful, original content, we could probably boost that paltry 1 percent.

We Know What You Mean

Bad news: We’re number eight in the “gathering information” chain for adult library users (at least, the ones with those burning life questions). Good news: Librarians are change agents. As some of the previously mentioned articles state, we are growing and changing with technology. We really do have a lot to offer our searching patrons.

For starters, we can help better phrase searches. Look at this list of Google searches found in yet another ReadWriteWeb article:

- What are movie spears made out of? (looking for information on Zulu spears used as movie props);
- Car hit by bicycle (looking for articles on bicycles hitting cars); and
- Famous science fiction writers other than Isaac Asimov (looking for a list of sci fi authors).5

Now, we all know those are poorly constructed searches. Creating a proper search string for Google was actually not the main point of this article. It had two points: first, that semantic search engines will be better (once they’re built) than current search engines; and second, that current search engines don’t do a great job of searching.

I agree with the first point: Future searching (and many other Web-related things) will probably be improved by the semantic Web. But I only halfheartedly agree with the second point. Why? Because most of the searching world simply doesn’t know how to search properly with a search engine.

For example, take the first search: What are movie spears made out of? The search typed in this way finds loads of links on Britney Spears—not the desired information on Zulu spears carried as movie props. But if the search string is tweaked to zulu extras spears, relevant information is found in the first ten search results in Google. The other two searches could also be easily improved.

Another recently released study examines the “Google Generation” of users, who tend to be thought of by many as digital natives who somehow inherently understand digital content, including searching the Web. The researchers examined, among other things, “whether or not as a result of the digital transition and resources being created digitally, young people, the ‘Google Generation,’ are searching for and researching content in new ways and if so, how this will shape the way they research and search in the future.”6

Who do the researchers include in the Google Generation? “The ‘Google Generation’ is a popular phrase that refers to a generation of young people, born after 1993, that is growing up in a world dominated by the Internet.”7 And what did they discover about the Google Generation?:

- “Young scholars are using tools that require little skill: they appear satisfied with a very simple or basic form of searching”; and
- “Users make very little use of advanced search facilities, assuming that search engines ‘understand’ their queries.” 8

The researchers discovered that the younger generation is decidedly not expert at searching: “[this] is a dangerous myth. Digital literacies and information literacies do not go hand in hand. A careful look at the literature over the past 25 years finds no improvement (or deterioration) in young people’s information skills.”9 Although tech savvy, the Google Generation still needs to learn strong research skills—just as their parents and grandparents did. Librarians are in a prime position to teach those skills.

You’re Welcome—That’s Why We’re Here

I think perceptions of libraries and librarians are starting to change. Listen to this:

The librarian of the future will help a growing number of citizen media producers to classify their online media and get it connected to other related content . . . Imagine a future when you go to the library with a 5 minute video you’ve just made about last night’s Presidential debates and that librarian says to you: You should upload it to YouTube and tag it with these four tags—two broad and two more specific to existing communities of interest on YouTube and the topic of your video. Then you should embed that video in a blog post along with some text introducing it and
linking to some of your favorite posts by other people who have also written today about the Presidential debates. Make sure to send trackbacks to those posts!

Gurus of the emerging Web world are starting to recognize that librarians actually understand how to navigate in a world of information. Information creation, sharing, and discoverability are what we’ve always done, and will continue to do in a 2.0 world (Okay—it’s also sorta cool they’re calling us “sexy”—but that’s another article entirely).

Another recent ReadWriteWeb post mentions the recent Pew report:

According to the newest study from the Pew Internet & American Life Center—the youngest, most affluent, and most Internet-connected adults in the U.S. are also the most likely to visit a physical library. It wasn’t that way just 10 years ago. How many other legacy industries can you think of today that can say their strongest growth is among young, affluent, power-Internet users? Something is going very right in library land.

The music business ought to pay close attention to what’s going on there.¹¹

Sometimes, perception is everything. And thankfully, library perceptions seem to be changing for the better.

Come Again Soon—We’ll Be Here to Help
Where does this leave us? I’d say we’re set to succeed in a very real way! Our expert search and information-related skills are currently in high demand by our “regulars”—those patrons who already know what we do. The potential is there for demand to pick up as the Web continues to evolve. Librarians are already uniquely trained to navigate an information- and content-based society. We’ve been doing just that with a variety of content formats for as long as libraries have existed—and the Web is simply the newest container for content.

Surprisingly, even Web-savvy people need our help. Librarians have the essential skills to help guide our more savvy users through this new world, so to speak. We not only have the skills needed to improve their searches—but also to improve their questions. Stephen Abram says: “Recognize that librarians’ and library workers’ key contributions aren’t merely collecting, organizing, and delivering the information—it’s improving the quality of the question.”¹² This question-improvement applies to simple and silly questions—like Zulu spears—but also to important life questions.

Helping our patrons in this way may require us to work in a new way. Traditionally, librarians have stayed in their respective reference chairs, waiting for patrons to come visit us, preferably at the service desk, to ask those burning questions. And then we happily respond. This traditional service model has somehow resulted in adults who don’t think of using a library when they search for information on the Web. Abram suggests: “Our communities are changing. It’s not just understanding standard census data on ethnicity, incomes, and homes with children. It’s about changing consumer values, and libraries are a consumer service at their core.”¹³

With that in mind, maybe it’s time to rethink what your library is doing to serve both adults and the Google Generation. Is your website rich with original content and structured as a good place to start a search or to get ready help when needed? You probably already teach search engine classes—does your community know about them? If not, do you have a plan to restructure your website to make it more useful to your community? Do you have a plan to reach outside of your physical library walls and demonstrate your library’s wealth of knowledge, both traditional and cutting-edge, to your potential—but-not-yet patrons? Librarians—get out there and start changing those statistics!

References
2. Ibid., vii.
3. Ibid., 12.
8. Ibid., 14.
9. Ibid., 20.
13. Ibid.

PLA Programs at ALA Annual Conference

PLA is hosting the following programs during the upcoming 2008 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California (June 26–July 2). Check www.pla.org for program descriptions, updates, changes, and room locations.

Saturday, June 28
PLA 101: ALA Annual Conference for First-Time Attendees
8–9 a.m.
How Branding Can Increase the Relevance of Your Library
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Not Evolutionary—Revolutionary! Library Reorganization Project, 2010-Style
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Healthy and Secure Computing in a Library 2.0 World
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Dewey or Don’t We?
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Library Fundraising on Steroids! Going Beyond the Used Book Sale . . .
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Stretching Existing Staff: New Service Delivery Models
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Public Programs in a Shoebox: What If You Don’t Have a Community Room?
10:30 a.m.–Noon

Sunday, June 29
Selling Your Story: How to Use the PLA Service Responses to Market Your Library
10:30–3:30 p.m.
Get the Word Out: How to Do It, Marketing for Small and Rural Libraries
10:30–3:30 p.m.

Teens in Your Branch Library: From Trauma to Triumph?
1:30–3:30 p.m.
Uncover the World: Programming Your Way through Dewey
1:30–3:30 p.m.
Adult Learners: Helping Libraries Make MAGIC!
1:30–5:30 p.m.
Early Literacy Training for Child Care Providers: A Proven Program for Success
4–5:30 p.m.

Monday, June 30
Read Between the Lions: Public Television and Public Libraries Join Forces to Improve Literacy
10:30 a.m.–Noon
Reach Out and Touch Someone: Public and School Libraries Collaborate for Student Success
10:30 a.m.–Noon
PACs in the Library 2.0 World
10:30 a.m.–Noon
“Bringing in the Money” presents fund-raising strategies for public libraries. Many librarians are turning to alternative funding sources to supplement shrinking budgets. Fund-raising efforts not only boost finances, but also leverage community support and build collaborative strategies.

Marian, the Fund-raising Librarian

The character of Professor Harold Hill isn’t the only savvy salesman in Meredith Willson’s wonderful Tony Award-winning musical, The Music Man. If you carefully follow the back story to the play, you’ll notice that Marian Paroo (yes, the notorious Marian the Librarian) once made a major sales pitch herself. Approximately four years before Professor Hill arrived in River City, Marian apparently ventured into a specialized subset of fund-raising known as major donor cultivation.

In order to take a closer look at Marian’s major donor request, I drew up a case study, based on the commonly accepted Harvard Business School model. Then I asked a panel of four fund-raising experts to answer a series of questions. Participating on the panel were:

- **Rob Lavery**, CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive), is the Resource Development Consultant at Southern Ontario Library Service. For nearly ten years, he has assisted public libraries in the region with funding campaigns and capital projects, providing training and customized assistance in all aspects of fund-raising. Rob also teaches volunteer program management online through Georgian College, and conducts classroom sessions in fund-raising for Humber College and the University of Guelph.

- **Peter Pearson** is president of the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota. The Friends is a unique organization in that it represents the merger of a traditional Friends group with a Library Foundation. It has endowment funds of approximately $14 million and a professional staff of eleven. It leads all fund-raising activities for the St. Paul Public Library; it conducts annual advocacy campaigns for strong public funding of the library; and it manages most of the library’s adult cultural programming.

- **Susan Mathisen** is a fund-raising consultant who helps museums, historic houses and sites, libraries, archives, and historical societies raise support...
for their conservation and preservation projects. In addition to working as a conservator in several museums and regional centers, she has also worked in development for organizations such as the Conservation Center of New York University and the American Academy in Rome.

- Shirley Trauger is a vice president of Schultz and Williams, a consulting firm that provides fund-raising, direct mail, marketing, and management planning services to the nonprofit world. The firm’s clients have included the Lower Merion (Pa.) Library System, Tredyffrin (Pa.) Public Library, the Rosenbach Museum and Library, and the East Hampton (N.Y.) Library.

So, without further ado, and with great respect for the work of Meredith Willson, I offer:

The Music Man Case Study

The Trouble in River City
In 1908, River City is a small Iowa town, located near the Mississippi River and the Illinois border. It has a thriving main street lined with popular stores, such as the Candy Kitchen, Ewart Dunlop’s grocery store, and the Pleez-All Billiard Parlor. Most of the streets are still dirt, but the roads in the very center of town have recently been paved. There is a very pleasant town square, with city hall on one side and the church on the other.

The town is exceptionally clean and colorful, and the people all appear relatively prosperous. There is no smoking because cigarettes are illegal in the state. Railroad conductors, working on the Rock Island line that stops in the town, are careful to mention the no-smoking restriction to people disembarking at River City.

Recently, cars have arrived in River City, but only the richest citizens have them. Horses are still the primary means of transportation, although most people live near the town and can easily walk wherever they need to go. Every now and then, the Wells Fargo Wagon pulls into town, and everyone comes out to see what it is delivering.

The people of River City are known for their stubborn attitudes. They are often described as contrary, and even as having a chip on their shoulders. Door-to-door soliciting without a license is illegal. Most traveling salesmen, at least those who know the territory, choose not to come to River City, where it is rumored that the citizens are still open to the idea of tarring and feathering anyone who appears to be attempting to cheat them.

Children are educated in several small buildings located along the outskirts of the town, but there is talk of trying to raise funds to build a large schoolhouse. Education is very basic, consisting of reading, writing, arithmetic, and little else. There is no music education, and no town marching band.

But there is trouble, right there in River City, because there is no public library for its citizens.

Marian Paroo’s Vision for River City
Marian Paroo’s family moved to River City when she was in her late teens. Now in her mid-twenties, she lives just a couple of blocks from the center of town with her mother and her much younger brother Winthrop. Marian offers piano lessons at her house, but she has ambitions that go beyond music education for youth. She believes that the town should establish a public library for the purpose of improving River City’s cultural level.

In order to achieve her goal of starting a public library, Marian has engaged in discussions with the mayor and the Ladies Auxiliary Committee (LAC). Mayor George Shinn is mildly supportive of the idea, but cannot promise any funding to purchase a property, build the library, buy the books, or hire a staff. LAC, led by Eulalie Mackechnie Shinn, the mayor’s wife, is concerned that a library might advocate the reading of dirty books by authors such as Chaucer, Rabelais, and Balzac, and smutty books like the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

Marian’s recently deceased father was best friends with Mr. Madison, who is widely considered to be the richest man in town. Through her father, Marian is well acquainted with Mr. Madison. He has always treated her with kindness and respect, although they have rarely talked on matters of substance. She is aware that her father often discussed the needs of River City with Mr. Madison, and that they both believed the town would greatly benefit from a park, a high school, and a library.

Although Mr. Madison was friends with Marian’s father, relationships between Mr. Madison and other town leaders are strained. He is a gentleman in his late fifties, never married, and with no children. He lives comfortably but frugally in an average-size Victorian house and does not employ any servants. It is generally assumed around town that he made a fortune in the railroad business and is hoarding the money. Some people in town have taken to calling him “old miser Madison.”
Based on conversations between her father and Mr. Madison, Marian believes that Mr. Madison is indeed quite wealthy, but she feels that he is also very civic-minded. She deeply resents it when she hears him called “old miser Madison,” as she doesn’t feel this reflects his true character at all.

Questions

Where should Marian Paroo look for funding to launch her River City library project? Should she consider Mr. Madison to be a potential major donor?

Shirley Trauger: Before Marian Paroo starts asking for funding for a library, she should look hard at River City and find out what its citizens feel it needs to thrive as a twentieth-century town. She will want as many funders as possible to get excited about her library project. Clearly the townspeople have a lot of civic pride and want River City to continue to be better than all the neighboring towns. The Rock Island Line and Wells Fargo, as well as local businesses, can also benefit as River City becomes more attractive to the farmers who live around it as well as potential new residents.

Appealing to all these different motivations—pride, snobbery, self-interest, among others—Marian could continue to find partners to fund and advocate for town improvement. In listening carefully to their responses to her idea, she could find that the first priority of thoughtful citizens might be a real schoolhouse, and that her library project might be more attractive—and more useful—if more River Cityites could first read books beyond McGuffey’s First Reader. There may be more enthusiasm for building a combined school and library rather than a library alone. This is called building a case for fund-raising.

Of course she should consider Mr. Madison a potential major donor. He has the resources to support her project at a high level, he is fond of Marian and her family, and he has already realized—through conversations with Marian’s father—how beneficial a library and school would be to the townspeople. In other words, his interest has already been cultivated.

Peter Pearson: Most public library buildings are constructed with the majority of funding coming from the municipality and “enhancement” funding coming from the private sector. This building project will very likely not have that public/private mix; it will be built with all private funding. Therefore it will be necessary to get as broad a cross section of the community to be donors as possible. Marian will need to build a case for the new library with extensive community input. In addition, Marian will probably want to create a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to accept contributions for the library. Most major donors will not want to write their check to a government entity. They will have more comfort in contributing to a nonprofit whose sole purpose is to build and support the library.

Mr. Madison should clearly be cultivated as a major donor to the library campaign. Marian will want to conduct a feasibility study of the project before soliciting contributions. Mr. Madison should be one of the individuals invited to participate in the feasibility study interviews. This will allow him to critique the project and get better buy-in. He may even indicate an interest in helping to raise the money needed from others.

Rob Lavery: I think there are a few places Marian can look for funding. In my experience with libraries, I would say most individual donors are looking for a municipal commitment first before they agree to their own leadership gift. So I would advise Marian to meet with the mayor about the new library and convince him that the project will not fly without a significant contribution from the municipality up front—that the community is looking for leadership from the town for this project. Once she has confirmed participation from the town, Marian can then speak to Mr. Madison and LAC. Mr. Madison should certainly be considered a potential major donor to the funding campaign. He has many characteristics of a major gift donor and would likely rate quite high in his linkage to the project, interest in the community, and ability to make an investment. And it appears that the members of LAC have a zeal for the issues, which, properly channeled, could result in a financial commitment.

Susan Mathisen: Marian has a good deal going against her. First, there appears to be no dedication to education within the community, as is evident by the basic curriculum, the location of the school buildings on the outskirts of town, and even though it’s been discussed, no one has championed the cause to build a proper school. It’s almost as if they do not want education to be an integral part of the community.

In addition, she doesn’t have the full support of those she will need to help her in her cause: the mayor and LAC.

So, before she can really start a campaign for funding, she needs to...
get the community behind the project. She can do this through a variety of cultivation efforts—teas, dinners, and so on, in which she discusses a plan for the library, why it is important for River City, and how the town would eventually benefit. This will not be an easy task, given the stubbornness of the townsfolk and the probability that they will be hesitant to agree to anything they perceive as change. But by showing that the effects of the project are positive ones, she can create an air of excitement around the project that will help her get the community behind her. No doubt the mayor and LAC will follow suit.

