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J O E M A T T H E W S
More on Serving Gay Youth

I am writing in response to “Serving Gay Youth @ your library” by Michael Garrett Farrelly (Passing Notes, July/August 2006).

Although it is normal to be concerned about possible negative community reactions to perceptions of an individual librarian’s words or actions as “encouraging” a teen to explore a controversial issue, this article did little to actually accomplish what its title describes. Serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, or questioning (LGBTQ) teens means more than buying a few books and offering a token book discussion. Serving LGBTQ teens is the same as serving all teens; it involves recognizing their educational, informational, and recreational needs and providing resources and services to meet those needs. Part of serving any audience is making sure they can find people and experiences authentic to their lives on the shelves of their library while also exposing them to dissimilar people and experiences so that they can develop a sense of the greater world around them.

One of the first things a librarian needs to do when thinking about serving LGBTQ teens is to address the very issues Michael

continued on page 5
Every Child Ready to Read® Available at ALA Store

Materials for the popular Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® program are available now at the ALA Online Store (www.alastore.ala.org).

Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® is a joint project of the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). Based on research from the PLA and ALSC Early Literacy Initiative, the Every Child Ready to Read® program consists of three programs targeting parents and caregivers of children ages: 0–2 years old (Early Talkers), 2–3 years old (Talkers), and 4–5 years old (prereaders).

Materials are available in the form of a kit, which contains everything necessary to present all three programs. Individual items also are available, including brochures and posters that highlight the importance of helping children learn prereading skills beginning at birth. Spanish language materials also are available.

To order Every Child Ready to Read® materials, visit www.alastore.ala.org. For more information about Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® visit www.ala.org/everychild.

On the Agenda

2007

ALA Midwinter Meeting
Jan. 19–24
Seattle

PLA Spring Symposium
March 1–3
San Jose, Calif.

ALA Annual Conference
June 21–27
Washington, D.C.

2008

ALA Midwinter Meeting
Jan. 11–16
Philadelphia

PLA 12th National Conference
March 25–29
Minneapolis, Minn.

ALA Annual Conference
June 26–July 2
Anaheim, Calif.

Public Libraries Contest—$500 First Prize for a Public Libraries Article

Do you have an idea for an article that you might write up someday for Public Libraries? Well, the time is now. During the past few years, many of those involved with Public Libraries have expressed interest in receiving more articles from people working in public libraries. Now, perhaps that will happen. Feature articles submitted or published in 2007 will be eligible to compete for two prizes one of $500 and another of $300. The prizes will be awarded at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference.

Criteria for eligibility are:

- authors must be public library employees at the time the manuscript is submitted.
- Articles must have been submitted or published in 2007.
- Articles must be feature length. Verso and Perspectives contributions will not be considered.

The articles will be evaluated and awards made by the Public Libraries Advisory Subcommittee members. This group makes policy for the journal and advises the editor about certain issues that need resolution. The names of the subcommittee members are listed in each issue of Public Libraries on the masthead.

Although questions about topics for articles directed to the editor are welcome, she cannot make commitments about publication without seeing the finished manu-
Readers Respond  continued from page 2

Farrelly raises in his article but never confronts. Why would we be more afraid of a parent thinking we’re encouraging homosexuality by buying Luna or using The Geography Club in a book discussion any more than we’re afraid of a parent thinking we’re encouraging any other “undesired” characteristic? We are comfortable with our assertion that reading Doing It will not make a teenager have premarital sex or that reading The Chocolate War will not make a teen defy authority. The fears that our words or actions in those areas could be perceived as wrong are not unfounded, just check in with ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom for proof.

Why are we so comfortable standing up to prejudices and censors when it comes to other contentious issues but quake when the subject is sexuality? The answer is easy—we as a culture are still working through our OWN feelings about the subject. The solution is not so easy.

We have to stand tall and do what’s right, even when we question ourselves because of the messages we have internalized by being alive in the later portion of the 20th century. We have to examine our OWN homophobia to answer our OWN questions about why we do what we do as public librarians, with all topics and audiences, so that we can respond to critics with the same strength of conviction we use to respond to all complaints.—Tracey Firestone, Manager of Young Adult Services, Oakland (Calif.) Public Library

Michael Garrett Farrelly responds: I would like to completely agree with Ms. Firestone’s premise that we, as librarians, need to stand our ground in regards to LGBTQ issues just as vehemently as we do any other issue of intellectual freedom. My article’s premise, which perhaps the title did not convey entirely, was dealing with internalized homophobia and fear of “sex” issues when working with LGBTQ teens. Because of society’s often rabid reaction to any issue of sexuality being addressed to children or teens, many libraries and librarians will react with fear or avoidance rather than confront the issues with the same doggedness as we would when someone complains that Bridge to Terabithia is too dark or The Golden Compass promotes an atheistic view of the world.

My intent was to offer small steps for those who are struggling, not to imply that a simple book discussion or purchase order would be a universal balm. Those suggestions were first steps for librarians and libraries who otherwise might have offered nothing for LGBTQ youth. I do plan on writing further, and in much greater depth and detail, about LGBTQ young adults in a future column, and hope you will continue reading.
Public Libraries and Baby Boomers

Public libraries must understand and respect the needs of their citizens and shape their service programs to respond to those needs. The growing proportion of active, older Americans—those baby boomers born between 1945 and 1964—is motivating libraries to rethink what services they provide and how they provide them. Public libraries have the potential to become cornerstone institutions for baby boomers and productive aging. In recognition of this unique position to act as a springboard for the millions of baby boomers beginning to reach retirement age, Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) (www.lff.org/about/onthego.html) convened a select group of librarians at the University of North Carolina this past July at the Lifelong Access Libraries Leadership Institute. I was fortunate enough to have one of the California State Library staff, library programs consultant Suzanne Flint, attend this institute. The purpose was to train librarians to lead the nation's libraries in enhancing services for older adults, with opportunities for active learning, creative exploration, and meaningful civic engagement. ALC has already made great strides in serving older adults through their Lifelong Access programs (www.lff.org/programs/lifelong.html). I would like to thank Suzanne for sharing information from the institute and assisting me in preparing this column.

The Boomer Landscape

By 2014, 65 percent of current library customers will be between fifty and seventy years of age. In California, the state with which I am most familiar, the state's older population is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the state's total population, increasing 112 percent from 1990 to 2020. As early as 2010, one in five Californians will be sixty years of age or older.

These aging adults constitute our largest growing "natural resource" (in potential personal time and money contributions) if we embrace the possibilities they have to offer. Institutions, corporations, government, and nonprofits must all reconsider how they do business to capitalize on this resource.

What do we know about these boomers? We know that they:

- will be more healthy, active, and mobile;
- are more and more likely to age in place;
- want meaningful engagement in their communities, either paid or unpaid;
- expect to design and manage activities for themselves and others; and
- view retirement not as an end, but as a new chapter in which to begin new activities and to set new goals.
We also know that these active, engaged older adults tend to seek:

- welcoming places;
- meaningful activities;
- opportunities to learn;
- social and civic connections; and
- information and options.

Research on Boomers
Much useful information about older adults was shared at the ALC Institute. Here are some highlights of the most inspiring presenters, who spoke about the current research underlying new approaches for working with midlife and older adults.