Once she has town support, she’ll have a better chance of raising the needed funds and use a variety of techniques to do so. She can approach the many prosperous business owners in town, offering them publicity as supporters of the library. Schoolchildren can help, through drives that can help raise funds for books or bricks and mortar. She can also appeal to the richest citizens in town, offering naming opportunities and such.

As for Mr. Madison, he should be solicited at some point, but given his strained relationships with those whose help Marian needs most, having him as the lead gift may cost her that support.

If Mr. Madison is targeted as a potential major donor, how should Marian go about making the request for support?

SM: Because he is reputed to be the richest man in town, he should be solicited. But Marian should determine first what his giving capacity is and how interested he is in the project. She could do this through a bit of prospect research. However, since there is no library available, her best way to do this is to take the knowledge she does have and discuss the project with the donor. From the discussions with her father, she knows he has an interest in the needs of the community, so she is not too off course in approaching him. She can do this through several conversations (or cultivation meetings) not unlike those she would have had with other community leaders. In her presentation, she should clearly describe the project, staying positive, yet looking for clues in particular aspects that seem to interest or concern Mr. Madison. At the appropriate time, she should ask him to consider a gift of a certain amount. The key at this point is to sit back and get a reaction, which, if she has presented the library properly, will be positive. But she should keep in mind that if she gets a “no,” it may not be a good time for Mr. Madison to consider a gift, and she should continue to keep him abreast of the project so that she will be on his mind when he is ready to give a gift. In all cases, she should conclude the meeting with a thank you and follow-up note.

RL: In fund-raising we say, “If you want money, ask for advice, if you want advice, ask for money.” So I would suggest to Marian that if her hope is to get a leadership gift from Mr. Madison, then she should consider her first meeting with him as an information-and-advice meeting. She should present the idea of the library to him and then wait to hear what his thoughts are. Does he have any issues or concerns? Are there any areas of particular interest for him? Once he sounds engaged in the project, Marian can thank him for his thoughts and ask for a second meeting. It’s at subsequent meetings that Marian can speak to Mr. Madison’s civic-mindedness, and his legacy to River City.

PP: Before Mr. Madison is asked to make a contribution, Marian needs to cultivate the relationship a bit more. Even though he has spoken about the library in past conversations with Marian and her father, Marian will want to engage him in additional conversations to share her vision for a River City library and to find out what parts of a library Mr. Madison may feel passionate about. An additional step is to ask Mr. Madison to participate in a feasibility study interview. This will allow him to react to the plans for the library and to feel as though he has had a hand in shaping the final building project.

Many requests for major gifts are made by more than one person—often a volunteer and staff person. With no staff in this situation, Marian will want to be sure to bring another individual whom Mr. Madison knows and respects. Both Marian and the other individual she brings to the appointment with Mr. Madison need to be contributors to the project before they ask Mr. Madison to contribute. Possible candidates would be Marian’s mother or a business colleague of Mr. Madison.

ST: Marian could ask Mr. Madison if he would help her raise the dollars needed for the project by making a matching gift of half of the funds needed. She might suggest that his gift challenge the town and the community to contribute the other half. She should offer the possibility that Mr. Madison be an “anonymous benefactor” if he wishes, but also state her admiration for his quiet good citizenship and her hope that his contributions be more widely recognized, perhaps by putting his
name on the library or some other part of the project.

**A New Paradigm**

Marian Paroo is concerned that she may lack the academic credentials necessary to succeed as a librarian and fund-raiser. She wonders if she should go back to school for additional training in either library science or fund-raising, but is unsure if major donor solicitation is a science or an art—or if it can really be taught at all.

While pondering just how to go about making the request to Mr. Madison, Marian hears rumors of a new approach that she thinks might offer a model for her. Through her music-teaching connections, she learns of a new “think system,” which is apparently being used to teach band music in communities in Kentucky and Illinois. According to this think system, all a student has to do in order to play the *Minuet in G* is to think the *Minuet in G*.

While Marian is dubious about this system being appropriate in teaching the flugelhorn, she wonders if it could be applied to her first attempt at fund-raising. Perhaps all she has to do is think the request—fully imagine it in her head—and then she will be able to successfully make the request.

**Questions**

Should Marian delay making the request until she has received some kind of formal training in major donor fund-raising?

**RL:** No, I don’t think Marian needs formal training. She has good natural instincts and a passion for the library project. I would love to have her as a volunteer on my library capital campaign! Her passion and commitment trump any formal fund-raising training I could offer. Just a little bit of rehearsal for the actual meeting, and I’d send her off. Too much time is wasted developing plans and materials so that canvassers have something in their briefcase—and frankly, they are just stalling in making their calls!

**ST:** No. Anyone with enough motivational skills to get a fourth-grade boy to the point that he can play a halfway decent version of *Für Elise* can raise money for a project she deeply believes in.

**SM:** Marian seems to have a good deal of confidence, given she thinks training in one field can help her be
successful in another. While experience is often transferable, there is still a good deal to be learned. It would be helpful if Marian could get a bit of training, but her reality is that there are no resources from which she could receive this training. Therefore, she should forge ahead, realizing that mistakes will be made along the way, but she will learn from these mistakes, and those lessons will help her be more successful in the future.

**PP:** Marian may not need course work in major fund-raising, but she should certainly seek out the assistance of a seasoned fund-raising professional.

**Do you think Marian should follow a variation on this think system in preparing to make her request?**

**PP:** The think method would not be terribly effective in this instance. Instead, Marian needs to be articulate, passionate, and well prepared for explaining the benefits, costs, and operational expenses after the building is built.

**SM:** I have two reactions: (1) If all we have to do is imagine ourselves getting a gift, our jobs would be a lot easier; (2) It’s a philosophy akin to the little engine that could—“I think I can successfully make the request, I think I can successfully make the request.”

    But by fully imagining the request in her head, Marian is doing something many of us do before we go into a donor meeting—rehearse. This is key, particularly when one is bringing in a board member to the meeting as well. It creates a united front, but more importantly, it establishes who will be doing the talking and who will be doing the asking. Although Marian is going in by herself, it will behoove her to know exactly what she is going to say, think of any questions he may ask and have answers prepared, and know how much she is requesting. Being rehearsed will give her confidence and that will no doubt impress Mr. Madison.

**RL:** A positive attitude is a key component for any level of asking. And rehearsing the scenario prior to the actual meeting is important too. If she can anticipate any negative responses from Mr. Madison and work these out beforehand, she will manage the meeting with aplomb. I’m sure Mr. Madison will be won over by her enthusiasm and passion for the project.

**ST:** While “thinking don’t make it so,” it is as important for Marian to rehearse asking Mr. Madison to support the library project as it is to practice, practice, practice the piano. Fully imagining her request—and then asking her mother or brother to pretend that they are Mr. Madison while Marian rehearses her conversation—will be very helpful to her.

**Marian’s Dilemma**

Marian fearlessly makes the request, following her basic belief that “No matter who one is, or what one is working for, one can do anything if one puts one’s mind to it.”

Mr. Madison asks for time to consider her request, but asks for her advice on one thing. Apparently, members of LAC have already spoken to him on the subject of a library and have strongly asserted their opinion that their town should be free of books by such smut peddlers as Chaucer, Rabelais, and especially Balzac. He asks Marian if she would consider accepting a gift toward the library on the condition that books by these authors be permanently excluded from the collection.

**Questions**

**Should Marian agree to this condition?**

**PP:** Marian should not agree to a condition of censorship with Mr. Madison’s contribution.

**RL:** Well, if Mr. Madison is truly only looking for Marian’s advice, then I think that she could have a rational discussion on the topic to explore options. She doesn’t need to agree outright without discussion on some compromise positions.

**SM:** Any time a donor expresses concern or offers up a condition, it needs to be dealt with accordingly. Ignoring it will just show the donor that you have not listened to him and don’t care about what he cares about. But one doesn’t need to give an answer there and then, particularly when it has to do with policy (in this case, acquisitions policy), as that often has to be discussed with board members. If you don’t know, admit it, but let the donor know you’ll look into it and get back to him. And don’t forget to do just as you promised!

**What are Marian’s options at this point?**

**SM:** The first thing Marian should do is thank him for considering her request, and then ask when he thinks he may have an answer for her. If he is unsure, then she can suggest a date. If he agrees, she should contact him on that date to see if he has made up his mind.

---

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

38
If he says yes, she should follow up the second conversation with a letter that acknowledges the gift and states the amount. If he says no, she should continue cultivating him with the hopes he may make a gift in the future.

**PP:** One option would be for Marian to suggest that such decisions would be made by a duly appointed library board with broad representation from the community rather than by a LAC with little or no knowledge of library issues.

**RL:** Ultimately, funding should be independent of collection policy. But the reality is that many funders have specific funding interests, and often they have an impact on collections. Public libraries take their role as the repository of all information very seriously, but also, they must live in the real world and reflect community standards. Many libraries have learned to compromise on access issues resulting in happy funders and patrons. Marian could suggest limited or restricted access to controversial texts, or active supervision and monitoring of use. But I’m not a librarian—and I willingly leave the procedural aspects to them!

**ST:** Anyone as wise and thoughtful as Mr. Madison seems to be, must himself be a reader of books that include such authors. Marian could express her strong opinion about the value of such widely regarded masters of literature and their ability to reflect—and reflect on—the foibles of being human. If Mr. Madison agrees to support Marian’s position, together they might create a more tolerant and deeply cultural environment in River City. That may be exactly what LAC fears, or they may really be afraid of exposing their children prematurely to the evils of the world. Marian could offer to make authors like these available in an adults-only section of the library. If Marian has built a good partnership with these ladies, they should now trust her to do what is in the best interest of River City.

**Conclusion**

In the end, Marian Paroo received the contribution that she wanted from Mr. Madison, made in the form of a planned-giving bequest. There was one curious proviso attached. In his will, Mr. Madison bequeathed a building to River City to be used as the site for a public library, and he left a large collection of new books designated for the library to Marian herself. The collection conspicuously included titles by Chaucer, Rabelais, and even Balzac. Although there was a considerable amount of whispering regarding the nature of this scandalous bequest, Marian got her library.

In later years, Marian married the respected music philosopher Professor Harold Hill. Thanks to their work, River City became known throughout the Midwest as an artistic and cultural haven, noted for its fine library, marching band, and barber shop quartets.
“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.

Guitar Hero and Rock Band
Games that are Fun and Educational

I recently attended a rock show. This is a bit out of character for me. I tend to have very odd taste in music, leaning more towards electronic than folks with guitars and drums “rocking out,” but I went all the same. The band was dressed in silver spandex and matching T-shirts that read “Satan’s Devils.” They preened, did some call and response with the audience (a well-lubricated audience filled the tavern, so this went on for a bit), and then the band finally started to “kick out the jams.” This is a column so I can’t adequately describe what it sounded liked, but I’ll endeavor. Click-click-click. Tappa-tappa-tappa. Click-click-click. Tappa-tappa-tappa. Yes, this was a Guitar Hero rock concert.

If you’re not familiar with Guitar Hero or Rock Band, let me fill you in. They are both games for next-generation video game consoles (XBox 360, Nintendo Wii, and Playstation 3) where the goal is to match your button mashing to the beat and rhythm of the music. They feature actual recordings from artists like KISS, Blue Oyster Cult, and Ozzy Osbourne. They come packaged with small plastic guitars featuring colored buttons in place of strings. Rock Band also comes with a drum kit, though the drums are actually flat plastic pads, not unlike rehearsal pads for “real” drumming.

I put “real” in quotes there for a good reason, and, no, snarkiness is not the reason. These games blur the line between reality and gaming in a completely original way. A friend of mine who has been drumming since grade school played Rock Band and said that the drumming in game was nearly identical to the skill set he uses in “real” bands. While the guitar controller might not teach chords, it does develop dexterity in the fingers, rhythm, and an ear for the beat. All vital skills when learning a musical instrument.

I’ll confess, at first I was very dubious of these games. I decided a couple years back to learn guitar after spending most of my childhood musical endeavors in choir and toiling away with the dreaded hand bells. I wanted to learn simply for my own pleasure. No delusions of rock stardom danced
in my head. It was arduous, and it took months for me to stop letting my pinky finger get in the way of a proper G chord, but now I have a small and growing number of songs under my belt. The sense of accomplishment and satisfaction is almost embarrassing.

But what if I’d been slapping the colored buttons of Guitar Hero instead of wading in the fetid waters of “Margaritaville”? Would I be any better off? I sneered at the games as a waste of time. Then I came to a very simple realization. These games weren’t for the dedicated student of chord charts and guitar tuning, they were meant to be points of inspiration. They were meant to fire young people’s passion for rock and roll, that most simple and youthful of musical styles. They were fun as all get out, but the teachable aspects of it were best directed at young adults.

Every teacher will tell you that if you can make learning fun you’ve achieved something wonderful. These games make music into a game. They create a sense of achievement, of curiosity and excitement about one of the most basic forms of expression. They also take some of the sting out of the learning curve. Seeing an F chord or a B minor or—my nemesis—the C chord for the first time can throw a wrench in the most excited student’s plans. Games allow that passion to continue without the frustration.

It’s very rare for me to make flat statements. Such pronouncements are often one-size-fits-some at best, but here goes nothing. Every library within the sound of this column needs to have these games on hand. Libraries need to host game nights, jam sessions, and just open up the doors and let the kids play. Games that inspire are as vital to young adults as any book, magazine, or website. The Millennial Generation views video games as simply another form of media to be consumed. In providing a full spectrum of services to young adults, libraries would be remiss in avoiding this opportunity to bring music, in a simple way.

The games can be expensive (Guitar Hero and its sequels average about $100 with the controller, Rock Band about $150) and game consoles range from $250 for the Wii to $400 for the PS3, but there are ways to mitigate the cost. Buying used games and controllers can cut those prices nearly in half. Many game stores offer trade-in credit. Running a drive where you collect old video games from patrons to offset the cost could work. If purchasing is out of the question, consider reaching out to the community to work out a lending program with patrons. The return on investment of time and money will be staggering.

I rarely recommend purchasing expensive capital items for libraries. The cash crunch is always there, staffing cuts loom, and hiring freezes make us shiver. Consider this: How many times have you read the same, tired story about how video games are to blame for violence, crassness, and the general downfall of society? How often are games and game makers excoriated as villains, like the comic book creators of old? What better way to shake the cobwebs off these irksome assumptions than to show the power of the new medium?

Even more broadly, when games come along that inspire players to learn, to be curious about playing music, and perhaps find a voice, isn’t it part of our duty as librarians to find a way to give young people a chance to experience them?
An elderly library patron attempting to help his young granddaughter do a report on Native Americans is befuddled when he cannot find any listing for American Indians in his library Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). A twenty-three-year-old patron searches in vain for any information on his favorite indie rock stars.

Imagine a breakthrough in which OPACs could be enhanced by subject headings selected by the people themselves. What if one's unwieldy bookmarks/favorites feature in his browser could be reorganized with his own custom-made subject headings of his favorite websites? What if all interested online users could also tag their favorites, using specialized software to pool all these favorites together? Now a participant could access any other participant’s tagged favorites file. This world is already bursting upon us with the rapid growth of online folksonomies. Since connecting users with information is at the very heart of the library profession, librarians are left asking, “Are folksonomies, indeed, a path to a better way?”

According to Dye, the term folksonomy “was coined in 2005 when information architect Thomas Vander Wal mashed up the words taxonomy and folk to name the growing phenomenon of users generating metadata by tagging pieces of digital information with their own searchable keywords.”¹

How do folksonomies work? Dye goes on to state that “the process is simple enough: users assign a name, or tag, to any image, article, blog, bookmark, or URL. Later, when they want to recall this content, they can search for its tag and find exactly what they're looking for.”² The social bookmarking software then organizes those tags to be accessible by all participants. Users will not only find many Web resources through these tags, they will also find a community of users with similar interests.

Why are proponents of social tagging so excited over this phenomenon? Many times users cannot relate to the subject headings assigned by the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) on OPACs. Social tagging gives the people the power to use categories that are meaningful to them. Researching becomes more accurate, and social taggers can tap into the findings of others by sharing their tags.

Exploration
In a library studies graduate class project, I joined my teammates Ebony and Heather in posting twenty-five images each on the Flickr website (www.flickr.com). We were to apply tags to our personal collections, then apply tags to each of our teammates’ collections. I displayed slides of Africa taken by my father, Dr. Robert L. Shrigley, when our whole family spent two years of my childhood in Kano, Nigeria. Ebony provided a photo...
One unusual aspect of our team was that Ebony is originally from Nigeria. Since Heather had never set foot in that country, Ebony represented the Flickr community members with intimate knowledge of Nigerian culture, while Heather represented those who needed to research that culture. For example, my father took many pictures of Nigerian Muslims practicing their religious rituals. Ebony already understood these Islamic practices, while Heather periodically referred to Islamic websites to broaden her understanding.

Agreeing ahead of time to emphasize originality, we strenuously avoided copying each other’s tags. This suited my purposes well, for a greater number of distinct tags meant increased findability of our images by the whole Flickr community.

When tagging my own site, I created either five or six descriptors from my own mental vocabulary. Five tags were required and, to my mind, that meant six would be even better. I resisted going beyond six due to time pressures and not wanting to make my teammates feel like they had to do the same. Also, using single-word tags seemed more concise to me. Yet, when I did use multiple-word tags, such as my “mother and child” tag for one of my father’s images, Flickr readily accommodated it.

What did I learn from my tagging these three photo galleries? First of all, while I had no trouble understanding my slides, I obviously lacked my teammates’ familiarity with their subjects. I could specifically tag the image of the Nigerian woman balancing the gourd on her head as that of a Fulani woman carrying cow’s milk in a calabash gourd, but I could not name even one of Ebony’s tennis stars. Thus, I had to depend on my partners’ title and description cues.

Secondly, my mission of increasing findability for the entire Flickr community consumed my tagging choices. Filling in the missing logical word choices (according to my mental check list) guided my selection.

Thirdly, I had assumed that findability is enhanced by tagging only what one actually sees in the slides—what I had dubbed as “objective tagging.” Words that captured the emotions of the slides’ subjects or my emotional response to the slides were off limits for my purposes.

Flickr provides a useful tool called a tag cloud, in which the more popular tags are displayed as larger in size. My research of my own Flickr tag cloud revealed that only the 150 most popular tags from all three of us were floating in this cloud, and all capital letters had been replaced with small letters. Multiple-word tags were put together in one long tag, such as “oldcityofkano.” Not surprisingly, the four largest tags are the four tags I used in all my images: Africa, dlis-571abbas, lis571, and Nigeria.

How did my teammates tag my images? Like me, they also tried to supply the descriptors I had missed. They added some great terms I had not even thought of, such as “changing color” for my chameleon slide and “playmates” for the preteen Fulani cow herders.

Yet to my surprise they did not limit themselves to objective tags. Roughly one-third of their tags resulted from their subjective analysis of the images. Within this subjective category, about half dealt with my teammates’ interpretation of the main characters’ attitudes. For example, they had attached the word “humility” to two images: one of Sule, a Muslim holy man, as he bowed toward Mecca, and the second of the image of hundreds of Muslims bowing toward Mecca.

The other half of these subjective tags came from their own emotional reactions to the slides. Heather had tagged my slide of an uninhabited African village surrounded by a bamboo wall as “freedom.” She later told me this image evoked within her feelings of the liberty she associates with returning to a simpler, more back-to-nature lifestyle.

When Heather tagged my images she tried to analyze what was going on in my scenes without relying too heavily on my title or description. This is why she checked instructional Islamic websites. She also did not tag to increase findability for the entire Flickr community, but just to be original.

Ebony would read my titles and descriptions and try to pick descriptors consistent with my wording. She did not refer to outside sources, possibly because she was from Nigeria. She also was not thinking in terms of assigning descriptors for other Flickr members to find.

One aspect of Ebony’s distinctive tagging style for her tennis stars was her omission of their given names. Instead she used their nicknames. Perhaps she assumed everyone (myself excluded) already knew their real names or just thought their nicknames were more colorful. At any rate, driven in my mission to increase findability, I had every star tagged with his or her given name. One interesting aspect to her style was Ebony’s rating of certain male athletes as “hunkamania” or “hottie.” I checked the whole Flickr site and found that hunkamania was used ten times versus the 9,995 appearances of hottie.
Apparently, at this point in time, hunkamania accompanies male images while hottie is a unisex tag.

Ebony’s use of these two terms poses the fascinating question of the evolution of slang terminology. While hottie is riding high on the crest of popularity right now, it would be an intriguing study to track just where hottie and hunkamania might rank five years from now.

The 9,955 hottie tags taught me one valuable lesson: Subjective tagging is really popular on Flickr.

Heather’s distinctive subjective tagging style consisted of analyzing her daughter’s facial expressions and body language to assign a phrase that captured Natalie’s thoughts. In one slide, Natalie displays a lowered brow and heavy eyelids. Her mother tagged that image with, “It wasn’t me.” Upon checking for all “it wasn’t me” tags on Flickr, I found forty-three additional images with that designation. My favorite was that of a baby in a high chair, wearing a bib embroidered “It wasn’t me!”

Assessment of Experiment
Flickr participants apply tags to accomplish different purposes. Some community members assign tags for their own personal findability, while other members focus on increasing findability for all Flickr participants.

Our Flickr experiment also indicates that, at times, some users avoid emotional responses and employ objective tags. When several persons objectively tag the same image, their pooled efforts can produce useful synonyms that the owner of the images never thought to use.

Sometimes users prefer the emotional connotations of subjective tagging. These types of tags give a fascinating glimpse into what others are thinking, as well as the current use of slang terminology. Seeing the implications for public-oriented information professionals, Etches-Johnson observes, “one glance at the ‘popular tags’ list on del.icio.us gives you immediate insight into what users are searching for. What if we had the ability to gain this sort of insight into our library users’ behaviors and preferences?”

Tips for Tagging
Are there any best practices in how to actually tag websites? First, evaluate all available social bookmarking software to make the right choice for you. Check the information provided at www.readwriteweb.com/archives/social_bookmarking_faceoff.php and www.h3rald.com/articles/view/social-bookmarking-services. Be sure to look for an export feature. If your software ever faces extinction, you must be able to export all of your hard work to another site. For the purposes of this paper, I will specify del.icio.us, as it is by far the most popular social bookmarking site.

Use your software’s plug-in (or tag). Drag it to your toolbar and click on it whenever you find a good website. A form will pop up, easily allowing you to type in information such as notes about the site and descriptor tags. Then just click the Save button, and it is now part of your collection.

Before you begin any tagging, think through a personal plan as to how you will tag your sites and consistently stick to that plan! You do not want to return several months later and have to re-do all your tags.

Pick your tag words carefully. Select a set of keywords you will readily recall and can use over and over. If you wish to share your websites with others, include some of the tags that del.icio.us specifies as popular tags.

Use five or six tag words per site, generally nouns. As mentioned by Chanchal Gupta, if you restrict yourself to one tag, you may find yourself wading through myriad sites trying to find that one special tag for that one particular site a year later.

John D’Agostino believes that when picking your tags you “focus on main issue of the bookmark without going into too much detail.”5 He also tries “not to overlap tags which have the same meaning.”6 For example, he avoids what some users do when they tag sites with these three tags: “web,” “development,” and then “webdev.”

Would you like to record when you first found each site? If so, Chris Rippel, head of the continuing education department at Central Kansas Library System, suggests adding a year/month date tag to each link. If you found your link in July 2007, merely add the tag “2007July” as another descriptor.

Decide how you will put together two-word tags. First, study your software’s rules concerning such tags. In the case of del.icio.us, spaces are not permitted and two words must be combined into one. Suppose you wished to tag all sites offering jobs in libraries. Some users would tag this as “jobslibraries,” all in the lower case. Others might like to try camelcing. Camelcing means to display significant letters in upper case, in order to better catch the user’s eye. In this example, the user would tag these job sites as “JobsLibraries.” The beauty of camelcing in del.icio.us is that it will retrieve both the “jobslibraries” and the “JobsLibraries” sites.
Ben Hockenberry, a cataloging vendor employee and 2007 MLS graduate, adds prefixes to his tags in del.icio.us. He prefixes the tag with “in:” or “lang:” to distinguish between different words.

Explore early how your software organizes tags into hierarchical layers. Del.icio.us presently offers only two layers. One layer is the name of the bundle itself and the other is the name of the tag contained within that bundle. Rippel has developed one trick he uses within this framework—that of collecting computer training tutorial sites in his del.icio.us account. One of his bundles is called “Hardware” and another is called “Software.” “Explanations” is a tag that could belong in either bundle. So Rippel tags the hardware explanations as “hExplanations” and the software explanations as “sExplanations” (see table 1).

Despite del.icio.us’s restriction of two layers, Rippel has also devised a way to produce a third layer. Within his collection of computer training tutorials, Rippel has named one bundle “Hardware.” The second layer is the tag “Mouse.” He has devised a third layer by combining the broad “Mouse” tag with another tag that narrows the meaning. This last tag can be either “Buying,” “Repairing,” or “Training” (see table 2).

Bookmarklets are great time-saving, free devices for information professionals as they build up their personal accounts of websites. They are available at both www.bookmarklets.com and www.squarefree.com/bookmarklets. Bookmarklets contain a formula written in Javascript. Each bookmarklet performs a unique function to a website and can be installed on your link bar or tool bar.

Would you like to get rid of those annoying, hard-to-read background colors on some of your selected websites? The squarefree.com site offers a “zap” bookmarklet that will do just that. No matter what the original color, using this bookmarklet will change the text to black on a white background.

The bookmarklets.com site offers a bookmarklet called More Info About that allows you to surf without clicking on links. Suppose you find a word or phrase that interests you, but no link is attached. By just dragging across this word or phrase, the bookmarklet will quickly feed it into a search engine for you, saving you steps.

One note of caution about using bookmarklets: read the site first to see what browsers are compatible with the bookmarklets. For example, the bookmarklets from the bookmarklets.com site specifies Internet Explorer 4, and may not work with the latest browsers. Steve Kangas, the author of bookmarklets.com, is planning to update his site to accommodate current browsers.

**Table 1. Del.icio.us Double Layers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer 1: HARDWARE</th>
<th>Layer 2: hExplanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Layer 1: SOFTWARE</td>
<td>Layer 2: sExplanations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Del.icio.us Triple Layers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layer 1: HARDWARE</th>
<th>Layer 2: Mouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Layer 3: MouseBuying or MouseRepairing or MouseTraining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YA librarians should also encourage their teen users to download pictures from Flickr to add to their reports.18

Lisa Holmes, children’s library assistant at the Central City Library’s Centre for the Child in Christchurch, New Zealand, uses del.icio.us to compose her own collection of resources for her storytimes and for class visits from the local school.19

Suppose many of your adults love to explore genealogy sites. Why not post a link on your library’s website to a list of genealogy sites in del.icio.us? The Stony Brook University Health Sciences Library (www.hsclib.sunysb.edu) has a link to del.icio.us under the Research Assistance category on the home page. At the present time, this link (http://del.icio.us/healthscienceslibrary) takes the user directly to 104 websites for their student patrons.

Flickr can also add to your library’s Web presence. La Grange Park (Ill.) Public Library (LGPPPL) has a great picture gallery set up on Flickr at www.flickr.com/search/?q=LaGrange+Park+Library. Presently, you will see photos of summer reading programs, princess tea ceremonies, or knit-a-thons. According to Schmidt, when LGPPPL was experiencing construction, photos were uploaded to Flickr to allow all interested users to follow the progress.20

As a cataloger, Hockenberry compiles link lists using keywords such as “cataloging+marc+standards” and gives the URL for his tag to trainees to guide them to best practices for the job.21 As of this writing, the previously quoted tag will net you 118 choice cataloging sites on del.icio.us.

Darren Chase has uploaded a gallery of pictures from the Stony Brook University Health Sciences Library in New York on Flickr at www.flickr.com/photos/hslibrary.22 Be sure to check out the beautiful orchids that grace the facility.

Have you discovered Pageflakes (www.pageflakes.com) yet? This efficient site serves as a one-stop location for your frequently accessed websites. Each flake, or box, houses a website such as your favorite news service, Flickr photos, local events, weather, a podcast feed, movie listing, e-mail carrier, videos, and so forth.

Pageflakes serves as a great place to display your pick of social bookmarking resources. For example, suppose you are presenting a booktalk on author Walter Dean Myers. After finishing your booktalk, tell the teens to view your Pageflake public pagecast (view mine at www.pageflakes.com/cosentin/12771379), and they can tune into Flickr photos of Myers, his interview with First Book, del.icio.us tags to the best Myers websites, two additional written booktalks to whet their appetites, and a well-done, homegrown video clip of Myers’s book Monster. One cautionary note about using Pageflakes: the site requires heavy use of Web resources. Be sure to get clearance from your library’s information technology person before using Pageflakes.

Enhancing OPACs with Social Tagging

As recently as 2001, catalogers such as Wendy Tan were wrestling with the inherent difficulties of trying to catalog ever-changing websites.23 Perhaps instead of trying to catalog websites, we should concentrate on enhancing presently existing OPACs by linking them to social bookmarking sites.

Fichter reports that the library at the University of Pennsylvania has already set up PennTags (http://tags.library.upenn.edu).24 PennTags allows community members to add entries. Eitches-Johnson reports that “some libraries are already using social bookmarking tools to provide Web-based subject bibliographies for their users,” and she quotes the Thomas Ford Memorial Library as an example (www.library.org/referenceresearchcenter/topicguides).25

LibraryThing (www.librarything.com) can be a wonderful addition to your OPAC. LibraryThing is a folksonomic type of software that enables members to build personal catalogs of their favorite books. The start of my collection is available at www.librarything.com/catalog/cosentin. LibraryThing also allows members to write reviews of their own favorite books and see the reviews others gave those same titles. To find fresh reading material, you can see the names of books similar to yours that have been submitted by fellow members. At the “Tag-Info” section, you can view what the entire LibraryThing community is reading on one particular subject. For instance, for my tag “animals,” Tag-Info tells me which users use that tag, which books were most often tagged with “animals,” and the last ten books tagged “animals.”

Libraries such as Bedford (Tex.) Public Library (www.bedfordlibrary.org) have added LibraryThing to their OPAC. LibraryThing enhances OPAC by adding user-friendly genres that LCSH does not recognize, such as “cozy mysteries.” If you click on the LibraryThing link, it will bring you to the Thingology Blog. Clicking on the “cozy mysteries” link brings up a tag cloud as well as dozens upon dozens of books similar to the listed OPAC novel, which is Abby Cooper, Psychic Eye (Psychic Eye Mysteries, Book One), by Victoria Laurie. What a great idea for patrons hunting for new authors in their favorite genre!
Has your library incorporated LibraryThing to meet the informational needs of, say, your users wishing to start their own small business? Ed Rossman, adult services librarian at Shaker Heights (Ohio) Public Library (www.shakerlibrary.org), is working on showing Score business counselors how to use LibraryThing.26 First, the patrons are shown the library’s OPAC of small business resources. The Score counselors develop their own LibraryThing accounts of best resources. The counselors and patrons would all use a shared tag, like “score_shpl,” to give everyone access to the LibraryThing resources. Rossman is also making plans to ask local churches and Bible study groups for their favorite books on LibraryThing, hoping to add those resources to the library’s religious studies collection.

Conclusion
Librarians and other information professionals have reason to be eagerly watching the developments of social tagging within the online folksonomy communities. By all means, social tagging of library collections must be encouraged to continue. More libraries should add LibraryThing and the next generation of folksonomic sites to their OPACs. Above all else, for our own information needs and certainly for the needs of our users, librarians must become skilled users of social-tagging software sites. Then maybe, sometime in the near future, no library patron will be left to vainly scour the stacks for the elusive Native American or any favorite indie rock star. That would indeed be a goal worth shooting for.

References
2. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
In addition to the print version, PLA is now offering access to the PLDS Online Database. The Online Database features a dynamic, Web-based format. Users can:

- View 2008 PLDS Tables - including summary and comparison tables, with searchable data exportable into Excel/CSV file formats, and linked data from other report sections.
- Access 2006, 2007, and 2008 summary tables in interactive charts control the type of chart (line, bar, area, pie) the information is displayed in, and the types of calculations used. Charts will include breakdowns by legal service area (as in the print version), as well as breakdowns by state and the legal services within each state.
- Create customized PLDS datasets with user-defined data, calculations, charts, and other analysis that can be saved and exported into Excel/CSV file formats.

The PLDS Online Database, a project of the Public Library Association, is designed to meet the needs of public library administrators and others for timely and effective library-specific data that illuminates and supports a wide variety of management decisions.

A subscription to the PLDS Database provides unlimited Web access to data and reports from the 2006, 2007, and 2008 Public Library Data Service Survey for one year (12 months).