Paul Nussbaum is a clinical neuropsychologist and author of *A Lifestyle Guide to Brain Health across Your Lifespan* and *Brain Health and Wellness*. Information about these publications is available at www.paulnussbaum.com/bookspapers.html. Nussbaum’s research and work suggest some far-reaching consequences for lifelong learning and the environments that nurture and support it. He believes that lifelong learning and an active lifestyle are critical to maximizing brain health and perhaps delaying or even preventing neurodegenerative disorders later in life. Five critical domains to brain health, according to Nussbaum, include socialization, physical activity, mental stimulation, spirituality, and diet. He sees libraries as having an important role to play in creating environments that support just such lifelong learning activities.

Peter Maramaldi is an associate professor and Hartford faculty scholar, Simmons School of Social Work, research associate at Massachusetts General Hospital, and lecturer in the department of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He shared his experiences in the field of social work, which has traditionally focused on children and families, but has had to change to include aging populations in what is best described as a major professional paradigm shift. He pointed to this transformation in social work as an example of the kind of shift public libraries can and should make as well.

Mary Catherine Bateson is a writer and cultural anthropologist whose most recently published book is *Willing to Learn: Passages of Personal Discovery* (Steerforth Pr., 2004). She shared her work in the development of Active Wisdom Dialogues—a model for engaging midlife customers in the library and the community through specially facilitated intergenerational community discussion groups in which older adults share how they might use their experience and perspective to impact present and future societal conditions.

Boomer Service Strategies
Institute presenters made a number of suggestions for transforming libraries to be more responsive to boomers:

- integrating new communications and information technologies to promote productive aging;
- creating programs and services that are accessible, culturally sensitive and connected to the larger community, including such topics as:
  - health and wellness;
  - life planning;
  - financial planning;
  - intergenerational activities;
  - spiritual development; and
  - social issues.

The challenges for libraries, as identified by the presenters, include:

- continuing to change traditional service models;
- changing our assumptions about older adults;
- making boomers one of libraries’ priority constituencies;
- seeing boomers as a valued resource; and
- acknowledging that boomers are a highly variable constituency (with a great diversity of races and ethnicities, as well as a broad range of educational levels, health, and family status).

I know that public libraries can serve as an important component in effectively addressing the needs of this growing demographic because libraries offer the following key attributes:

PLACE: The community’s information and meeting place.

TRUST: Most trusted public institution.

ACCESS: More than 16,500 public libraries nationwide.

INCLUSIVE: No barriers for age, language, belief or economic status.

PURPOSE: Public libraries already support engagement and learning.

A quick and easy Web site for information on this topic is www.boomerproject.com. You can get timely information about boomers and subscribe to their e-newsletter. In order to remain relevant in the twenty-first century, libraries must reshape their service programs to address the needs of the increasingly older population.

I hope that all of you have a wonderful holiday season and a great new year in 2007.
How Will This Serve the Community?
Deciding Who Can Speak at Your Library

Many libraries generate revenue by renting available space to outside groups or individuals to give free talks, presentations, or workshops to the community at large. As the saying goes, however, there's no such thing as a free ride. Consider the following example: A library district charges for-profit individuals and groups $150 per hour of occupancy, but a business-savvy speaker circumvents the room fee by contacting the person responsible for adult programming and asking to have the fee waived. The library still provides the speaker with staff time, refreshments, and publicity, which can amount to $300. Setting up and breaking down the room takes an hour, plus the one-hour talk, and you have another $300. So you get a “free” speaker—but at what cost to the library? Although no money changed hands, the library made a gift of $600 to the entrepreneur.

Free Speakers
According to the American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics, Article VI: “We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.”1 Some businesspeople are only interested in advancing their own private interests, and their presentations are little more than packaged sales pitches—a disservice to library patrons. If you habitually schedule free speakers who are there to solicit clients to meet their own professional and financial agendas, your programs will have the flavor of live infomercials and your audience will soon dissipate.

The Middleton (N.Y.) Public Library Policy for Library-Initiated Programs defines the purpose and philosophy of a program as:

- a library resource, which is a planned interaction between the library staff and members of the community. Its purpose is to promote library materials, facilities, or services, as well as to offer the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience . . . utilizing library staff, materials, community resources, resource people, displays, and media presentations.2

The key phrase here is “Library-Initiated” (found in the name of the policy). More and more frequently, outside agencies approach library programmers with offers to present programs to the community. The following process will
help you remain true to the purpose and philosophy of your programming mission statement when you find yourself presented with similar offers.

The Art of Inquiry
When you are approached by an entrepreneur who wants to give a “free” seminar or workshop at your library, it would be worthwhile to attend one of the seminars before agreeing to schedule one at your library. Then you can decide if he or she has a service your library users would find beneficial. If this is not possible, engage the businessperson in an in-depth conversation, asking such critical questions as:

- “What do you have to offer the community?” This question sets forth the maxim that the library is there to provide services to the community—that is, local taxpayers. If the businessperson is looking for an opportunity to recruit potential clients from the library gene pool, this will become clear as you ask more leading, specific questions, such as, “How will patrons benefit from your program?”
- “Can you send me a description and an outline of your talk?” Good businesspeople are also good salespeople. They often give you just enough information to convince you that you need the costly services they provide. A description and outline will be ample indicators of the substance of the talk—or lack thereof. I always ask for this in e-mail, as it saves time, money, and paper.
- “Will my patrons be more informed and feel more empowered as a result of this program?” If the information leaves you with more questions than answers, it is most likely a hollow sales pitch to entice the audience to come to the speaker’s office or store. If the speaker is evasive when you ask more specific questions relating to the needs of the prospective audience, it’s a good indication that the substance of the talk will leave your patrons feeling empty and unfulfilled. How will the program empower people? Some businesspeople do not want the audience to feel empowered because they want to identify or create a need and make the audience feel dependent on the speaker’s services. Many for-profit businesspeople tend to cringe at the word empowered.
  
For example, I asked a prospective financial speaker how people—especially pensioners—could avoid Enronization. His response was, “Diversification.” It was an answer I could have received from a television commercial. What he did not tell me was that various financial institutions were offering a principal-protection fund whereby an investor’s principal will not be in jeopardy should the institution fail.
- “I know the talk is free, but what are your fees should a patron request your services?” Our library sponsored a workshop promising to address pain management through hypnosis. A husband and wife offered the workshop for free because they had a practice in the county. Many people with arthritis came to the workshop through hypnosis. A husband and wife offered the workshop for $90 an hour, $10 off for library patrons attending the workshop. Needless to say, the attendees of this workshop were disheartened and disappointed. This could have been avoided had I asked one simple question: “What are your fees should a patron request your services?” Many patrons rely on the library because they do not have the resources to buy books, newspapers, magazines, CDs, or DVDs. Wealthier communities may sponsor local businesspeople who charge high fees, but those speakers would not be appropriate for an inner-city public library that caters to lower-income constituents.
- “Is there a nonprofit in the community that would be able to address the community’s needs more impartially?” A man approached me wanting to give a talk on the New York State Partnership for Long-term Care. In other words, he was in the business of selling or promoting insurance. I remembered that the local Office for the Aging would cover this option along with other choices. I informed the man that we partner with the Office for the Aging, which provides the library with a seminar on this very topic. Remember that businesspeople are not in the habit of naming competitors or advocating alternative choices.

There is a national trend for libraries to collaborate with other nonprofit agencies in the community. ALA and other national organizations encourage libraries to partner with community resources such as public schools, community centers, and other affiliations that have nonprofit status. This will help maintain quality services to taxpayers—our customers—at a time when tax-supported budgets are shrinking.

Libraries are nonprofits, and that fact should be emphasized when consultants tell you how much they charge. For instance, one woman...
charged $300 for a vocational workshop. Resources in the community provided this very same service free of charge because they received funding from government agencies.

In the Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Public Library District, successful collaborations have included:

- Service Corps of Retired Executives and Gateway for Entrepreneurial Tomorrows, who offered workshops on a variety of topics dealing with small business;
- Westchester/Putnam Legal Aid Society, which presented workshops on a number of legal topics, including landlord-tenant rights and pro se divorce;
- Office for the Aging, which gave workshops aimed at caregivers, as well as workshops on Medicare and the New York State Partnership for Long-term Care;
- the Dutchess County Historical Society and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, which offered walking tours and lectures on local history; and
- Catholic Charities, which provided immigration workshops in English and Spanish.

There is a wealth of community resources in the form of organizations that are often willing to partner with libraries. They are just a phone call away.

The Gracious Exit
If the speaker appears to be merely promoting a fee-for-service business, you can explain that although the library does not sponsor that type of program, it does have space to rent at an hourly rate, provided the meeting room is available. Be sure to state the fee. If your library does not rent to outside organizations, then refer the person to the local chamber of commerce or other business groups you may be aware of in your community.

Article VI of the Library Bill of Rights states, “Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.”3 So if your library district offers meeting space for $100 an hour to for-profit entrepreneurs, bear in mind that it needs to do so on an unbiased basis.

Fee-Based Speakers: Honorarium versus Payment
Libraries are accustomed to offering an honorarium, defined as “a payment for service (as making a speech) on which custom or propriety forbids a price to be set.”5 Many people seek the library as a venue for their performance because “libraries pay.” However, libraries with modest operating budgets may not be able to allocate much money for programming. Furthermore, most programs are presented free to the public, and there are many people such as lawyers, retired coaches, teachers, and a variety of speakers from the local college speaker’s bureau who are willing to offer their expertise as a community service. It is proper etiquette to offer an honorarium to guest speakers unless they volunteer their services, or unless you lack sufficient money in your budget. If there are no monies, say so plainly: “I wish the library could offer you an honorarium but we do not have money in the budget at this time.” This tells the speaker two important things: (1) you are aware that his or her time is valuable, and (2) his or her time and expertise will be considered a donation should they agree to speak to community members at your library.

Remember that the operative word is honorarium because “propriety forbids a price to be set.” It is a reward or recompense for services rendered to the community. Libraries purchase resources and provide services so that a large number of people will benefit from the materials or services provided. Be wary of people who want to use the library as a steady source of income. Moreover, the word honorarium, rather than payment, allows a library to change fee schedules due to budget modifications during economic hardship.

You may encounter guest speakers who have set fees that may or may not be negotiable. For example, a home organizer who approached the library to give a talk said her fee was $100. We were able to meet that demand.
A Buddhist monk came to give a lecture on the art of meditating and we offered him a $100 honorarium. Guest speakers who impart valuable information and knowledge to attendees are worth the honorarium.

Libraries should attempt to meet the fees of scholars, performers, and musicians through grants and sponsors. According to a spokeswoman at an ALA Let’s Talk about It! Jewish Literature Series conference, the rate for scholars is between $100 and $150 an hour. While performers’ and musicians’ fees are sometimes firm, people are often willing to negotiate if their fees are not within your budget.

Tips for Setting Fee Guidelines
Poughkeepsie (N.Y.) Public Library District (PPLD) is in the process of establishing budget guidelines for various programming departments in our library. Fee guidelines fluctuated in the realm of adult programming. For example, Sunday concert performers were receiving between $300 and $700 per concert (this is common because performers charge based on number of performers, length of performance, and distance traveled). If we paid a performer $450 and twenty people attended the event, the cost per person would be $22.50. If we paid a guest speaker $200 to conduct a writing workshop and twenty people attended, that would amount to $10 per person. What is the amount per person the library is willing to spend?

PPLD did not want to dispense with the free Sunday concerts. In order to accommodate everyone, performance fees were lowered to $300–$350 for a one-hour performance, which seemed to be the reasonable going rate in the area. If a ninety-minute performance were desired, it would then be appropriate to offer $400–$450. Many musicians are willing to extend playing time at libraries for a reduced rate.

As there is a potential for an audience of one hundred or more, the next step is trying to recruit more people to take advantage of this free event. Musicians are always given the opportunity to sell their CDs at the end of the performance. More money may be agreed upon to cover travel expenses, or the fee can be lowered if another library (or other venue) in the area also is booking the performer (called “piggybacking” here in the Hudson Valley). The fee reduction due to piggybacking typically amounts to $50–$100. A band playing for a café...
in the region offered the library a $50 discount on their usual $450 fee. On the other hand, another band charged $1,000 for a show. This was clearly out of the library's budget and more suitable for a paying venue. Some performers may be willing to perform as a fund-raiser for the library, so remember to keep the channels of communication open.

You may have been able to pay performers $300 for a performance last year but find that now you only have $200 to offer the same people. It is fair practice to let them know you do not have as much money in the budget as you did last year and that this is all you can afford to pay them. Most performers are gracious and will agree to perform for your established price unless they can get a better-paying gig the same time and day.

At the Hyde Park (N.Y.) Free Library, cost of a folk concert was reduced considerably, after the library offered free space to the musicians to conduct workshops during the day where participants were charged directly by the artist. The library then charged a small admission fee to those who did not attend workshops to help offset the price of the evening concert (the cost of the workshop also included admission to the concert). Libraries without programming budgets may have to charge small admission fees to help offset costs and provide future programming. Many nonprofits feel uncomfortable charging a fee, so they may resort to “suggested donation.” This is an open invitation to everyone in the community, regardless of economic status.