I wish to order ____________ one year (12 months) subscription(s) @ $250 each ____________ total

Please Bill Me:
Invoiced orders require P.O. # ______________________ or Authorized Signature____________________________
Charge to My Credit Card:      ___Amex       ___MasterCard       ___Visa
Account Number__________________Exp. Date_________________Authorized Signature______________________

Bill To:
Name: ________________________________________________________________________________
Institution: ______________________________________________________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________________
City: _________________________________State:______________________Zip:_____________________

Send To:
Name: ________________________________________________________________________________
Institution: ______________________________________________________________________________
Email Address: ___________________________________________________________________________

RETURN THIS ORDER FORM TO PLA VIA FAX: 312-280-5029 OR REGULAR MAIL, PLA, 50 E. HURON, CHICAGO, IL 60611. QUESTIONS: PLA@ALA.ORG OR 800-545-2433, EXT. 5752
The PLDS Statistical Report, a project of the Public Library Association, is designed to meet the needs of public library administrators and others for timely and effective library-specific data that illuminates and supports a wide variety of management decisions. In addition, since its beginning in 1988, the PLDS reports have been used extensively by the media to understand the public library and its environment. Order your copy today!

To reserve your copies of the PLDS Statistical Report 2008 - Print Version, please complete the form below. The cost is $120 per copy.

I wish to order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(ISBN 13: 978-0-8389-8453-6) @ $120 each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shipping and Handling Charges

$100 to $149.99 - $10
$150 to $199.99 - $11
$200 - 8% of total order

Choose one: ALA-only members deduct 10%  
ALA/PLA members deduct 20%

Total

Please Bill Me:

Invoiced orders require P.O. # ______________________ or Authorized Signature______________________________

Charge to My Credit Card:  ___Amex       ___MasterCard       ___Visa

Account Number__________________Exp. Date_________________Authorized Signature______________________

Bill To:

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Institution: ______________________________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________State:______________________Zip:________________________

Ship To:

Name: ________________________________________________________________________________

Institution: ______________________________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________State:______________________Zip:_____________________

RETURN THIS ORDER FORM TO PLA VIA FAX: 312-280-5029 OR REGULAR MAIL, PLA, 50 E. HURON, CHICAGO, IL 60611. QUESTIONS: PLA@ALA.ORG OR 800-545-2433, EXT. 5752
In late summer 2004, a casual suggestion from a librarian to an administrator led a group of Dallas Public Library (DPL) employees to create the first-ever series of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) author presentations in the library’s history. While DPL’s clientele consists of many distinct populations, represented by special events and activities on a regular basis, no programming specifically targeted to the GLBT community had ever been attempted. But thanks to some highly motivated employees, DPL would tackle the project from the ground up.

With the initial guidance of the library’s central administrator, an ad hoc committee was formed consisting of six librarians and assistant managers from several central library divisions and DPL branches, all of whom had previously demonstrated or expressed interest in GLBT literature and programming. Beginning in the summer of 2004, we met monthly to brainstorm ideas for programs and other special projects that would be of high interest to the GLBT patrons we all serve.

Planning Our First Series
We soon decided that a series of three public programs featuring GLBT authors discussing their work and lives would be a viable and visible manifestation of our intent. Author schedules permitting, these programs would be held monthly on Saturday afternoons during the fall of 2005. The venue would be DPL’s Oak Lawn Branch Library, located in a neighborhood that is home to numerous GLBT-related businesses and activities.
But which writers should be invited? The first person chosen by the committee was the award-winning young-adult author Julie Anne Peters. One of the committee members had interviewed her for publication earlier that year, and had also highly recommended her novels to several others in the group.

After further discussions, we invited comic-strip artist Alison Bechdel and poet/memoirist Mark Doty to round out our series. We wanted authors who would appeal not only to GLBT patrons, but to a general audience as well. Author negotiations proved interesting, diverse, and, ultimately, successful. All three writers were honored to be part of our fledgling series, although speaker fees and expense reimbursement requests differed markedly among them.

Money Matters
As for funding, in addition to $3,000 of seed money committed to our project by DPL's multicultural administrator, we also planned to secure support from several large corporate entities and other GLBT-related businesses within the Oak Lawn neighborhood.

In our enthusiasm to bring our chosen authors to Dallas, the committee, perhaps naively, assumed that said businesses would readily offer substantial financial support—or perhaps even underwrite the cost of one entire program. We contacted our most likely revenue sources by mail and telephone, and while waiting their (inevitable, we thought) checks and pledges, assembled lists of other entities to approach as backup.

Unfortunately, the presumed major donors chose not to contribute to our project, which left us keenly disappointed though still confident that we could easily raise the money among other local businesses. However, we soon realized that we should have begun our fund-raising efforts immediately and not depended so heavily on only a few key sponsors.

Perhaps regrettably, our authors' signed contracts were finalized before all of the necessary monies were actually in place. We thus began our major fund-raising thrust less than six months prior to our first event, with many dollars yet to be raised.

As fund-raising began to assume a more ominous role in our planning, we simultaneously faced changes in our committee's membership, as several people left the group for various reasons. Our first unofficial chairperson relinquished the group's leadership to an assistant manager at DPL's central library, while still remaining a vital member of the team. Along with coordinating the overall work of the committee, our new leader now also assumed the role of treasurer and financial point person.

Publicity and Record Keeping
In the realm of publicity, we utilized the staff of DPL's central design and exhibits division. They created 8.5" x 11" multicolor posters and flyers, featuring photographs of each author, brief descriptions of his or her work, and standard biographical information. Our hope was that the flyers would be displayed in the windows of area businesses. Information about the event and authors was included in the local GLBT weekly newspaper, and since the series would begin during Dallas's annual pride weekend in mid-September, we purchased advertising space in the Pride Guide, a full-color magazine promoting the weekend's events.

The library's design staff did an excellent job creating our materials, spotlighting the theme “Check Out the Oak Lawn Library,” complete with rainbow color motif, at no direct cost to us. However, we underestimated the many hours that would be required from each committee member and from DPL support-services staff toward making our author series a reality. As a result, we resolved to be more cognizant of the staff-time factor in the future.

Meanwhile, we were able to negotiate discounted hotel room rates for our visiting authors at hotels that were in walking distance of the library and other GLBT-oriented attractions in the neighborhood.

Our treasurer devised a budget structure for the series consisting of five major categories: Expenses, Donations, Funds Earmarked, Funds Not Earmarked, and Remaining Funds Needed. We eventually determined that our earmarked categories were actually difficult to track and thus not very useful. So, our five budget lines became three: Expenses, Donations, and Remaining Funds Needed with the latter delineated in date order.

Our Debut
The September debut of our series was now only weeks away, but we still needed additional funding. Committee members then made personal cold calls to potential neighborhood business sponsors with limited success, although several valuable contacts were established that we hoped would prove fruitful for the following year.

As September drew near, smaller details loomed larger, such as airport logistics, post-program din-
ner plans, accommodating our speakers’ audio-visual needs, collecting goodie-bag gift items for the authors, and much more. To our immense relief and gratification, Julie Anne Peters’ September appearance went splendidly, and she proved to be a delightful guest and speaker. There were approximately fifteen people in our audience that day. While we had certainly hoped for a larger turnout, those attending shared enthusiastic reactions on short surveys that we had distributed.

Our Concerns Continue
Thanks to some budget juggling, we had sufficient funds to pay Bechdel, our next speaker, but the committee was still in the financial hole for our third and final author, Doty. We quickly compiled a list of Oak Lawn-area businesses that had previously advertised in Dallas’s weekly GLBT newspaper and made a new round of telephone cold calls. At this point, however, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was an overwhelming fact of life in Dallas. Thousands of evacuees were now calling our city home, thus stretching a typical business’s charitable-contributions capability to the maximum. We therefore had minimal success on this occasion but were learning much about fundraising on a daily basis.

Bechdel’s appearance in October, her first time ever in Dallas, was another logistical success. Unfortunately, despite her high name recognition within the GLBT community, and even though we distributed flyers to several lesbian book-discussion groups in the area, only ten persons attended her presentation. Was the day’s beautiful weather a factor? Was Saturday afternoon perhaps not the best time for such events? Was there some other publicity venue we should have tapped? Our group obviously had serious issues to consider in planning for 2006, along with immediate concerns regarding an audience for our final speaker.

Our First Series Concludes
For Doty, our November speaker, we would target our publicity efforts more precisely. To that end, a committee member e-mailed an online invitation for the event to various writing groups and relevant organizations, plus area university English departments. Since Doty’s work appeals to a broad spectrum of readers, we felt justified in expanding our efforts beyond the immediate Oak Lawn neighborhood.

Our additional public relations efforts, plus fortuitous timing, were greatly successful, as nearly forty-five people joined us for Doty’s appearance. The scheduling of this particular program free of conflict with any other major GLBT event in the Oak Lawn area and combined with our targeted publicity blitz obviously produced results. We on the committee had learned a valuable programming lesson for the future.

On to 2006
Our first order of 2006 business was devising a mission statement:

The GLBT Adult Programming Committee of the Dallas Public Library strives to enhance the quality of life for the GLBT population of Dallas by providing cultural and educational programs that enlighten, inspire, and foster a sense of community. It also aims to highlight the role the Dallas Public Library can play in this endeavor, by sponsoring events relevant to the GLBT community and encouraging those attending to use library resources in order to strengthen the community.

For the sake of finances and audience appeal, this year, we would offer programming featuring speakers from the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and dealing with topics of more current interest to the GLBT population. We would thus mount a speaker series not necessarily focused on literary authors.

Our speakers for fall 2006 included a local representative from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) in a workshop on effectively dealing with the media regarding GLBT issues; and the North Texas chapter of Immigration Equality, discussing immigration issues affecting the GLBT community. Our only out-of-town presenter was award-winning gay poet/physician Rafael Campo.

In addition, thanks to our committee’s initiative, DPL became one of only six American cities chosen to host the San Francisco Public Library’s GLBT historical traveling exhibit “Out at the Library: Celebrating the James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center.” The materials would be on display at DPL’s Oak Lawn Branch Library from February through April 2007. Our committee would take full advantage of Dallas’s prestigious selection for this exhibit by arranging a preopening reception in late January 2007, with invited guests and likely media coverage.

Because our local speakers would be appearing free of charge, Campo’s program would be our major single expense for 2006. Our designated multicultural DPL funds would cover his costs, though we
would continue fund-raising within the community. In comparison to the previous year, our financial burden was noticeably lighter. Unfortunately, our solicitation letter, sent to all previous and hoped-for sponsors with follow-up phone calls shortly thereafter, did not raise an appreciable amount although several of our 2005 contributors did once again respond favorably.

Our 2006 publicity efforts replicated those from 2005 (glossy posters and flyers for distribution throughout the library and surrounding community), plus targeted e-mail announcements distributed through appropriate channels. For reasons of cost, we decided to forgo advertising in Dallas’s weekly GLBT newspaper or the annual Pride Guide.

A total of forty people attended our three 2006 programs, a small, but enthusiastic group. Twenty-five people, including several Dallas city council members, joined us for the “Out at the Library” opening reception in January 2007. The exhibit drew steady crowds of appreciative visitors over the next several months.

2007

Our 2007 programming took another turn as we presented a Q Pride Film Series at DPL’s central library in downtown Dallas on six Saturday afternoons from September through November. Since DPL owns a license allowing staff members to show movies from its own collection, expenses incurred were solely for refreshments and payment to a local film critic for commentary at each showing. Our features included Rent, In & Out, Philadelphia, and Too Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar, with Greta Garbo’s classic Queen Christina for a little historical perspective.

Since our film license does not allow us to advertise the titles of our scheduled movies in any venue outside the DPL system, our 2007 publicity efforts were somewhat circumscribed, though we did use posters and flyers along with information on the library’s website.

Always consider approaching businesses, individuals, foundations, grant-bestowing groups, and nationally based nonprofit organizations interested in serving the same target audience that you are aiming for.

What Did We Learn?

So what have we learned during these eventful, fulfilling years of thinking, planning, calculating, anguishing, and building camaraderie? What questions should be uppermost for any library group wanting to produce a similarly targeted series of programs? Here are some thoughts and suggestions:

- It’s never too early to start fund-raising. Start thinking about it immediately, the very first day you create your brilliant programming concept.
- If you have ideas for a program series, formulate its tentative budget, and then either raise the needed money to meet that budget or secure your available money in place first. Then plan your programs to accommodate what you have accumulated.
- Think about other fund-raising your library may be doing. In effect, synchronize your begging so that you and another library department, or county department, or unit of your supporting organization, are not asking the same potential sponsors for precious limited dollars.
- Always consider approaching businesses, individuals, foundations, grant-bestowing groups, and nationally based nonprofit organizations interested in serving the same target audience that you are aiming for.
- Schedule with care! We now believe that a crucial reason why our first two 2005 events did not draw sizeable audiences was the fact that each took place during a period of mega-activity in the Oak Lawn neighborhood. Peters appeared during Dallas’s annual pride weekend, and Bechdel joined us hours before the yearly neighborhood Halloween party and parade would begin. Access to parking was slim to none on those particular Saturdays, and overall activity overload was likely a deterrent as well. By contrast, Doty’s appearance took place during a free weekend, with obvious positive results.
- We underestimated the many hours that would be required from both committee members and
DPL support staff in order to bring this project to life. Therefore, any library team wishing to tackle something similar should be prepared for major time expenditures along the way for all personnel involved.

- Out-of-pocket expenses—from last-minute color copies at Kinko’s to gasoline for airport chauffeuring—should also be tallied so you will have a more accurate overview of the projects’ costs.

**Summing Up**

Over the last three years, each of us has learned and grown tremendously in our roles as money managers, public relations mavens, party planners, and hotel/conference negotiators. To be sure, we have faced miscalculations and disappointments along the way, but dedication to our overall vision and to each other as colleagues-in-arms has never wavered. We began this undertaking as a committee and became a team. We look forward to the years ahead, solid in our resolve to continue bringing enlightening, entertaining programs to our special audiences. And to all of you, we say, go forth and multiply. Your libraries and the people you serve will be better for your efforts.

---

**Penguin Commmemorates the Centennial of Ian Fleming’s Birth**

May 28, 2008 marks the 100-year anniversary of the birth of author Ian Fleming, best known for creating the world’s most-loved secret agent, James Bond.

It was in March 1952 that Fleming completed *Casino Royale*, the novel that introduced his immortal character, the elegant, amorous, and indestructible Agent 007. More than a half-century after his literary debut, the world’s sexiest crime fighter continues to thrill new generations of readers with his heart-stopping adventures.

In 2002, Penguin Books started bringing trade paperbacks of all fourteen James Bond books back into print. In order of their original publication, here are the Ian Fleming works featuring James Bond:

- *Casino Royale*, 1951
- *Live and Let Die*, 1954
- *Moonraker*, 1955
- *Diamonds Are Forever*, 1956
- *From Russia, with Love*, 1957
- *Doctor No*, 1958
- *Goldfinger*, 1959
- *For Your Eyes Only*, 1960 (short stories, including *Quantum of Solace*)
- *Thunderball*, 1961
- *The Spy Who Loved Me*, 1962
- *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, 1963
- *You Only Live Twice*, 1964
- *The Man with the Golden Gun*, 1965
- *Octopussy*, 1966 (short stories)

An all-new Bond novel, *Devil May Care* (Doubleday, May 2008) by Sebastian Faulks, and a new Bond movie, *Quantum of Solace* (MGM, November 2008), will be released to celebrate the Ian Fleming centennial.

OPEN ACCESS AND
Science
NEW PATHS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

NADINE DALTON SPEIDEL (nspeidel@cuyahogalibrary.org) has sixteen years of experience as a paraprofessional in public libraries and recently obtained an MLS degree. She is reading Dismantling the Public Sphere: Situating and Sustaining Librarianship in the Age of the New Public Philosophy by John E. Buschman, Origin by Diana Abu-Jaber, and Your Home A Living Canvas by Curtis L. Heuser.

Rising costs of serials created a war in libraries and the publishing world in the last decade. Our brothers and sisters in academic libraries fought for freedom of information, and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) was born. In the face of continuing price battles, developments favoring free flow of information continue to occur. One such development is the open access (OA) movement. In a nutshell, OA holds dear the availability of information, oftentimes scholarly information in the form of research articles and journals, to anyone in need, with minimal restriction. A webliography concerning OA can be found at www.escholarly-pub.com/cwb/oaw.htm. Pursuing some of the links listed there will illustrate the history of the movement, the ongoing debates, directories of OA repositories and e-journals, and guidelines for OA publishing, including a thorough discussion of copyright in this new world.

Open access (OA) is an attempt to keep information available to the public. Many governments, international agencies, museums and other cultural organizations, as well as universities and educators support OA and understand its importance to the global community. Public libraries are in line with this goal of freedom of information to their citizenry, and yet, scant discussion has occurred in the public libraries community with regard to understanding the OA movement, furthering the cause, or utilization of OA materials for the general public.