Another rationale for charging a minimal fee for concerts is based on mathematical analysis. If your library serves a modest population of six thousand, and you average thirty people attending a free concert, you are only serving 0.5 percent of your constituency. Now, what if thirty more people were planning to go? If sixty people did indeed attend you would still only be serving 1 percent of your constituency. There are 5,970 people who did not attend this free event. Charging a minimal fee will not only help offset the cost of the program and guarantee future performances, but you are charging only the people who are interested in the event while other monies could be invested in programs that may cater to the remaining 5,970 people in your community. However, some of your patrons may resent a free public library charging for performances. Know your demographics and your patrons before charging for public

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**Honorarium Guidelines**

These honorarium guidelines are for a New York State library serving 73,000 residents with a $3 million operating budget:

- Local history speakers are offered a $50 honorarium for morning speaking engagements.
- Evening speakers who are established experts in their fields offering a self-improvement or how-to talk are awarded $100; two-hour daytime workshops range between $150 and $200.
- Scholar-led book discussions are awarded $100–$150 per session.
- Musical performances are set at $300–$350, which can increase or decrease depending on the number of performers, the hours of performance, and the artists' ability to perform in other local venues.
- Partner with other agencies and community resources that offer free seminars of value to local residents.
- Partner with local colleges and ask if they have a speaker's bureau.
- Determine the charge per person for each program. Charge materials fees or small admission fees to help offset the cost of expensive crafts or performances if your programming budget is small or nonexistent.
- Do not discount the businessperson from offering a free seminar to patrons. However, make sure of the following: (1) service fees will be affordable to your patrons; (2) valuable information will be imparted to attendees even if audience members choose not to use the services; and (3) the businessperson will be objective and offer information that empowers members of the audience. Always check to see if there is a nonprofit in the community that would be able to address the community's needs more impartially. If there is, then pursue a relationship with the nonprofit agency, especially if the for-profit speaker is charging a fee. When programming a seminar or talk, always keep the best interests of your patrons foremost. Proceed with discretion by asking leading questions to help determine if the speaker will meet the needs of your community.

Remember, guidelines should be flexible. Establish honorarium guidelines that allow for budget modifications and negotiation.
Some authors will speak for free to promote their books; others . . . may require a speaking fee that they might be willing to reduce or forego for a library engagement.

events. If your budget is in crisis-mode and you must begin charging a fee when you never have in the past, it is better to call it a fund-raiser.

Craft programs can also be expensive. For example, pysanky (Ukrainian egg decorating) is a lovely craft but the materials are costly. The library decided to absorb the instructor’s fee and room-rental fee, while participants were responsible for paying a materials fee. The instructor charged $125 for the day, the room-rental fee was $50, and materials were $12 per kit. Materials for twenty people cost $240. If a materials fee were not charged, the library would be spending $20 per person. In order to make the event affordable for the library, a materials fee of $10 was charged to the participants. As an aside, charging a materials fee for children’s crafts is discouraged since it may prevent economically disadvantaged children from participating.

Some authors will speak for free to promote their books; others, especially popular authors, may require a speaking fee that they might be willing to reduce or forego for a library engagement. For example, the normal speaking fee for Joe Smith, a renowned (and fictitious) author, is in the thousands of dollars, but he might agree to speak at your library for $200–$300. Certain authors may not feel comfortable giving a talk but may offer to do book signings. Some authors may expect the library to buy their books; others might donate them. Programming policy should offer pricing guidelines and allow for flexibility. For example, what is the cap on any one performance; any one speaker? This may be adjusted if it is also supported by a grant. However, fundraisers not withstanding, there should be a general consensus on how much is too much.

Conclusion
Today’s librarians carry many important responsibilities. Among them are: (1) to serve the community in an unbiased manner, and (2) to make sure that information can be accessed freely. Remembering both of these will help when planning adult programs for libraries.

Spam can attack us in the “real” world as well as on the Internet. We need to learn how to distinguish the spammer from the legitimate entrepreneur who has something of value to present to our library communities. Whether it’s a free seminar or a fee-based workshop, our first question must be, “How will this serve the needs of the community?” The answer to this will set the direction for the rest of the decision-making process, from checking to see if there are any nonprofits who could provide the same information for free, to determining how much of a fee or honorarium your library can offer. Bear in mind that not everyone who wants to charge a fee is self-serving, and not every one willing to speak for free has something of merit to say.

This paper gives a list of questions that the library programmer can ask a potential speaker. The answers received, plus a good knowledge of existing community resources, will help you decide whether or not that person has something that will benefit your community. The matter of honorariums and fees should be settled before you have to determine the worth of a speaker’s or performer’s time, talent, and knowledge. Finally, networking with programmers from other libraries may result in reduced performers’ fees due to shared venues, and will allow all of us to learn from one another’s positive and negative experiences.

References and Notes
3. Lear, ALA Programming Guides.
Nevada State Library and Archives Receive Federal Grant for Recruitment and Training

The Nevada State Library and Archives (NSLA), along with its collaborative partners, received a grant of $696,378 from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The funds will be used to support the partnership project “Mining the 21st Century Librarian II: A Collaboration to Recruit and Educate Diverse Librarians for Underserved Communities in the West,” which aims to recruit librarians for masters degree programs and support them through the educational process.

NSLA, in partnership with the University of Nevada–Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries, the University of North Texas School of Library Science, and the Las Vegas–Clark County Library District, will build upon a successful multilibrary collaboration begun in 2002 and supported by IMLS in 2004. The funds will be used to support the partnership project “Mining the 21st Century Librarian II: A Collaboration to Recruit and Educate Diverse Librarians for Underserved Communities in the West,” which aims to recruit librarians for masters degree programs and support them through the educational process.

NSLA, in partnership with the University of Nevada–Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries, the University of North Texas School of Library Science, and the Las Vegas–Clark County Library District, will build upon a successful multilibrary collaboration begun in 2002 and supported by IMLS in 2004. The funds will be used to recruit forty diverse students from Nevada, Utah, and other Western states for enrollment in master's degree programs in fall 2007; increase the level of grant support available to students pursuing library master's degrees in those states; and provide an enriched educational experience through in-depth special topic seminars and professional development support.

UNLV Libraries Dean Patricia Iannuzzi said, “We are proud to play a part in this collaborative effort of recruiting and nurturing the next generation of librarians for the West. We are happy to share the responsibility of developing librarians prepared to contribute to an information literate citizenry.”

First Lady Laura Bush recently announced more than $20 million in federal grants would be issued to thirty-five universities, libraries, and library organizations across the country to recruit and educate librarians. The grants are designed to help offset a current shortage of school library media specialists, library school faculty, and librarians working in underserved communities, as well a looming shortage of library directors and other senior librarians, many of whom are expected to retire in the next twenty years. Nevada was one of twenty-three states to receive a grant.

For more information contact Teresa Moiola at (775) 687-8323 or write her at tjmoiola@clan.lib.nv.us.

Jefferson County PL Purchases Student Artwork

Each year, the Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) in Lakewood, Colorado, honors local young artists by purchasing a piece of art from the annual Jefferson County High Schools Student Exhibition. This year the library selected a mixed-media piece titled, “Ink Novel,” by Amy Fitzgerald, a senior at Chatfield High School in
Littleton. It will be displayed at the Columbine Library in addition to being featured on a JCPL bookmark. The library felt this reflective piece, featuring a teen boy reading a book, would be a fitting work to grace the JCPL's wall. For more information, contact Ioanna Athanasopoulos at (303) 275-2235 or write iathanax@infojefferson.lib.co.us.

Speed Dating with a Bookish Twist

A library is a natural meeting ground for people, particularly people who love to read. People with similar tastes in reading tend to get along well. People love talking about books they've read, and books can provide a common ground to break the ice. Even if people don't make love matches, friendships can grow out of shared interests. Not everyone is comfortable in a bar. Speed dating at the Cliffdale Branch Library in Fayetteville, North Carolina? Why not?

The format was simple: check-in followed by timed chat sessions. Each couple got six minutes to discuss their books and anything else that struck their fancy. At the end of the evening, participants left their contact information for partners in whom they were interested.

Transfer of contact information was kept as confidential as possible. The library provided an area where participants could drop their names, book titles, and e-mail addresses without worrying about it going to the wrong person. The library provided attractive, brightly colored tins so as not to detract from the overall experience.

The first run was limited to ten men and ten women, with advance registration required. The library also provided signage and notified local newspapers.

Creating a romantic atmosphere in the library was a bit of a challenge. Most available tables were long folding tables, designed to seat four to six people—hardly a romantic, cozy atmosphere! To solve the problem, staff placed artificial foliage arrangements in the middle of the table, dividing each one into two separate areas. The industrial white plastic tabletops were covered with tablecloths. Because library policy forbids the use of open flame, staff put up perimeter lights to give the room a more intimate feel. Staff also grouped cheesecake bites, chocolate cookie sticks, peppermints, and water around the plant centerpieces to provide snacks for the participants and provided starter questions.

The participants were an incredibly diverse group, yet they all found something to talk about for six minutes. Whenever staff called time, people complained about having to move on. The response was overwhelmingly positive. One gentleman said that even though he didn't feel a connection with anyone, he hoped he would have better luck the next time. One lady stated that even though all the men were young enough to be her sons, she had a delightful time talking to them and couldn't think of a better way to have spent her evening. Several participants indicated that as single parents, they felt it was important to be able to meet people outside of the bar scene. Several participants exchanged e-mail addresses and phone numbers, and one couple left the library together. Speed dating in the library worked surprisingly well!

For more information, contact Marna Martin at (910) 864-2600 or write mmartin@cumberland.lib.nc.us.

Free Movie Downloads Available at NYPL

Film lovers can now rely on The New York Public Library's (NYPL) eVideo circulating service to check out a wide range of free films twenty-four hours a day. eVideo, the newest addition to NYPL's eCollection, which currently includes eBooks, eAudio, and eMusic, is now accessible to all patrons with a NYPL borrower's card. EVideos can be downloaded onto PCs, laptops, and a variety of mobile devices. NYPL cardholders will have access to more than two hundred films, including such classics as Federico Fellini's 8 1/2; Vittorio De Sica's The Bicycle Thief; and Fritz Lang's Spiders; a collection of televised plays such as Hamlet, The Tempest, and The Glass Menagerie; and a selection of IMAX films, including Coral Reef Adventure and Mystery of the Nile. The collection...
also includes numerous music films featuring such performers as The Ramones, James Brown, Cher, and Tupac Shakur. In addition, there are many titles for children and young adults, including educational films like *How Does That Work: Simple Machines*, and *Volcanoes of the Deep Sea*. To peruse available titles, visit the eCollection Web site (ebooks.nypl.org).

"Imagine having a choice of movies to watch at your fingertips," said Susan Kent, director and chief executive of the branch libraries. "We are at an exciting time when we can greatly expand access to library materials through the innovative use of technology. This is sure to be one of our most popular eCollections and I am looking forward to dipping into this cinematic trove myself via just a few mouse clicks—along with a large bowl of popcorn, of course."

Patrons may borrow up to twelve titles from the eCollection at one time, and each may be kept as long as three weeks for eAudio, eBooks, eMusic, and seven days for eVideo. Users may place holds on titles that are not available when all copies are in circulation. At the end of each loan period, access to the titles will expire and they will be automatically checked-in and made available for other users.

For more information call Jennifer Lam at (212) 704-8600 or write jennifer_lam@nypl.org.

Vermont Department of Libraries Negotiates Statewide Movie License

Vermont public libraries will be showing movies with a shared statewide public performance license from Movie Licensing USA during the year beginning June 1, 2006.

There will be no cost to Vermont public libraries during the first year of the contract and during years two and three, the cost per library will be nominal (under $50). Libraries that have already paid Movie Licensing USA for a license will receive reimbursement from the company.

As with most movie licenses, a few restrictions apply. These include showing “home use only” films on library property, not charging admission, not advertising the movie title in the local media or on library Web sites. Libraries may advertise movie titles on posters in the library and in library newsletters.

For more information, contact Amy Howlett at amy.howlett@dol.state.vt.us or call (802) 463-0142.

Queens Library Goes All Out for Summer Reading

Hundreds of young library customers at the Queens (N.Y.) Library branch in Whitestone looked on in fascination as children’s librarian Susan Scatena put it all on the line for literacy when she sat in a tub of Jell-O and let children dye her hair purple. In doing so, she paid off a bet she made in June: if 250 children in her community signed up for the summer reading program and collectively read more than 1,000 books, she promised to perform the stunt. Total summer reading registration at Queens Library in Whitestone reached 353, and they read 4,654 books!

Scatena’s challenge created a lot of buzz all summer long. Every time the children finished a book, they received a token to put in the jar. At the end of the summer, the library counted the tokens. The children had a lot of ideas about what color Jell-O might be best and other creative input. Hundreds crowded the library steps to witness the event. Whole Foods of Manhasset graciously donated refreshments.

Queens Library offers summer reading at each of its sixty-three community libraries to encourage kids and teens to keep reading during the school hiatus. It’s one of the best ways for students to retain learning and get a jump start on their academic success. There were hundreds of programs, parties, and activities across the borough, but few quite as colorful as that of Scatena and her participants.

When asked how she felt sitting in the Jell-O, Scatena said “squishy! And it’s cold!” But she already has ideas on how to top her challenge for next year.

Queens Library heavily promotes summer reading throughout its sixty-three locations with incentive prizes, parties, and fun activities to keep children and teens engaged.
Are Collection Agencies the Answer?

Public librarians are trained to be service- and patron-oriented. That is why so many find the concept of using a collection agency to retrieve long-overdue materials and fines so difficult to swallow. Still, public libraries lose thousands of items every year, and many find that overdue notices and phone calls are not doing the job. Others realize that a lost item costs the library more than the replacement cost, if the item can even be replaced; postage, processing costs, and staff time must all be factored into the equation. Some libraries find shifting to a more business-like approach is necessary to combat the problem. Many are turning to library-friendly collection agencies that use a “soft” approach. Others rely on the police to prosecute patrons who do not return materials after an extended period of time. Still others rely on their municipality or state to collect fines and fees through less traditional methods.

Whatever approach is chosen, one thing is certain—a great deal of thought went into the pluses and minuses of the solution. While public librarians have a fiscal responsibility to taxpayers to see to it that materials are available for everyone’s use, they also want to make sure that whatever public relations are generated by their choices are positive. In this month’s Perspectives, several librarians share their own journeys toward a solution.

How Much Is Your Time Worth?

GREG OLSON, CIRCULATION SERVICES MANAGER, CHAMPAIGN (ILL.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; golson@champaign.org

The least appealing library circulation function is charging and collecting fines and fees. We would all love for our patrons to return every piece of material, on time, every time. Then we would never have to worry about replacing materials or charging money because someone left a book in a car for the last month. The extreme scenario here is running up against excessive
fines and fees. We need to do something to recoup our losses, but how to go about it? Should we handle it ourselves or go to an outside service?

The Champaign (Ill.) Public Library ran the gamut on this process. We began by trying to collect the debts ourselves. Our expertise was limited, so the process was not comprehensive. We relied primarily on notification letters. We sent letters to the addresses we had from the patron’s account and called the telephone numbers listed, but if our information wasn’t current, our efforts were stymied.