Typically, the OA information in question will be available in digital form. Protocols are followed, such as Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) to ensure interoperability, or the ability of various computer systems to exchange information in a meaningful way. Metadata, or simply data about data, helps with storage and retrieval of information by describing a digital object, stating its creator, size, content, quality, condition, and more. This process is somewhat akin to good old-fashioned cataloging. One of the most popular formats for metadata is the Dublin Core (DC), which utilizes “title,” “creator,” “subject,” “description,” “publisher,” “contributor,” “date,” “type,” “format,” “identifier,” “source,” “language,” “relation,” “coverage,” and “rights” as elements for resource description (see http://dublincore.org).¹

A few public libraries have begun to publish digital collections or digital libraries of local value. For example, some libraries work closely with their local historical society, which may have a collection of documents relating to local historic events. Or perhaps a collection of historic postcards exists that illustrates historic changes in landscape and architecture of the community through the years. These can be nice additions to a library’s complete digital collection. However, it is highly recommended that creators of digital libraries use some sort of metadata and also attempt to house material in an OA repository so that the metadata
can be harvested and the rest of the world can find it. Depending on the collection, other options for metadata besides DC may be implemented. Visual Resources Association (VRA) has produced the VRA Core for materials relating to cultural heritage, as well as Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO). These types of collections may be heavily graphic or visual in nature (see www.vraweb.org for more detail). Thesauri that have grown up around the OA movement are also available. Woll details a method for thesauri use and correctly states that use of such tools will better enable the average digital library user to navigate through the material.²

**Costs, Quality, and Copyright**

The most current debate in the OA movement relates to costs and means of support. Two trends have developed. One, referred to as the green road, champions self-archiving and placing information in an institutional archive or other central repository after publishing in a subscription journal. The second method, gold road, posits that authors would publish their work in an OA venue right from the start. The latest argument in these two scenarios is whether or not the author should pay a fee, usually several thousand U.S. dollars, to be archived in an OA venue. Traditional academic research and subscription journal publishing involves monies from member organization subscriptions and research grants, among others. OA has pursued other means of funding. However, is it a valid notion to expect the author to incur an additional fee? Freedom of information is an altruistic thought, but can we ever hope to provide access without any funding? Can OA ultimately be self-supporting and sustainable? Can OA transform subscription journal publishing?

OA is a relatively new construct, and serious in-depth study of business models, support for information flow, and utility as a method of publishing have not been completed as of yet. One recent article focuses on science, medical, and technological (SMT) information, and provides a good conceptual model for analysis of OA as a sustainable publishing venue. Sally Morris situates publishing within the total costs of research and breaks every step down by costs.³ She reminds us that the scholarly community assumes costs for editing and refereeing. When taking into account honorariums paid for editing, payment to journal editors, expenses for meeting attendance, and the like, Morris claims that this cost can often surpass fees for books. Publishers take on costs for creating journals in print and online, content editing, marketing, sales, customer service, and archiving. One overlooked point surrounds customer service—with the advent of global information sharing, and the need for information technology (IT) troubleshooting, customer service has become a 24/7 responsibility, creating a need for more staff with expertise. Libraries are responsible for acquisition, storage, user support, and preservation. Morris even factors in searching and reading as costs. Some cost highlights include: research costs of up to $50,000 per article (science uses expensive equipment), eighty to one hundred hours in writing time, direct costs between $1,425 and $2,750, overhead of 35 percent, and taxes (an often forgotten part of cost analysis).⁴

Publishers use any profit made to reinvest, support learned societies, and reward shareholders. One of the biggest variables in cost analysis is preservation. Estimates for electronic storage and migration to new formats are wide ranging. Is OA an answer to costing problems in publishing? Some say that payment is merely switched from the reader (subscriptions) to the author (author-pays model). Morris believes that the bulk of costs are unchanged, but this model merely alters the source of the funds. Most disturbingly, she posits that as acquisition costs disappear, the costs of managing access will become more than libraries can afford.⁵ Also, with the author-pays model, the academic world might be forced into covering much of the costs. Chang performed a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) on three OA venues (BioMed Central, Public Library of Science, and Medknow Publishers) and found that with lower operating costs, improved impact (research is more visible), barrier-free scholarly communication, and business involvement (e.g., Google Scholar) leveraged against costs to the author, lack of indexing services, and low business benefit, OA is a financially viable method for dissemination of scholarly information.⁶

But what about quality in research and publishing? In Morris’s mind, a steady 3 percent increase in research funding has created more research output, and this increase has not been matched by library acquisition budgets.⁷ Also, submission of a poor research article costs the system much more than for a good article. When do we throw in the towel on poor research, and how much will we have spent by then? Are we really researching meaningful topics, or has an increase in funding, combined with stiff tenure requirements for publishing, created an information glut? The impact to science from finance in the context of an OA paradigm remains to be seen. Public libraries would do well to follow this debate.
so as to anticipate their future place in the information world, budget for their future roles, and keep abreast of the latest OA sources in order to help the customer of the public library find the information they need.

Copyright proves to be another point of conflict for the OA movement. Copyright is a blossoming area of the law in our time of digitization and the Internet. Legalities surrounding databases, fair use, and more have created the need for legal counsel and legal staff in libraries and schools. The original Copyright Act of 1790 was intended to foster advancement of research by making scientific discovery profitable and letting others build upon research data. Until recently, this raw data had never been protected by copyright; only the interpretation of the data was bound by law. Currently, some in the publishing industry, research universities, and governments want to control profits from research by controlling access to raw data. The 1996 European Union Directive 96/9 gave legal protection to collections of data, including data collected in electronic databases. They consider them one-of-a-kind data and allow the database owner intellectual property rights over it, and permission to charge for access to the data, as well as the interpretation of the data. One draft of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 in the United States had a component that addressed this issue in a similar fashion, but it was not approved. Clearly, this is another issue about which the public library employee must be kept abreast. Public librarians would want to retain original raw data and all interpretations of them for their customers, all at the lowest possible cost to the library and the customer. Also, any libraries publishing digital information, such as the local history documents mentioned previously, may want to provide any copyright information necessary. Fortunately, more and more scientists are publishing in an OA venue. This will affect the development of OA in general, and have an impact on copyright law nationally and internationally. For now, all we can do is be informed and guide our customers carefully.

Related to the OA movement, but not the same, are open source and open standards. Open source is generally defined as software programs available to all via the Internet that have minimal intellectual property restrictions and negligible-to-no cost. This relative freedom encourages collaboration and user-generated software packages. An example of open source would be the OpenOffice (www.openoffice.org) suite, which provides word processing, spreadsheet capability, and more; or Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net), an open-source software for sound-clip editing. Open standards are the basis for open source. They are computer standards, free to all, that can be used to develop software. HTML or CSS can be examples of open standard (see www.w3.org/Style/CSS or www.w3.org/MarkUp for more information). Open standards, open source, and OA can address the need for long-term access to information. When libraries shifted emphasis from ownership to access by purchasing online journals and indexes through subscription databases, they found that long-term access was suddenly lacking. It became difficult to find articles that were more than a few years old. The move toward an OA model will increase possibilities for long-term availability by
providing more free copies and creating an environment where technological obsolescence is less of a threat due to more ease in migration to newer platforms (see www.lockss.org/lockss/Home for more detail).

Due to the relative newness of the OA movement, it is still difficult, at this point, to discern hyperbole from truth about its usefulness as a method of information dissemination. Most of the articles written about the OA process focus on financing and praise for technology. Also, the bulk of the articles are written by or for academic librarians or publishers, making for a narrow and untested collection of OA information. A quick search of the literature landscape was unable to procure any articles relating to the theory of OA as it pertains to public libraries, in spite of the fact that public libraries face the same problems that academic libraries face. They, too, are expected to pay a high price for subscriptions. They, too, worry about archiving of digital materials. They, too, see a yearly reduction in budget due to societal and economic influences. And they, too, need to address customer needs in the most efficient ways possible. OA, on the surface, seems like a great way to reach these goals. Yet, when it comes to OA, public libraries remain mostly silent with the exception of a few articles rating the quality of OA sources.9

Science and the Public

As a customer and a member of the general public, Terry reports firsthand on the difficulties she has had with medical information in particular.10 Nowhere is the debate about access to information more predominant than when it concerns science and medicine. She claims that despite her children facing a genetic disease (pseudoxanthoma elasticum), the most disturbing obstacle they as a family faced was the “wall around published scientific research.”11 She describes episodes of doing research that rang true such as honing down a morass of information in PubMed to a manageable range of one dozen articles, only to start clicking on titles and finding that there was a charge of $25 to $40 per article for those that she really needed. If we look past the veneer of freedom of information, we find even in OA databases and repositories that a haves and have-nots caste system is in place. This system remains, whether OA follows the green road or the gold road. A sense of urgency about this caste system can be found in articles coming from other countries. A recently published article from a Brazilian librarian reminds us that in a “globalized world only those people with access to information and knowledge will have the best opportunities to improve their quality of life.”12 The librarian in Brazil and the American woman with sick children know this well. Sick people are part of the public; high school and college students are part of the public; small children who grow up to be scientists are part of the public; immigrants are part of the public. How can public libraries address the numerous and varied needs of this heterogeneous group of customers? We can try to understand and affect the changing information landscape while returning to our roots, use core values and tools that have withstood the test of time, and lead our customers through the glut of information available to them to quality, including OA sources.

Pathfinders: Matching Customers to Sources

OA sources are rarely indexed in traditional commercial indexing services and they are not well marketed.13 Therefore, the savvy public librarian needs to build an arsenal of leads to OA repositories for the customer. One forgotten library tool, the pathfinder, can aid in leading the customer to valued OA information. Indeed, the web bibliography mentioned previously serves a similar function to the print pathfinder in that they both lead the customer to the appropriate information and supply enough leads to let the customer follow a path relevant to their needs. Contemporary pathfinders should be a composite of print materials, websites, appropriate database listings with quick tips on how to use the databases themselves, as well as directives to OA materials. They can be printed or digital, but when they are digital, it is recommended that the pathfinder be formatted for printing and that the length, when printed, should be no more than two pages, for ease of use by the customer. Samples of contemporary pathfinders that utilize Internet sources are available.14 An expansion of this method, which would include OA sources, will help customers get the information they need as well as increase public awareness of and support for the OA movement. Perhaps increasing public awareness of the whole process of publishing will help to ultimately restructure the way information is produced and provided.

Relevance, accessibility, and reliability are important criteria, particularly for SMT literature. Smart pathfinders will account for these variables. A sound understanding of user needs also factors into creation of a pathfinder. OA gateways are still in the formative process and at this point, no one database
A recently published article from a Brazilian librarian reminds us that in a “globalized world only those people with access to information and knowledge will have the best opportunities to improve their quality of life.”

An open access and science website will serve all SMT research-related needs. Also, individuals in the general public will not be familiar with the specialized vocabularies of SMT information and may need help translating their needs into scientific language (we are all familiar with MeSH headings, for example, and know that customers wanting to treat a bloody nose may need to use the heading “epistaxis” at some point).

Starting at the beginning, where the customer is at present, is the best course of action. And where is the starting point for SMT where the public is concerned? Borchelt summarizes it as follows:

More than 70 percent of Americans know, for example, that oxygen comes from plants, that the continents are moving and have done so for millions of years, that light travels faster than sound, and that the Earth goes around the Sun. However, one-half or fewer of Americans know that the earliest humans did not live at the same time as dinosaurs, that it takes the Earth one year to go around the Sun, that electrons are smaller than atoms, or that antibiotics do not kill viruses.

People learn about science in any number of ways, many of which do not jibe with an academic focus. Public libraries are composed of a broader audience than one would find in an academic or research-oriented culture such as the science community. Children, teens, and adult learners at all levels of information literacy must be served. One segment, the adult learner, was studied recently by Miller et al. Although most American adults have an interest in science and technology, fewer than one in five is able to read and understand the science portion of The New York Times. Pew Research Center found that a growing interest in health stories in local media surpasses the audience for national or international news. Given this, ScienCentral and the National Science Foundation chose to track the impact of science news stories. Nineteen news stories relating to a variety of topics were offered to ABC and NBC television stations and affiliates. Retention of stories by viewers was measured and filtered through the schema learning framework, which describes how individuals process new information into previous knowledge and experiences. Almost half of the people studied had some recall of science material. Accurate recall was higher and more stories were recalled with topics in which there was some previous knowledge (teen behavioral stories, for example), and lower with newer topics (neuroscience, genetics). Stories covered on local news stations reached the biggest audience. Attention, interest, experience, and education level affected recall. When visual images to illustrate a concept were used (instead of a talking head), retention of information was significantly greater among less-educated people.

Combining this information with findings by McInerney, Bird, and Nucci and Brossard and Shanahan, librarians can begin to think about ways to get science information across to a general public. McInerney, Bird, and Nucci illustrate that language formation around newer science topics can cause some confusion (that is, Frankenfood), and that the lay press does not follow scientific publishing when highlighting topics. Brossard and Shanahan further explore the idea of a “civically literate” science vocabulary framed by science information as presented in American media. These studies allow a librarian to extrapolate methods for helping the public with science. Perhaps a partnership of the local library and the local news station could produce short television segments capable of reshaping a customer’s vocabulary (for example, Frankenfood) into something more usable (like genetic modification) in an information-literate society. A visual pathfinder might be created. Start with words they know, and slowly build. Perhaps librarians can be more sensitive to the need for graphic imagery when working with a less-educated public. These television segments might have a simple graphic relating to finding more information in the library, which might encourage potential customers. Information on adult learning should be applied. For example, the television segments should always relate to something practical that the customer might be working on, should start...
with familiar language and knowledge, and then try to stretch a bit into uncharted information. OA material can be highlighted and simple televised directives might be offered pertaining to finding OA sources on one’s home computer or when visiting the public library. Public library customers already have an interest in science. We librarians can build on that interest and help create a more science-savvy public. Self-confidence stemming from increased mastery of expert scientific language will empower citizens to utilize as well as have an impact upon science and science policy in their own interest.

Public Libraries and the Global Agenda

Global issues regarding the flow of information are many, but the focus here has primarily been on tools and resources based in the United States that utilize English as their primary language. Public libraries may serve customers who have come from a country wherein information does not flow freely. These customers may not even be aware that such information exists. Even within our own country, the line demarcating what is available to the public continues to shift. On the one hand, the National Institutes of Public Health have mandated that research supported by federal grant money must be made available to the public. On the other hand, the National Science Advisory Board released documentation for Biosecurity Guidelines that attempts to restrict “sensitive” information due to the threat of bioterrorism. In addition to lack of awareness regarding source material, librarians serving customers who may have recently come to America may need to build upon OA sources from other countries and in other languages. In the field of SMT, this may be more difficult, given that English is the international language of science. Indeed, public libraries are oftentimes still attempting to level the technological playing field and serve many customers who have not used a computer before, or assist those who are not proficient in computer skills, let alone providing language choices for information sources. Governmental and political restrictions on information flow, and foreign-language OA materials are beyond the scope of this article, but public library staff would do well to be aware of these dilemmas and address customer needs as best they can. Language, libraries, and the global community are areas full of possibility for further research. OA has given us a glimmer of a different and more egalitarian information terrain. It is up to all of us—librarians, educators, publishers—to help shape change in the industry, band together for the good of the globalized world, and make OA into something great.

References

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
21. Brossard and Shanahan, “Do They Know What They Read?”

Additional Resources

Appendix A: Toolkit for Librarians
A toolkit for librarians and other interested in OA in general, and OA as relating to SMT, can be comprised of the following sources:

- **PubMed Central**, a Free Archive of Life Sciences Journals, developed and managed by the National Institutes of Health’s National Center for Biotechnology Information (www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov)
- **Health Internetwork Access to Research Initiative**, organized by the World Health Organization (www.who.int/hinari/en)
- **Oaister** (find the pearls), created by University of Michigan’s Digital Library Production Service, a union catalog of digital resources (www.oaister.org)
- **Citebase**, a citation index (www.citebase.org)
- **CiteSeer**, a scientific literature digital library hosted by Penn State (http://citeseer.ist.psu.edu)
- **Open J-Gate**, an electronic gateway to global OA sources, from Informatics India Limited (www.openj-gate.org)
- **Open Access News**, an online blog and newsletter from Peter Suber (www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html)
- A resource page from **Alliance for Innovation in Science and Technology Information**, a nonprofit agency that supports OA (www.aisti.org/home/pages/resources)
- **International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications**, a directory of free and OA online resources (www.inasp.info/peri/free.shtml)
- **Medknow**, another OA site from India that has its roots in publishing (www.medknow.com)
- **BioMedCentral**, an OA site from the United Kingdom, focusing on biology and medicine (www.biomedcentral.com)
- **Public Library of Science**, a nonprofit group of scientists and physicians supporting OA (www.plos.org)
- **Google Patents**, an attempt by the big guys to make patent searching easier (www.google.com/patents)
- **ArXiv**, an OA site with a strong focus on hard sciences, produced by Cornell University Library (www.arxiv.org)
- **E-Prints**, providing OA and the tools for creating it (www.eprints.org)
- **Directory of Open Access Journals**, quoted as the most important directory of OA journals (www.doaj.org)
- **HighWire Press**, a pioneer in the field from Stanford University (http://highwire.stanford.edu)
- **Cogprints**, an archive for the study of psychology, neuroscience, philosophy, and computing (www.cogprints.org)
- **Digital Library of Information Science and Technology**, OA for library studies (http://dlist.sir.arizona.edu)

This group of tools is by no means complete; rather, it is meant to give a sample of various starting points for further exploration by public librarians and to provide quick resources for customers. These websites can be incorporated into pathfinders as is appropriate to the topic (see appendix B).
can support library staff with further research into the field of OA itself.

Appendix B: Sample Pathfinder
A sample pathfinder for auto repair, a nonthreatening science topic, is presented below. Only one OA source is listed, but it is enough to generate interest and open up the field to customers. Creating pathfinders in medicine, health, astronomy, physics, psychology, library science, or computers is easily done by using the websites listed in appendix A. Why not try your hand at creating a pathfinder for a topic requested at your public library?

Fixing Your Car? Get Your Bearings
Colorado State University Engines: www.engr.colostate.edu/~allan/engines.html
Car Care Guide: www.carcare.org

621.43 St72i2: browse this area of the numbered books for more on engines—

621.434 Ol6i: don't be afraid to try something easy—

629.2872205 M857: Some are compendiums of cars for a number of years—

629.203 G628d2: 

Too much tech speak? Trouble with English? Try taking home a DVD or video, setting your player for the preferred language, and following along.

629.2872 Se48: Self-Defense for Car Expense (video)
629.2872 G591: Good Car Bad Car (video)
629.43 B48: Big Auto Plant (video)

Or choose one of the repair guides in your language:

Auto Repair Famous Names: Chilton, Motor, Haynes
Motor Literature for Gear Heads (www.motolit.com)
Old Iron Online: The Old Car Manual Project (www.tocmp.com)
AllData: Database for automobile repair. Simply go to the catalog, click on “databases,” and enter the AllData site. Choose the year, make, model, and engine of the car you are repairing, and then choose the part of the car to be repaired. Diagrams included. Printers attached, for your convenience.
Chilton's Auto Repair Reference Center: Another database, follow along, as above.

629.453 C49: Some books discuss the part to be repaired—

Browse books or the library catalog for emissions, wiring diagrams, brakes, steering, engine controls, and more.

BUI 1997/2000: What’s this? All of a sudden, the numbers on the books look funny, but don't panic, it's simple. The first three letters are the make (BUI for Buick, JEE for Jeep, HON for Honda, and so on), numbers correspond to the years covered. Models listed in title.

Manufacturers publish repair guides, too. They follow the same arrangement in the library (OLD for Oldsmobile) and will list themselves as the publisher.

Decided Not to Do It Yourself?

Problems with car repair or dealer? Contact the State Attorney General (www.ag.state.oh.us)

Gonna Be an Expert?


Dictionary of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org) is getting scientific information out there for free; just enter your subject (such as “combustion,” “radial loads”) in the search field. Articles are full text from reliable journals.

More of a Generalist?


Don’t Forget the Magazines
Popular Mechanics; Autoparts Report; Motor Trend; Car and Driver; Hot Rod

Community Resources
The telephone book is a great way to find people who can help. Also try the database Associations Unlimited. Go to the databases on the catalog, click on Associations Unlimited, and enter "corvette" in the spot under “association name.” National and regional associations are listed. Try your make and model and see what shows up!

Keywords
Automobiles, maintenance and repair; Chilton’s auto repair manuals; Internal combustion engines; automobile repair shops; emissions; wiring diagrams; General Motors; automobiles, parts; Buick Century automobile; automobile mechanics, certification; Honda; brakes

ALA Releases Groundbreaking Study on Library Service to New Americans

About 21 million people in the United States speak limited or no English, 50 percent more than a decade ago. As our country's demographics continue to change, U.S. public libraries continue their efforts to meet the demand for service to non-English users. In March, the American Library Association (ALA) released “Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries,” an unprecedented study on the range of specialized library services for non-English speakers.

“Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries,” is the first national study to consider the range of library services and programs developed for non-English speakers, including effectiveness of services, barriers to library use, most frequently used services, and most successful library programs by language served. The study also analyzed library service area populations and patron proximity to local libraries that offer specialized services.

“Serving Non-English Speakers in U.S. Public Libraries,” was conducted by the ALA’s Office for Research and Statistics. Completed in spring 2007, the study was made possible through funding from the 2006 World Book–ALA Goal Grant. Dr. Christie Koontz and Dean Jue of Florida State University conducted the research for the ALA. The ALA Offices for Literacy and Outreach Services, Public Programs, and Diversity provided additional support.

Bilingual spokespersons are available for interviews. Interested media should contact Macey Morales, ALA Media Relations, at (312) 280–4393 or mmorales@ala.org. For more information, or to view the complete report, please visit www.ala.org/nonenglishspeakers.
EBAY’S UTILITY IN A LIBRARY

EBAY is a veritable treasure trove for collectors, bargain-hunters, and the like. This well-known site also holds a treasure of resources that libraries may wish to employ. EBay may function as an acquisition tool, reference tool, or a vehicle for promoting the library. The usefulness of eBay for buying and selling books is obvious; however, its utility as a reference tool and as a library promotion tool is less evident. For reference work, some patron inquiries require creative searching to find an answer, and there are certain types of inquiries that lend themselves well to information gathering in eBay. The strength of eBay as a library promotion tool lies in its immense popularity. By offering hands-on eBay training classes, libraries can reach out to community members interested in using this online auction site, possibly providing some with their first introduction to the Web.

A Short Primer on Online Auctions Sites Like eBay
In order to truly understand how best to take advantage of eBay for library collection development and maintenance, a basic understanding of how online auctions work is needed. The English auction, the auction type used by eBay and similar to what is seen in auction houses around the world, is an ascending-bid auction (bidding continues upward until only one bidder remains). The traditional process requires all the bidders to be in the same room at the same time, but with the wonders of modern technology, computer-assisted asynchronous bidding is now possible. Rather than having bidders remain present for the length of the auction, on eBay and other online auction sites, further bidding is done by the computer system. This process works by allowing a person to make a maximum bid (for example, $100) on an item, as well as a minimum bid (for example, $5). The system will bid the minimum $5 for the person. As another bidder bids $6, the system now automatically enters in a higher bid on behalf of the first bidder (in this case $7) and the system will inform
the new bidder that he has been outbid by the first bidder and gives him the opportunity to bid again. New bidders will now have to bid higher than the newly established bid of $7. This process goes on until the end of the auction. If the original maximum bid is exceeded, then an e-mail alert will be sent to the person who placed the original maximum bid, offering him or her a chance to make a higher bid.

While bidders may start with a sizable opening bid, many prefer to follow the bidding more closely and hope to get a bargain by sniping. Sniping is the strategy many bidders employ by waiting until very late in the auction, usually in the last few seconds, hoping to place a winning bid without other bidders having time to respond to that bid. This is such a common strategy that there are a number of special programs (for example, AuctionStealer, BidNapper) set up to do just that and relieve the bidder of the obligation to place the bid at the last possible moment.

Many busy people like the immediate gratification of paying for an item in a store over the vagaries of bargain hunting on a days-long auction that might not be won. In an attempt to cater to these customers, eBay has developed a couple of methods: Buy-It-Now prices are available through some auction listings that allow the buyer to purchase an item at a set price. Items can also be purchased through eBay Stores without going through the bidding process. For example, a book may be on sale in an eBay Store for $20. The same title may also have an auction listing that may go for more or less than $20. Some will find it better to pay a premium to get a book than to hope that they can get a bargain through an auction.

eBay as an Acquisition Tool
Online commerce has increasingly changed the dynamics of buying and selling items of all types. The exponential growth of online resources has created possibilities for buying and selling that simply did not exist a few years ago. Libraries have typically established relationships with vendors or book-jobbers to help with purchasing. Vendors and book-jobbers offer expertise and volume discounts that are an undeniable asset for libraries. However, much as Google and other popular search engines have cut into the market of customers at the reference desk by allowing searching by the end-user, online auction sites have provided alternatives to the typical “library middlemen” for acquiring books.

While online auction services have been serving customers for more than ten years, libraries, with a few notable exceptions, have been slow to participate in them. Although there may be valid reasons for not participating in online auctions, there are some real advantages to making use of this exciting environment. An early case study presenting a library director’s use of eBay for collection development was found in Library Journal’s long-running series “How Do You Manage?” In this article titled “Director, Do Thy Bidding,” the use of eBay by a library director to replace lost, stolen, and badly damaged books that were needed in the library’s reference collection is discussed. Most of the books were out-of-print and difficult to find. By utilizing eBay, the library director was able to acquire these valuable reference resources at a fraction of the cost that would have been paid to a book dealer. Also, the director generated funds through eBay to purchase the replacement books by selling weeded items from the collection that had been removed from the shelves because they were no longer circulating. The article goes on to discuss the pros and cons of such transactions and the morality of libraries using eBay. From this article, it is obvious that eBay can be a valuable resource for obtaining books to enhance libraries’ collections and improve the information resources available to library patrons.

eBay as a Collection Maintenance Tool in Libraries
The library literature actually has several examples of librarians taking the initiative to use eBay to assist in collection maintenance within their libraries. Library book sales, often run by Friends of the Library organizations, have frequently been a great place for library patrons to pick up weeded library materials at a steep discount. Many used-book sellers have earned a tidy profit by purchasing select, discarded library books and reselling them at a profit. An early example of a library using eBay to attempt to sell weeded library books at a premium can be found in Kathleen Baxter’s “Your Discards May Be Somebody’s Treasure.” At Anoka County Library, a suburban system in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, Baxter began selling weeded books on eBay. Using the user ID ACLBOSS (Anoka County Library Books Online Sales Service), this system has sold nearly two hundred books on eBay. Without a supply of volunteers to take care of this, staff members did the actual work. Unfortunately, the service has been discontinued because library staff no longer has the time to devote to it. Another library that had early experience in selling weeded
books on eBay was the Los Gatos (Calif.) Public Library (LGPL). The author, part of both the library board and the Friends of the LGPL, conceded that it is a project best suited to volunteers rather than library staff because it is time consuming, requiring approximately 65.5 minutes per book. The online auctions generated $6,700 for 167 books, netting the library approximately $40 per book.3

**eBay as a Collection Development Tool in Libraries**

Selling discarded library books on eBay has been used as an alternative to the annual library book sale at several libraries. However, when it comes to purchasing books, librarians and library staff are more accustomed to the traditional route of buying books through vendors who make it easy to purchase a large number of books at a known discount. A multitude of online booksellers, including eBay, create a new avenue for libraries to add to their collections. The Web gives library staff the opportunity to buy books (possibly at large discounts) and may give them access to materials that are in short supply. A great example of a library taking an active role in using eBay to add materials to their collection is Western Oregon University (WOU).4 WOU’s archivist, with the support of the library director, has used eBay not only to inexpensively replace the occasional lost reference books, which are hard to replace through regular channels, but also to add to their archives. Between July 2004 and June 2005, carefully crafted searches on eBay by the archivist and director yielded three hundred hits. Of the one hundred unique items that these searches found, WOU actually purchased about one-third of them.

Mutter, Milliot, and Holt wrote a very illuminating article explaining the revolution brought about by the Web and the ability to sell books online. It is written from the publisher’s point of view and explains how the traditional sale of new books can be adversely affected by the easy availability of used books. It is “a more perfect market in the classical economic sense, where every buyer is exposed to every seller and vice versa.”5 No longer will buyers be bound by working exclusively with local booksellers. This is especially true regarding used textbooks, creating a real problem for the trade-book world. According to this article, used books may someday make up to 20 percent of the market. An interesting observation made by the authors is that this change will depend on alterations in consumers’ habits on selling their books, not on buying them online, which has already happened.

With the ability to find multiple sales for most items, customers feel more confident that they are not over-paying for a book.

With the possibilities of purchasing books at discounted prices through online auctions as well as through the more traditional route of library vendors or book-jobbers, how can a library decide when to use eBay or other online auction services to buy or sell books? Beyond making sure that proper policies, procedures, and ethical considerations are taken into account, there are certain criteria that can be examined to help determine if eBay use is right for the library. When considering purchasing items on eBay, library personnel should search for alternate suppliers of items to determine if purchasing through this route will truly yield a bargain. When considering selling items on eBay, there are multiple considerations, including the presence or absence of a substantial pool of potential buyers, the market-value of the items to be sold, and adequate staffing and knowledge base to perform the necessary duties for eBay transactions. If, for example, a library has some finer volumes that are being sold because they have been deselected or were donated for a book sale, they may wish to consider using eBay provided that: (1) these books may have an opportunity to bring a higher price online than at an annual book sale, (2) there is a much smaller number of potential buyers at the local book sale, or (3) local buyers may not be aware of the true market value of these books. To ultimately have a successful auction, with a positive cost/benefit ratio, the library needs to have a staff (be they paid or volunteer) that has the necessary skills and experience to process these volumes. Selection of these materials, creating the listing online, responding to bidder inquiries, and processing the final sale (including arranging payment and mailing of the volume) can be a detail-oriented process that not all staff may be adept at. With an average time of 65.5 minutes processing time per book to sell on eBay, potential benefits to the library can hinge on the efficiency of those processing the materials.6

**eBay as a Reference Tool in Libraries**

The eBay auction site can be a valuable information resource and sometimes the site of choice for quickly answering reference questions at the library. The primary reference-related applications where eBay may be most appropriate are those related to product identification and those aimed at determining market value of specific items or item types. Of course,
Most of the books were out-of-print and difficult to find. By utilizing eBay, the library director was able to acquire these valuable reference resources at a fraction of the cost that would have been paid to a book dealer.

with creativity, many additional reference applications for eBay may be discovered.

One librarian, Nisa Asokan, who is employed by a newspaper, has used eBay for identifying particular magazine issues. Asokan suggests that eBay is often very useful for finding particular magazine issues (much more useful than a library catalog record) when only the magazine title and what is on the cover are known. For example, searching eBay for “Rolling Stones magazine Beatles” quickly brought up multiple hits of issues with the entire band or individual band members on the cover of the magazine, including pictures of the magazines, issue numbers, and publication dates. Asokan also reports that eBay is quite useful as an image archive and is sometimes more successful at retrieving relevant images than Google’s image directory.

Personal experience in the library setting has also demonstrated the utility of eBay as a reference resource. Google is a frequently used search engine in the library setting and in general. When trying to answer a query through Google, eBay is often a highly ranked site. On two occasions, eBay has been very effective at answering reference questions. In both instances, Google was consulted before proceeding to eBay for answers and in one instance Google led to the answer on eBay. To answer one query, eBay was used as an image archive, as suggested by Asokan. A patron had bought an old farm implement and knew only that it had something to do with corn and was likely manufactured by a specific company. She was not only curious about what exactly she had purchased, but also interested in the item’s potential value. A search of eBay using keywords such as “farm,” “corn,” and “implement” brought up a picture that looked very much like the picture provided by the library patron. The patron was pleased with the available information, as well as the information regarding the price the item had fetched. On another occasion, a patron wished to obtain a repair manual for a particular model Case tractor. Searching the OPAC for this manual proved fruitless; however, a search of eBay using the search phrase “Case tractor repair manual” brought up multiple hits for the needed repair manual with a title that could easily be searched in the OPAC. In this instance, there was no ISBN for the publication; however, this information might also be located through an eBay search and easily applied to an OPAC search.

There are a couple of ways that the fair market value of products can be found through eBay. One way of determining the going rate for a particular item or item type is by searching eBay’s completed listings (information on this search strategy is available at http://pages.ebay.com/completedlistings). Searching only completed listings is easily accomplished by selecting the eBay Advanced Search and clicking on the check box beneath the search box that reads “completed listings only.” Because some completed auctions may skew toward a high or low price, the median or average price should be sought and utilized as an indicator of the fair market value. For example, if attempting to determine the value of a used set of the Great Books of the Western World (first published in fifty-four volumes in 1952 by the Encyclopaedia Britannica and expanded in 1994 to sixty volumes), one may wish to monitor sales in the completed listings, and probably look for a narrow range of prices. A helpful feature built into the system is the ability to re-sort by a number of parameters, including price. Sometimes there will be a set that was sold at a bargain price, and other times sellers will list them so high that the set will not sell. Usually the set will be listed a second time at a more reasonable price if the initial auction was unsuccessful. The older fifty-four–volume set of the Great Books of the Western World regularly goes for about $200 and the current sixty-volume set, which retail for $995, can often be purchased used for about $350. If $350 appears to be the average going rate for the current-but-used set, then that price may be considered the fair market value.