We realized that to more effectively pursue these delinquent accounts, we would need more knowledge and capability or we would need help from an outside source. The losses were becoming prohibitive; we had to try to recover some of the materials or money from those accounts. We couldn’t afford to keep replacing materials out of our new materials budget. Our new acquisitions were suffering, so we knew we had to become more active with our collections process.

Our lives would be so much easier if we didn’t have to have security gates, security staff, and collection agencies, but that just wasn’t reality. We do have to protect our assets and recoup losses when possible. I believe that we are more than justified ethically in using an outside collection agency. All we ask of our patrons is to return materials in a timely manner. If an item is not returned, for whatever reason, the responsibility for that item falls upon the patron. We tell everyone who signs up for a library card that they have the responsibility for checked-out materials, so there is no surprise when we levy charges when a patron fails to return something. Consequently, rather than discussing “if” we were going to pursue the materials or costs, it became a matter of “how” we were going to accomplish that goal and what our role would be.

The decision ultimately came to choosing between expanding the collections process within the library and seeking outside assistance. We are a library, not a collection agency. Our resources are limited for pursuing delinquent accounts. We couldn’t write off all of the debt—there was too much money involved—and staff found the process was becoming too time-consuming, so we decided to seek the assistance of a collection agency, who we have used since the early 1990s. We’ve been very happy with the results.

Economically, the decision made a lot of sense for us. We didn’t want to create a debt collections position or department within the library, but we still needed to recover our materials or their cost. We weren’t pressed by the city management to pursue a collection agency. It was an internal, administrative decision. Consequently, all recovered money goes directly to replacing the lost or damaged materials. With the aid of an outside collection agency, we greatly increased the recovery of money and
materials due to more consistent patron notification and more effective pursuit of delinquent accounts.

Our recovery is quantifiable with respect to our return on investment. Since 1997, we have recovered a bit more than five times the money that we have paid to the collection agency. For example, if we pay an average of $400 per month, we could expect to recover $2,000 each month in cash. That figure does not include materials recovery. With consistent notification, the value of materials recovered roughly equals the dollars collected each month. Our results are not typical, but the average return on investment is still 3:1 or 4:1. You need to be able to quantify your costs by examining how much time your employees spend on debt recovery tasks, how much money is actually recovered, how much money you need to recover to be effective, and how much you can afford to lose before it hurts your available funds. If your replacement costs are chipping away at your materials funding, you may want to consider an outside agency.

We were able to drastically increase our recovery using an outside service versus handling it in-house because the service is able to pursue accounts much more diligently.

Agencies will set up library accounts in a couple of different ways. We began working with the collection agency in a manual format. This manual process took a staff member between eight and ten hours per month, usually working with the accounts once a week. We looked through our daily billing notices once a week, choosing accounts that reached our minimum threshold for referral to the collection agency and faxing that information to the agency. The agency would then attempt mail and phone communication with the clients. This primary phase usually costs a specific amount per account. If unsuccessful in their initial efforts, the agency would start the secondary phase, which included more involved attempts at client location, such as skip-tracing, and required a higher fee. If the steps from the second phase failed, the agency would then report the patron to the credit bureau.

As the Internet gained popularity for business use, we began entering account data on a Web site rather than faxing it. Primary communication evolved to emails, with monthly mailings as documentation and backup.

Because of further technological innovation, the process is now fully automated. Libraries can purchase a program for their computers that automatically sends patron information to the collection agency when they have exceeded the accepted level of debt. This eliminates the need for library staff to monitor billing notices or accounts. The accounts are updated daily instead of weekly. The information is sent during the end-of-day processing. All library staff has to do is to process the money received and respond to patron inquiries. Staff members can suspend a patron from the collection process if, for instance, the patron sets up a payment plan with the library. We have complete flexibility with respect to the amount of money pursued, and we can still waive fees to work with customers individually. The automatic processing not only allowed us to reduce staff time involved in the collection process, it increased the level of reporting available to us. The collection agency Web site also has comprehensive monthly reports available.

The best part about the automatic process is that we’ve more than doubled our monetary recovery since we began using the program. In the past, we averaged sending forty people per month to the collection agency. Now, through the automated process, we are sending a little more than fifty accounts to the agency each month—because we’re not missing anyone. The recovery percentage increased because of the consistent notification and communication attempts. Also, the automated program is easier for the collection agency to administer, allowing them to pass on a bit of savings. We reduced our costs by $1 per account. Those cost reductions, coupled with the increase in recovery, have paid for the automatic program a couple times over.

The automated process has made our accountant happy because of the accuracy of the reporting and the increased ability to keep track of individual accounts. We also added the capability to take credit card payments about four months ago. People are carrying less cash and more plastic, so we felt this would allow us to offer more payment options. Indeed, it gave us increased customer convenience, which in turn led to increased customer payments, especially with larger amounts. Since we’ve added the credit card functionality, our recovery rate has increased another 3 percent. It wasn’t a hardship for the circulation staff because the transactions were very similar to cash and check transactions. We just added a button to our register. Again, with online reporting available through the banks, our accountant is getting good information on a consistent basis.

Using a collection agency can be a touchy subject. But if your losses are significant, it can be a good option to help you recover your material or costs. You can either handle it
internally by hoping that the notices sent will produce the necessary recovery, or you can work with a collection agency that will pursue the accounts for you for a fee. We tried relying upon our notices and did not get good results, which led us to research the possibility of using an outside service. Given the strong results we’ve gotten in recovering both money and materials, the decision was definitely right for us.

The Problem with Collection Agencies

JOANN POTENZIANI, DIRECTOR, NEW LENOX (ILL.) PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT; JPOTENZIANI@NEWLENOXLIBRARY.ORG

The use of collection agencies to go after public library scofflaws sounds like a good idea. Somebody else tracks down the miscreants, and the library gets the goods back. This is the concept, but I have found that it doesn’t always work that way.

Collection agencies may get some money back for the library, but most libraries are more interested in getting their materials back than receiving money for lost items. They would much prefer to have the book, compact disc, or DVD in hand than receive just the small amount of money that a collection agency is able to wring from a delinquent patron. That’s the crux of the problem with using collection agencies. Their goal is to get money from a customer and then give it (minus their cut) to the creditor, not to return a material item to its owner, the library.

Most collection agencies work for a percentage of the debts that are owed but having the money doesn’t help a library missing an out-of-print book or a difficult-to-replace item. The library would prefer to have a book available so others may borrow it than to receive a small amount of money from a patron via a collection agency. The library does not receive the full value of the book and the processing fee.

A different approach to the problem of reclaiming overdue items is to use the local police department. The New Lenox Public Library District (NLPLD) has done this for several years with some success and at almost no cost. The State of Illinois has the crime of library theft on its books, and one provision of this law makes it a crime if a person borrows and does not return materials worth $50 or more.

When NLPLD first considered involving the police department, I paid a visit to the chief and discussed the law and procedures the district would need to follow. While NLPLD is an independent library district separate from any other governmental body, the village police will go after these miscreants because the crime of library theft occurred within the village limits. The police chief and I developed the process, including the paper trail that his officers would need.

The library sends the first overdue notice to the patron by snail mail or e-mail, one week after an item is due. If it is a DVD or video, we also call the patron. NLPLD generates a second notice two weeks after the due date; at four weeks, NLPLD sends a bill that includes the retail cost of the item plus a $5 processing fee. After six weeks, the patron’s account is sent to “collection” (an internal procedure within NLPLD’s circulation system), and the patron’s status is changed from delinquent to barred. The district calls the patron once a month for six months; NLPLD is considering working with other consortium members to shorten this time frame. NLPLD then sends a letter via certified mail demanding return of the materials and threatening a visit from the police if they are not returned.

The certified letter gives the patron thirty days to either return the materials or pay the total amount due, which is the retail cost plus processing fees of $5 per item. If they fail to do this, NLPLD calls the police, who then pay a visit. The police department required a copy of the certified mail letter so that they know NLPLD followed all of the procedures outlined in the law before the police pay a visit to the patron.

Usually, just the threat of a police visit to a patron’s home is enough encouragement for them to return the materials. Of course, there are always some hardcore cases, such as those people who see the library’s return address on the certified letter notification and then don’t pick it up from the post office (in this case, the process breaks down because the patron hasn’t legally received notification), but overall, it has been an effective procedure.

... using a collection agency did help curb the extent to which people kept overdue materials, and many items would come back before the forty-five day limit.
If your state has such a provision in the law, I would suggest becoming familiar with it and then talking with your local police department to implement the procedures needed. It’s a very cost-effective means for retrieving long-overdue materials.

Collection Agencies: Are They Good for Libraries?

JENNIFER DAWSON, REFERENCE LIBRARIAN, TAMPA-HILLSBOROUGH (FLA.) PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM; dawsonje@hillsboroughcounty.org

Several libraries utilize collection agencies to get their long-overdue materials back. The two public library systems where I’ve worked have both used collection agencies, and I have found them effective.

One of the systems where I worked initially tried a fine-free day each week. Sadly, it became difficult for circulation staff to check in the multitude of materials that would arrive on that day because patrons would hold off returning their materials until that day to avoid paying a fine. Eventually, the library system hired Unique as its collection agency, which caused some ill will. Some patrons did not read their overdue notices, and therefore did not realize that they would be sent to collections and have a nonrefundable fee of $15 placed on their records if they kept their books for more than forty-five days. On the positive side, using a collection agency did help curb the extent to which people kept overdue materials, and many items would come back before the forty-five day limit.

Libraries using collection agencies to get materials back has proved to be an effective tool. According to an article in Indianapolis Monthly, Unique Management Services says that for every dollar a library spends on its services, the library recovers $5.1 New York’s Queens Borough Public Library, one of Unique’s first clients, presented the agency with a list of overdue materials valued at $10 million; Unique has recovered $7.3 million in books and cash reimbursements.2

I don’t advocate libraries bursting through people’s doors to get materials back, but many public libraries are losing funding or find their budgets staying static while the price of materials is becoming more and more inflated. For example, in 2004, the Newport News (Va.) Library reported that during the last five years, they had lost approximately $400,000 in books, CDs, videos, and DVDs.3 The budget for circulating materials was roughly equal to the amount of materials lost. Libraries cannot begin to replace all the materials that are lost. Budgetary constraints are not the only problem. Often, the lost materials are out-of-print.

The libraries where I have worked added a statement to overdue notices, both in e-mail and on paper, stating that if overdue materials exceeded the forty-five day limit, the patron’s account would be turned over to a collection agency and the patron would incur a nonrefundable fee. Some patrons do not read these notices and do not understand the difference between the nonrefundable fee and a fine. When my library started using Unique, we put up posters explaining why the library felt it needed to pursue this avenue. We included statistics stating how much of the collection was currently inaccessible to other patrons.

Unique claims that 70 percent of people respond to a call from them about returning overdue items once the patrons understand the repercussions. I think libraries’ use of collection agencies for recovering long-overdue items is a nonthreatening way of getting back library materials. Some libraries use collection agencies in ways that I do not agree with, such as banking on a certain amount of money collected from the processing fees to augment library budgets. I also think that if the items are returned, a patron should not be sent to a collection agency based on fines alone or a patron needs to accumulate a reasonable amount of fines before being sent to a collection agency.

Kansas State Program Helps Collect Municipal Debt

MICHELLE R. SWAIN, DIRECTOR, ARKANSAS CITY (KANS.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; mswain@acpl.org

When I first started as library director at the Arkansas City (Kans.) Public Library (ACPL), the overdue process was haphazard at best. There was no regularity or follow-through for tracking nonreturned items or receiving payment for lost materials. Finally, we hired a person who could manage the online system for generating overdue notices and who created a system to send out regular notices, including a final invoice for items not returned.

Despite all this, we still had more than $40,000 in overdue materials and unpaid replacement fines in ACPL’s system. For a small library serving twelve thousand people and with only forty-five thousand items in the collection, this seemed like a large amount. When I asked directors of other public libraries in our region how they dealt with collections, their answers varied, but I learned of a program through the State of Kansas to collect municipal debt, called the Setoff program. As a political subdivision of our city, with our own tax levy, ACPL was eligible to use this service. Our city uses the
service for unpaid utility bills and other debts such as court costs.

Setoff is a service that logs the debts of citizens in a database and then garnishes a portion of state payments to cover these debts. For example, if a person files state income taxes and is due a refund, their name and Social Security Number are matched in the system and any debt they owe is withheld from the payment. Other state payments are eligible for debt repayment, including state payroll, homestead and food sales tax refunds, state retirement system withdrawals, and lottery winnings. We had one library patron, who won $10,000 on an instant scratch lottery ticket—Setoff withheld $100 this person owed us from the check, clearing the debt.

This system does not cost the library any money upfront. The state withholds a percentage of the collection as payment for this service, usually between 19 and 24 percent, based on how the library submitted the debt and if the submission included a Social Security Number. The minimum amount that can be sent to Setoff is $25. Some libraries in Kansas set a higher limit before they send the debt to this service.

We submit names and debts on a quarterly basis in a spreadsheet sent by e-mail to the state department of administration. These names stay on file with the state, so even people who move out of state and eventually come back will find that their debt is still here waiting for them. Names and debt amounts are not submitted to credit bureaus, and it does not affect someone’s credit score. Setoff is checked, however, when someone files for bankruptcy. We receive a notice when that process is complete to cancel the debt.

Setoff allowed us to collect on some of our long-term debt without using a collection agency. The board of trustees agreed that this was a reasonable measure somewhere between not collecting on the debt at all and using a collection agency, which many people viewed as a harsher way to collect money owed to the library.

Some patrons are upset when they get the notice from the state saying that part of their payment is going to be withheld. If the items are returned within five days of receiving the notice, we can notify the state that the patron cleared the debt. If a patron comes in to pay the debt personally, the state still charges us the percentage fee because it was their action that caused the debt to be paid. We tell patrons that we would prefer that they let the system work as intended and let the amount be deducted rather than write us a check or pay cash. One patron tried to argue with me, saying that by law there is a limited amount of time in which a debt can be collected. I told the patron that there is no statute of limitations on library debt. It is a debt that will follow to you to the grave. While this may seem harsh, we also have a very open policy on debt forgiveness and are willing to work with anyone who comes in to us and makes an effort to pay their debt, even if it is just $1 a month.