Another route that can be used to determine product value is through a pay service offered by eBay, called Market Research. Market Research offers information beyond average prices fetched for items,
including popular searches for items within certain categories, market trends, and so on. The Market Research option has a modest cost ($9.99 per month for the Basic version and $24.99 per month for the Pro version) but is more likely a tool for individual sellers and buyers, rather than libraries, to purchase.

A tool that unfortunately seems not to have received much maintenance by eBay is the eBay Community Library (available at http://pages.ebay.com/community/library). This little known eBay site has a modest collection of information on items in different categories, including antiques, coins, computers, stamps, and more. Although the resources available from the eBay library do not provide precise product value information, they do provide information regarding factors that will influence the value of the items, as well as tips for locating and selling items of particular types.

As an example of the creative researching possible using eBay, one need only follow the lead of a savvy lawyer who utilized eBay to purchase evidentiary items to be used in litigation. A brief communication by Brenda Jeffreys in the National Law Journal reported on W. Mark Lanier’s use of eBay to acquire evidence and pertinent information for asbestos-related lawsuits. By typing in the keyword “asbestos,” Lanier was able to purchase many items (some fairly commonplace household items) known to contain asbestos. However, his most significant find was an unpublished corporate draft report that indicated the company had knowledge about the potential health hazards of asbestos, an admission contradicting the published report. This was undoubtedly weighty evidence for Lanier’s asbestos cases. If this article recounting Lanier’s use of eBay receives attention from the legal community, it could encourage further use of this website for evidence gathering and legal learning purposes.

### eBay as a Tool for Library Promotion

To get an idea of the potential impact of eBay, especially as it pertains to community draw and library promotion, some basic facts about this online auction site may be helpful. It is the most popular online auction site, dominating an impressive 90 percent of the online auction market. According to the Nielsen/NetRatings, eBay was the most often utilized search term in November of 2005 and was ranked amongst the top ten websites during the same month. Even though there are other websites that are more heavily trafficked, people spend a lot of time on eBay. According to statistics gathered by iMediaConnection.com, an average visit to eBay is lengthy, at forty minutes and twenty-three seconds; there is a large time gap to the nearest competitor, Amazon, at fourteen minutes and twenty-three seconds. It was also ranked as “qualitatively, the single best Internet site” by Tech Directions based on such factors as “usefulness, content, and ease of use,” according to columnist Reid Goldsborough. A July 2005 survey by AC Nielsen indicated that the number of individuals in the United States making full- or part-time livings by selling on eBay exceeded 700,000, and many hundreds of thousands more are supplementing their income by selling on eBay. The number of worldwide registered eBay users exceeded 221 million in the fourth quarter of 2006. Based on these statistics, it would appear that eBay would have a significant community draw, as well as a number of items that might be of interest to libraries wanting to add to their collections, and a number of buyers who would be interested in buying items weeded from libraries’ collections.

Some libraries may be reluctant to use eBay as a library promotion tool since it is an obvious commercial website. However, this website is extremely popular, and advertising eBay classes or resources may encourage library patronage. Indeed, by searching Google for “eBay classes” and restricting the domain to organizations or educational institutions, a plethora of eBay class offerings (past and future) could be found. Class providers were from a multitude of different institutions or organizations, including libraries, parks and recreation groups, computer groups, senior groups, colleges and universities, continuing education providers, and many more. The first result returned when searching for eBay classes restricted to the educational domain illustrated well their potential popularity. An announcement from Adams State College in Colorado reads, “Due to the success of the first eBay workshop, ASC’s Business Support Center is again hosting two classes that will teach the keys to selling on the eBay online auction site.” It is noteworthy that even though there was a registration fee, the eBay classes offered by Adams State College were very popular. And classes without a monetary fee may provide an even greater community draw.

These initiatives to teach eBay provided some individuals with the opportunity to use the Internet for the first time. A course that was offered at Westchester Community College in New York on eBay use was taught in three separate sessions, allowing time to advance from the basics of Internet use and eBay use to more advanced skills, such as posting items for auction. By inspiring individuals to use
the Internet, eBay is spurring the learning of a very valuable information resource.

One group in particular that eBay has targeted for eBay classes is seniors. The idea is to teach them how to be effective on eBay’s site and decrease the digital divide for seniors, a major eBay user group. It is interesting to note that there was a 54 percent growth in the use of eBay by individuals fifty-five and older during the period of April 2003 to April 2004. During the same period, seniors were also the fastest growing user group of the Internet. To help encourage the use of computers and the Internet, eBay initiated the Digital Opportunity Program for Seniors. To help ensure the success of the program, it partnered with SeniorNet, a nonprofit group that provides computer training to older Americans and has numerous learning centers throughout the nation. This partnership allows senior citizens access to computers through various SeniorNet centers in the United States. The goal of the program is to provide computer and Internet training to at least one million senior citizens within a five-year time period. In support of this program, eBay is providing significant funding, training of educational specialists, building new computer training centers, and adding courses to the current SeniorNet curricula that will help enhance knowledge of e-commerce.

If a library is having moral issues with using a popular commercial website for library promotion, perhaps focusing on the learning opportunities that eBay can afford will lessen these ethical concerns. Valuable skill development can occur by utilizing eBay. A lengthy dissertation by Lillard about infor-

---

**Learning More about eBay and Optimizing Performance on eBay**

Whether you want to learn more about eBay to prepare to provide eBay classes, or because you want to develop a collection to aid patrons with using eBay, there are many information resources to be found. There is much information on the eBay website alone available to help you with searching for, buying, or selling an item. The eBay Learning Center, available at http://pages.ebay.com/education/?ssPageName=home:ff:US, is a particularly useful starting point within eBay’s numerous websites to learn the basics about using eBay.

If you would like to build a collection of library books on eBay, there are many to be found. Some are more oriented toward “power sellers” who want to learn about “killer apps,” while others are more for the beginning eBay user or those who are merely interested in company history and company information. Some recent books available on eBay include:

mation use online by eBay entrepreneurs found that eBay promotes learning in many different areas, including: computer literacy, writing, advertising skills, technical skills, basics about accounting/monetary business transactions, HTML skills, value assessment, digital camera use, and the ability to upload and manipulate photographs. By surveying eBay users about initial problems encountered when first starting to work on this site and later after more experience had been obtained, Lillard found that the initial problems encountered primarily were technical difficulties, and these concerns were later replaced by practical concerns about consumers, such as payment issues. This progression from having many technical concerns to primarily concerns about consumers indicates that eBay is encouraging the development of technical skills.

A dissertation by Ghostbear also indicates that eBay is encouraging much “informal learning.” A discussion of the principles of andragogy, or how adults learn, indicates that adult learning on eBay follows these basic andragogical assumptions:

- adults must need to know why they are learning something before participating in optional learning activities;
- learning will move from dependency to self-direction as adults become more adept and focus more on personal interests in developing skills;
- personal experience plays a large role in adult learning as this is the foundation that adults will build from and this foundation impacts learning processes, perceptions, and so on; and
- adults must be ready to learn and find that the topic has pertinence to them.

It appears that eBay is acting as an impetus for learning and eBay users are following familiar learning patterns.

Information searching and posting skills can also be encouraged by eBay. Search skills are at the heart of successful Internet use, and while eBay’s search system does not operate exactly the same way as some search engines, the search skills used to find items on eBay can be readily applied when seeking information through Google, Yahoo!, Ask.com, and other search engines. Incidentally, eBay has recently teamed up with Google in an effort to improve searches for items, with Google providing related search links for product searches on eBay. This partnering may make searching on eBay more easily generalizable to standard search engine queries.

References

8. Ibid.


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


23. Ibid.

“By the Book” reviews professional development materials of potential interest to public librarians, trustees, and others involved in library service. Public Library Association policy dictates that PLA publications not be reviewed in this column. Notice of new publications from PLA will generally be found in the “News from PLA” section of Public Libraries. A description of books written by the editors or contributing editors of Public Libraries may appear in this column but no evaluative review will be included for these titles.

The Author Event Primer: How to Plan, Execute and Enjoy Author Events


This volume is a very practical one. It reminds the librarian involved in an author event of all the things to do, even the smallest, to assure its success: from book displays and promotional bookmarks to the reservation of parking places, from fees to thank you cards and gifts. Langemack, senior managing librarian at the Bellevue Regional Library for the King County Library System (KCLS) near Seattle, gives a lot of tips using an enjoyable writing style.

The scope of the book is complete, covering everything from the big festival to the flop when only six people showed up. Authors include poets and self-published authors, as well as major authors. Whatever the dimension of the event, this book warns the librarian that time, energy, and staff are required. Many useful samples, checklists, and case studies are interspersed throughout the pages.

The importance of giving the event an “imaginative twist” (45) is remarked. Events need to be fun and creative, as some inspiring examples demonstrate: projects like Seattle Reads, the interdisciplinary approach to one single book in school classes, and In Their Own Words, the space on the KCLS website with audio recordings of local authors, but also more courageous experiments like a singles evening event or a cooks-and-books program.

Outreach is basic and consequently is a crucial part of the book. That means relationships with local bookstores, schools, museums, and with the rest of the community, but Langemack also considers the internal role of the library book club and the staff. The last chapter is dedicated to the writers who wish to present their books in a library. This part is the one where collection-development processes are mentioned, regarding the selection of authors.

Langemack has written the book while always keeping the writers’ needs and habits in mind. For this reason and more it is a must-have for active public librarians.—Corrado Di Tillio, Head Librarian, Biblioteca Raffaello, Rome, Italy
Casanova Was a Librarian: A Light-Hearted Look at the Profession


Casanova Was a Librarian: A Light-Hearted Look at the Profession does not impart any earth-shattering revelations about librarianship, yet it is tremendous fun! This book presents a cursory overview of myriad topics ranging from the prim and proper (library history) to the outrageous (kinky librarians). If you want an entertaining read about all things library, then look no further.

Casanova begins with brief biographical sketches of well-known librarians, such as Laura Bush, Madeleine L’Engle, and the book’s namesake, Giacomo Casanova. Librarians will recognize most of these names from their formal education. Nevertheless, as librarians it is important to reflect upon the extraordinary and accomplished individuals who comprise our profession.

Casanova also includes select writings from library publications of the 1800s and early 1900s. My personal favorite is an essay titled “Librarianship as a Profession” by Katharine L. Sharp. It originally appeared in the publication Public Libraries: A Monthly Review of Library Matters and Methods in May 1898. In this piece, Sharp states that librarians “must be a combined edition of the encyclopedia, the dictionary, the dictionary of phrase and fable, the universal history, the bibliographic manual, and general biography.” She goes on to say “the library is a laboratory, a workshop, a school, a university of the people, from which the students are never graduated.” Sharp’s words are more than a century old and have endured remarkable technological advance and societal change. Yet these statements remain as relevant today as they were in 1898, truly embodying the function of libraries and the spirit of the profession.

Casanova Was a Librarian won’t make you a better cataloger or more efficient budgeter. But it will give you reason to laugh, or at the very least, smile. And as public librarians, we can all recognize the importance of that.—Adrianne Leonardelli, Reference Librarian, Forsyth County (N.C.) Public Library

Technology Made Simple


Computer networks, printers, copiers, databases, wikis, Wi-Fi, self-check machines, websites, games, PC reservations systems, blogs, RSS feeds, IM, and MP3 players—a dizzying number of information technology services and resources exist. How should small and medium-size public libraries decide what to do with all these options? Technology Made Simple guides non-technical public librarians through these complex questions using clear and accessible language. The basics of technology systems, applications, and services are explained within the context of comprehensive information technology (IT) planning. Bolan and Cullin suggest the use of a planning cycle comprised of assessment, planning, implementation, and continuous evaluation. The emphasis is on IT planning and implementation which supports the broader goals and mission of the library. Library staff is key to successfully supporting IT services. Methods for assessing staff IT abilities, setting minimum skill level requirements, and providing training are discussed. The appendixes include resources, worksheets, job descriptions, and publication samples. A Web page companion with additional worksheets and updates is available at www.ala.org/editions/extras/Bolan09205. This guide is a concise tool for small public libraries aiming to improve their technology infrastructure.—Ernie Cox, Librarian, St. Timothy’s School, Raleigh, North Carolina

Consider the Source


The shift from an analog world to a digital world has forever altered the information landscape. The medium that news junkies get their fix from in the twenty-first century is the Internet, no doubt. RSS, blogs, and newsreaders (for example, Bloglines and Google Reader) are the feeding trough for journalists, students, newshounds, researchers, and other information addicts as well as serious Internet users. Yet far too many information silos exist on the Web, and how does the critical thinker evaluate the top sources? Trust competent others to do the job.

Consider the Source is a collection of one hundred no-holds-barred reviews of news and information sites on the Web—compiled by Broderick, an author and journalism professor, and Miller, a veteran reporter. Not only does the book cover prominent U.S. sources...
Blogging and RSS: A Librarian’s Guide


Sauers states in his introduction that 2004 was “the year of the blog.” As a result of the blog boom, Sauers responded by writing a book in a conversational tone so anyone interested in blogs and feeds could comprehend. More importantly, the book was written in a manner that held the interest of three types of audiences: the new, the expert, and anyone in-between.

The earliest chapters provide a history and answer questions that the reader may have about blogs. Sauers covers the blog basics such as the definition of a blog, types of blogs, the blog effect, why people blog, and the difference between a librarian’s blog, a library blog, a miscellaneous blog, a personal blog, and a professional blog.

Chapters three and four introduce the bloggers and show the reader how to create blogs. Sauers enlists the help of other library professionals who author library blogs such as Christie Brandau (www.ksstate.librarian.blogspot.com), Steven M. Cohen (www.librarystuff.net), Karen Coombs (www.librarywebchic.net), Walt Crawford (walt.lishost.org), Lorcan Dempsey (orweblog.oclc.org), Sarah Houghton (librarianinblack.net), Jenny Levine (www.theshiftedlibrarian.com), Andrea Mercado (www.librarytechonics.info), Aaron Schmidt (www.walkingpaper.org), Michael Stephens (www.tametheweb.com), and Jessamyn West (www.librarian.net).

The latter chapters address RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and feeds. Identifying RSS and using feeds are covered in chapter five. Chapter six defines and differentiates different types of newsfeed aggregators. The author also includes noteworthy feeds in chapter seven, such as the Kansas City Public Library (www.kclibrary.org/guides), Hennepin County Library (www.hclib.org/pub/search/RSS.cfm), Amazon.com Syndicated Content (www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/xs/syndicate.html), BCR Online (www.bcr.org/rss), and OCLC (www.oclc.org/rss). For the more adventurous, chapter eight teaches the reader how to create a feed.

The book includes appendices, articles, glossary, an index, and a recommended reading list. Overall, Sauers has produced an important tool guide for the twenty-first-century cybrarian. A must-have on the professional library shelf.—Lori Sigety, Branch Manager, LaSalle Branch Library, St. Joseph County Public Library, South Bend, Indiana

Constraining Public Libraries: The World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Trade in Services


This book is a valuable resource in informing libraries about the World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) demonstrating why libraries and library boards should be aware of what they are and why it is more important than ever that libraries conduct advocacy. The book reviews the background and structure of the WTO framework, the requirements of the GATS agree-
ment, and the commercialization and privatization of public library services. The authors also did an excellent job of discussing how to avoid the negative impact of trade in services, advocacy for libraries, and the International Trade Policy as information policy. Libraries need to be aware that privatization and commercialization put all libraries at risk for trade threats.

One of the most common forms of privatization is outsourcing and while libraries branch out to offer new services, the same is occurring in the private sector as it also identifies new market services thus creating a competition of services. Commercialization includes libraries as a place to sell products and services, and as a place for receiving small payments for particular services.

The variety of traditional (free) and non-traditional (with new technologies) services libraries offer demonstrate that libraries cannot rely on the GATS exemption for services that are provided. Recommendations to libraries to continue to offer the highest-quality services so customers require access discourage the trend toward privatization in libraries and commercialization, and libraries must continue to advocate for funding.

The authors recommend that effective advocacy requires education beginning with the trustees and library boards. International trade agreements should also be viewed in a broader context. The last point is that library associations should view the importance of coalition building in order to gain a stronger response and create a more powerful impact.

This book is a valuable resource for library and information science, government officials, educators, and those in political science and is highly recommended for public and academic libraries.—Susan McClellan, Community Outreach Coordinator Librarian, Shaler North Hills Library, Glenshaw, Pennsylvania

**Storytimes . . . Plus!**


*Storytimes . . . Plus! is a collection of thirty-five themed storytime scripts with extra (plus!) supplemental activities that can be used to fit a particular storytime. Lincycomb has worked as a children's librarian in both a school and public library setting, giving her ample experience to collect storytime ideas such as "Plenty of Pockets" and "Spaghetti Day."

Each program script includes a brief table of contents, listing rhymes and songs, books and crafts that complete the storytime presentation. The "plus" activities include games, longer projects (think learning stations and centers, and so on), more read-aloud suggestions such as additional poems or books, snack ideas, and other tips. After the table of contents, the words to the rhymes and songs are listed, as are brief synopses of the books recommended. Generally Lincycomb provides only one set of craft instructions—and often these crafts require more time and space than would be available in a public library storytime setting. The plus section also includes brief descriptions of activities. The plus inclusions also seem more appropriate for a school setting.

There are additional resources at the back of the book including step-by-step directions and scripts for stories and reader's theater-type activities. A bibliography of selected books is also provided, along with a section of craft patterns, although a bit rudimentary. An index is included.

This book would make a great resource for those who are new to the art of storytime presentation, including new librarians or even new parents. The topics are kept simple and often include typically themed book choices. Interestingly, Lincycomb includes many holiday references which may be helpful to home school teachers or private school media specialists who can freely include holidays in their programs. Public libraries may wish to include this title as a reference addition, rather than part of the professional collection.—Lisa Erickson, Youth Librarian, Fort Worth (Tex.) Public Library


The 2007 edition of the American Reference Books Annual (ARBA) proves to be an invaluable resource for public libraries. The most recent edition of ARBA, volume 38 in the annual series, contains reviews of more than 1,300 English-language titles. These include books, CD-ROMs and websites that were published or updated in the United States and Canada during 2005 and 2006, including those from 2007 that were received in time to be evaluated. With an advisory board and more than 400 critics with backgrounds in academia and myriad public and school libraries, ARBAs reviews are highly comprehensive and can include frank criticism, a
Gotcha for Guys! Nonfiction Books to Get Boys Excited about Reading


It has recently been lamented that not enough attention is given to boys when it comes to promoting reading instruction and enjoyment. According to children's author John Scieszka's literacy initiative, *Guys Read*, boys regularly perform worse than girls in reading exams and high school males are more likely to be special education students.

With these sobering facts in mind, Baxter's fourth and newest *Gotcha* book is a welcome addition to a public library's collection. Practical and informative, *Gotcha for Guys!* aims to assist the public or school librarian in fostering interest and excitement in reading among boys from kindergarten age through high school. A consultant and former children's librarian herself, Baxter has written three previous titles, all focused on nonfiction book talks. Her enthusiasm in this particular work is evident and infectious.

The book is organized into ten chapters, each one covering suggested titles within a given subject that have been proven engaging to males. These topics include pirates, skyscrapers, insects, and bathroom humor, with chapter titles such as "Disasters and Unsolved Mysteries," "Prehistoric Creatures," and "All Things Gross." Within each chapter are three subsections. *New and Notable* contains booktalks for recent titles, including useful facts to share with the audience that provide historical or situational context to the book covered in question. The second section, *Not to Be Missed*, contains a list of annotated titles that have traditionally been well received by young male audiences. The last section of each chapter, *Worth Reading*, contains a longer list of titles, not annotated, that Baxter and Kochel may not have personally seen or used, but have received favorable reviews in *School Library Journal*, *Horn Book*, or *Booklist*.

Especially handy is the inclusion of recommended grade levels for each title provided. This convenient implement should be useful to both new and veteran librarians who are planning school visits and storytimes. Two indexes are included—title and author/illustrator.

This compendium of entertaining and educational nonfiction titles is catered to boys, but many girls will find the suggestions appealing as well.—Rebecca Kennedy, Adult Services Librarian, Chicago Public Library

Something to Talk About: Creative Booktalking for Adults


Booktalks are often performed by children's and school librarians to promote worthy titles and cultivate excitement for literature. However, adults often crave direction as well when it comes to reading. There are numerous professional works about booktalking to children, but not so many geared toward speaking to mature audiences. *Something to Talk About* purports to be the first book that focuses solely on doing adult booktalks. It does an excellent job of demonstrating the

Public Libraries
mechanics behind a booktalk program, as well as furnishing practical tips and detailed checklists available for the librarian’s own personal use.

The book is organized into two principal sections. The first six chapters are devoted to the development of a booktalk. Each chapter covers a particular phase of program planning, from the initial step of choosing the books to publicizing the actual event. Interspersed throughout the work are informational boxes that provide ideas and information that supplement the text in a specific chapter, such as a sample script for a sci-fi booktalk and a list of guidelines for crafting a successful speech. The seventh and last chapter comprises a generous collection of nearly ninety tried-and-true titles, divided by genre, each accompanied by a sample booktalk. The booktalks featured have been used in the field by the authors, who are both experienced public librarians.

The work unfolds slowly, without intimidating a librarian new to the task of booktalking. Steps to producing an effective booktalk are revealed at a comfortable pace and in straightforward language. This title also serves to a degree as a basic how-to guide on public speaking for the librarian. A standard index is included, as well as a briefly annotated list of materials for further related reading.

Both new and seasoned librarians will greatly benefit from this focused and clear-cut professional work that is catered to better serving their adult patrons. Booktalks are generally inexpensive programs for a budget-conscious public library to execute, and Something to Talk About provides a plethora of ideas on how to either improve or get started.—Rebecca Kennedy, Adult Services Librarian, Chicago Public Library

“Collaboration in the Digital Age” Set for June 24–25 in Denver, Colorado

It is clear that Americans are increasingly using the Internet to connect to museum and library resources. A recent IMLS study reports that in 2006, 310 million of the 1.2 billion adult visits to museums were made online and 560 million of the 1.3 billion adult visits to libraries were made online. Yet the Health Heritage Index found that 60 percent of collecting institutions do not include digital preservation in their mission.

Digitizing special library and museum collections has many advantages—better collection management, less wear and tear on objects, and greater public access, to name a few. But the challenges are also formidable, and include cost, prioritization, and, of course, preserving digital collections. Where to begin? To answer some of these questions, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is sponsoring the forum, “Collaboration in the Digital Age.”

This program—organized in cooperation with Heritage Preservation, the Denver Public Library, the Colorado Historical Society, and the Denver Art Museum—is part of Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action, an IMLS initiative to save endangered collections in the nation’s museums and libraries. Scheduled for June 24 and 25 in Denver, this is the second in a series of four national conservation forums that are part of the Connecting to Collections initiative.

“Collaboration in the Digital Age” responds to the needs of museums and libraries by helping them think strategically and collaboratively about digitization and digital preservation. Speakers will review the fundamentals of digital content creation and preservation, emphasizing practical approaches to planning digital projects, increasing access to collections, enabling digital resources to serve multiple purposes, and protecting digital investments.

Francie Alexander, senior vice president of Scholastic Education and chief academic officer of Scholastic Inc., will be the first of many speakers, including leaders in the digital collections field and other distinguished professionals from across the nation. Elizabeth Broun, the Margaret and Terry Stent director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, will deliver the keynote address.

The forum is open and free of charge to staff and board members of museums, libraries, and archives, as well as to conservation professionals, representatives of government, funders, and the media. Advance online registration is required by May 23. There will be no on-site registration. Program and logistical information and online registration are available at www.imls.gov/collections/tour.
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.

The contributing editor of this column is VICKI NESTING, Assistant Director at the St. Charles Parish Library, Louisiana. Submissions may be sent to her at 21 River Park Dr., Hahnville, LA 70057; vnestin@bellsouth.net.


**Graphic Novels Core Collection: A Selection Guide**

www.hwwilson.com

H. W. Wilson’s new *Graphic Novels Core Collection: A Selection Guide* is designed to help librarians choose age-appropriate works in this increasingly popular literary form. This WilsonWeb selection guide highlights approximately two thousand recommended titles with descriptive and evaluative annotations (plus cover art), searchable by author, title, subject, genre, and grade level.

The latest release in Wilson’s Core Collections series of selection guides, *Graphic Novels Core Collection*, provides assistance with collection development, readers’ advisory, and curriculum support. Strict standards are applied for rating materials by age appropriateness. Descriptive and evaluative annotations offer insight into both quality and content, and automatic links to cover-art give librarians a first-person “feel” for the work.

Like the other Wilson Core Collections, *Graphic Novels Core Collection* allows users to narrow any search to Short List (most recommended) titles. Limiters for fiction, nonfiction, or biography reflect the growing diversity of subjects treated in graphic novel format.

**Pearl’s Picks Now Available from EBSCO Publishing and NoveList**

www.ebscohost.com/novelist

NoveList announced an exclusive arrangement with Nancy Pearl to add Pearl’s Picks to its suite of readers’ advisory and library solutions. Pearl’s Picks is a compilation of suggested reading and annotations from the most widely acclaimed librarian of our time, delivered to libraries every month.

Pearl is heard regularly on National Public Radio and is the author of the Book Lust series. According to *The New York Times*, Pearl is “the talk of library circles,” and her richly diverse book suggestions provide a great reading experience of both fiction and nonfiction titles for readers of all ages.

Pearl’s suggestions provide marquee content that can enliven a library’s website and keep visitors regularly coming back for more of this monthly reader-oriented feature. Pearl’s Picks can be integrated into a website’s look and feel so that libraries can determine how best to feature these suggestions on their websites.

Pearl’s Picks includes a mix of titles that are readily available and titles that are most likely already in library collections. The service allows
libraries to tout new books as well as remind patrons of worthwhile books already on their shelves. Libraries receive a list of titles to be included in the monthly Pearl's Picks thirty days in advance, so they can obtain any titles that might be missing.

AllCIRC Automated CD/DVD Vault

www.allCIRC.com

AllCIRC is an automated vault for CD/DVD collections with a built-in patron self-checkout system. It was designed specifically for libraries to provide media protection with full self service.

AllCIRC is an advanced second-generation system built on experience and technology of the Intelligent Media Manager (IMM) product line. In addition to being the gatekeeper of your media collection, allCIRC now incorporates a complete FlashScan patron self-checkout solution for a universal all-in-one patron self-service station.

Apex DiscXpressII Storage for CD/DVD Collections

www.integratedtek.com

Integrated Technology Group recently introduced the Apex DiscXpressII (ADX-II), a sleek compact unit that holds sixteen hundred discs. An available random storage system increases effective capacity to two thousand discs or more. The ADX-II dispenser may be connected to one or more Apex XpressCheck self-service kiosks to allow for self-check out of all library materials at a single station within the same transaction, using an identical process.

The ADX-II features include:

- totally secure, locked storage of DVDs and CDs with discs dispensed to patrons only after proper check out;
- a central dispensing unit version of ADX-II designed for libraries with larger collections or multiple self-checkout stations;
- multipart sets dispensed as easily as single discs;
- continued deactivation of security strips and RFID security bits at the Apex XpressCheck station for those materials not secured in the ADX-II unit; and
- fast-loading of CDs without a single keystroke—simply scan the item's bar code or RFID tag and insert the disc(s) into the slot.

Seal Shield Launches Antibacterial, Dishwasher-Safe Keyboard and Mouse

www.sealshield.com/products.htm

Seal Shield Corporation announced the Silver Seal family of antibacterial products for infection control. Notably, Seal Shield introduced the Silver Seal Antibacterial washable keyboard and mouse. According to the company, the Silver Seal keyboard and mouse are the first ever antibacterial keyboard and mouse to be fully submersible and dishwasher safe.

Recent studies have shown the computer keyboard and mouse to be a major source of cross contamination infections. A study reported at the American Society for Microbiology found that the “superbug” Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) can survive on computer keyboards for up to six weeks.

Unlike traditional antibacterial products, the Silver Seal antibacterial plastic utilizes all natural, pure silver ions that are embedded in the plastic to create a safe and effective antibacterial solution. Silver is a natural antibiotic product and its properties have been incorporated into the Silver Seal product line using the latest nanotechnologies. Silver ions are infused in the plastic used to create the Silver Seal product line. When these ions are exposed to moisture in the air, they create an antimicrobial shield on the product that resists bacteria.

Media Bank Offers Secure Access to CDs and DVDs

www.libramation.com

Libramation's Media Bank offers an efficient and secure solution to provide patrons with 24-hour access to your CD and DVD media collection. The introduction of the Media Bank CD/DVD self-charge unit allows patrons to browse the library’s media collection, select the items of their choice, check out their selections, and receive a receipt. A customized graphic user interface guides their search and provides step-by-step checkout instructions. The item can also be returned at this kiosk.

Comprehensive Courier Management System Developed for the Library Market

www.quipugroup.com

The partners of Quipu Group announced the general release of Library2Library, a highly scalable
courier management and materials transportation system designed specifically for libraries. Library2Library is a knowledgebase, allowing staff to keep, update, and access all courier information in one place.

There are a number of benefits for courier managers in Library2Library. An operator can access all the functions of the application through a single interface, and managers can quickly get the information they need from the full report suite. Inquiries on routes, delivery schedules, and billing can be viewed online or downloaded into Excel, and reports are highly customizable to each courier systems’ needs.

Library2Library includes a trouble-ticket system, routing-slip creation, lost and damaged item management, multilevel logins, and courier route and schedule management. Courier systems may purchase individual modules or may choose to do a full implementation of Library2Library.

Marquis Who’s Who Adds Who’s Who in American Politics to Its Online Database

www.marquiswhoswho.com

Marquis Who’s Who announced the addition of Who’s Who in American Politics to its online database. Now available to subscribers as a fully searchable online database, Who’s Who in American Politics provides critical biographical information on approximately 36,000 key players in the political arena.

It includes every cabinet member, governor, state legislator, member of congress, and Supreme Court justice, as well as ambassadors, advisors, party officials, and political journalists. Profiles are searchable by name, political office, gender, political party, religion, birth place and date, and contact address.

The launch of Who’s Who in American Politics online marks the completion of an effort by Marquis to digitize all of its active Who’s Who print titles. The complete Marquis Who’s Who database now offers profiles of nearly 1.4 million of the most notable executives, scientists, educators, athletes, entertainers, political figures, and other industry leaders.

Freedom of Expression: Resistance and Repression in the Age of Intellectual Property

www.mediaed.org

This provocative and amusing documentary explores the battles being waged in courts, classrooms, museums, film studios, and the Internet over control of our cultural commons.

Based on Kembrew McLeod’s award-winning book of the same title, Freedom of Expression: Resistance and Repression in the Age of Intellectual Property charts the many successful attempts to push back this assault by overzealous copyright holders. Freedom of Expression could be a valuable tool for educators, activists, filmmakers, students, artists, and librarians.

Accessible Archives Expands Coverage of The Liberator and African-American Newspapers

www.accessible.com

Accessible Archives, a publisher of electronic full-text searchable historical databases, has announced the availability of Part III of The Liberator and Part XII of African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century, two of its premier collections.

William Lloyd Garrison was a journalistic crusader advocating the immediate emancipation of all slaves. He gained a national reputation for being one of the most radical of American abolitionists. He founded the most influential newspaper in the antebellum anti-slavery crusade, The Liberator, which was published from January 1831 through December 1865.

With the addition of Part XII of African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century, the twelve parts of this collection will provide more than 120,000 articles. Newspapers included in this database are being made available in chronological order, with the addition of some ten thousand articles each year. Titles include:

4. Frederick Douglass’ Paper, 1851–1859. Rochester, N.Y. (completed through 1855)
6. Provincial Freeman, 1854–1857. Toronto, Canada
7. The Christian Recorder, 1861–1902. Philadelphia (through 1902; 1892 is unavailable)
AV Xpress™—Without any staff assistance, patron can unlock an AV security case following successful self-checkout of item. Currently supports Kwik Case®, SecureCase™, and One-Time™ cases. RedTag™ cases coming soon.

DiscXpressII™—Patron uses empty case during self-checkout; once completed, DiscXpressII dispenses CDs & DVDs from secured storage. Integrates with a standard Apex XpressCheck self-service kiosk so that all library materials may be checked out in a single transaction.

Talk to us about:

Integrated Technology Group

✅ Self-Checkout
✅ RFID
✅ Automated Materials Handling (AMH)

www.integratedtek.com
sales@integratedtek.com
877.207.3127
Always At Your Service

www.titletales.com
Phone: 800.888.4478
Fax: 800.888.6319

Public Library Specialists
A FOLLETT CORPORATION COMPANY