Overall, this has been a very successful program for us. We are not letting deadbeats get away without paying, and we are not subject to the negative image that using a collection agency often garners. During tax season, payments come in fast and furious, then taper off for the rest of the year. We do not submit debt for overdue fines, just for replacement fines. This allows us to emphasize to all our patrons that we are only interested in having items returned in as good condition as they were borrowed in, making them available for the rest of the community to use.

Conclusion

Deciding how to go about retrieving lost materials and overdue fines is a serious decision that deserves the full attention of library administration and trustees. The cost of trying to collect materials, as well as staff time spent doing so, must be considered. In addition, libraries will want to think about the effect that using a collection agency may have on the public’s image of the library. For those that do choose to go the collection agency route, there are several companies that specialize in helping public libraries. While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, the contact information for three companies is included here.

Collection Resources

Unique Management Services, Inc.
119 E. Maple St.
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
1-800-879-5453
www.unique-mgmt.com

NorthStar Technologies, Inc.
5807 S. Garnett Ste. L
Tulsa, OK 74146
1-800-559-2938
www.northstargt.com

NCO Financial Systems
4000 E. 5th Ave.
Columbus, OH 43219
1-877-827-5672
www.nationalrevenue.com

References

2. Ibid.
JOHN SKRTIC is a freelance writer and the Assistant Head Librarian in the General Reference Department of the Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library; john.skrtic@cpl.org. He interviewed Brian Michael Bendis by telephone in August 2006.

John is reading The Faith of Graffiti by Mervyn Kurlansky and Norman Mailer, and Framley Parsonage by Anthony Trollope.

“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.

Comic Book Creation Is a Lot Like Rock-n-Roll
An Interview with Brian Michael Bendis

Brian Michael Bendis is an American comic book artist who began his career creating his own independent comic books. His early works include A.K.A. Goldfish, Jinx, and Torso.

In 2000, Bendis went to work for Marvel Entertainment, where he was responsible for Ultimate Spider-Man, an updated version of Marvel’s most beloved character. The book became a huge hit and exposed Bendis to a much larger audience. Bendis has gone on to win five Eisner awards, the highest award bestowed upon a comics creator. He also has written numerous screenplays, most recently finishing a screenplay based on Jinx, which is set to star Charlize Theron.

Public Libraries: Can you give us some background and talk a little bit about your childhood?

Brian Michael Bendis: Well, I remember there was a wicker basket, and I was floating on the water. No, seriously, I am from Cleveland, and I find it all very boring and hard to talk about without my eyeballs glazing over. I was raised by a single mom, and she did a great job raising me. I went to the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland—now they are thrilled with me. After a rough start in...
school, I ended up at the Cleveland Institute of Art, where I studied cinematography and art.

**PL:** I know that you are a student of pop culture and cinema-obsessed. How do these preoccupations figure into your writing?

**BMB:** A great deal. Comic book creation is a lot like rock-n-roll—it's a bastard art form. There is no one thing that you can say "that is what a comic is." Rock-n-roll, when it does its own thing, can be okay but also boring, but when it pulls something into it, such as opera, jazz, R&B, or the blues, it becomes something more than itself. Comic books are the same way—they thrive when you pull influences from outside the medium, whether it is cinema, screenwriting, or poetry. I study not just filmmaking, but specifically the work of great cinematographers. I like to apply their philosophy of storytelling to my work when I'm doing my comics. I think that's the biggest influence, it's the thing I'm most aware of. I seem to also use the work of playwrights whose work accentuates the characters that talk to each other and not just at each other for the sake of furthering the plot along.

**PL:** You released a script book, *Powers.* This gave readers insight into your writing process, but can you touch upon the process of editing down a script for a comic book?

**BMB:** It's like any commercial format of storytelling whether it be television, film, or a book, you only have so many pages to tell your story in. Most comic books are about twenty-two pages. The books that I own, I can go a little bit further with, but for Marvel, you have to do twenty-two pages. That is the hardest part of the job, getting everything you want into that script and have it be entertaining and not just read like CliffsNotes of another story. Sometimes I'll have a script that I just write organically, I just write everything down that I am thinking and sometimes it's forty pages, but you don't want to chop it off at twenty-two and leave the rest of the story hanging. So you whittle it down to get what you need. That is why I have a lot of little panels on my pages.

**PL:** You have been writing *Ultimate Spider-Man* for years. Even though Peter Parker has a rich cast of characters surrounding him, that series is different than your most recent venture, *The Mighty Avengers.* What is the difference between writing a character-driven vehicle as opposed to a book that features a team?

**BMB:** I've been studying this for the last two years. When you are on a book like *Ultimate Spider-Man* or *Daredevil,* there is obviously a line to follow a lead to the story—it's not always from his point of view but rarely does the focal point of the story leave Peter Parker or Spider-Man. You are either in his head or watching, but it is always him. It's easy to follow the story through his worldview.

When you are on a team book, you have the choice to be omniscient, just watch them all, or pick the person in the story who is the most interesting for that scene or whatever. Everyone needs their screen time. It's funny, the whole time I was writing *X-Men*—it was my first team book—only after I was done writing the book did I realize that Colossus sat and did nothing the whole time. I didn't do it to ignore Colossus; I just literally had nothing for him to do. I do make a conscious effort on team books to make sure everyone has a point or a moment and if they are not having a moment, then maybe they shouldn't be in the book or I shouldn't be writing it. I have gotten much better at finding a little place for everybody to do their thing and show off a little bit, even if it's just sassing someone in the jaw. In the *X-Men* scripts, I used to write to the artist, “Can you have Colossus doing something in the background like washing dishes or whispering to Wolverine?”

**PL:** Now that you have a young daughter and young people are reading your books, do you feel any extra pressure to change your writing style in any specific way?

**BMB:** Well, my daughter is really little. The audience that reads my book is nowhere near that little, and I don't think she has any real interest in what I'm doing. Stan Lee always had the philosophy that Marvel should not write down to people—he never did. If he had a $10 word, he would use that $10 word. I remember a couple of times reading a *Spider-Man* comic and having to look something up, because I didn't know what it was. But it was great.
because I actually went and looked it up, I actually cared. If that same word was handed to me at school, I would have glazed over, but because I was interested in what I was reading, I checked.

I tend not to write down to people at all, I don't think anybody in the world wants to be written down to, and I haven't heard any complaints. I get a lot of mail from kids for the Spider-Man book, which is a kid's book—they like it, they want something new, and that is what they are paying money for. I will say that the idea that my daughter growing up and reading some of the things that I have written is quite horrifying to me. I envision her saying, “Dad, you are gross! What is wrong with you?”

**PL:** What advice do you give to aspiring comic book artist and authors?

**BMB:** I get asked this question all the time; I feel so bad because it was so frustrating for me coming up. There is no right or wrong way to break in; you can't tell someone that if “you do this or this, you will break in.” It’s not how it is. But having talked to friends of mine who are in different professions, it’s no harder to break into becoming a doctor or a lawyer. Just because you graduated doesn’t mean you will get the gig. If it’s a job that you really want, it’s a job you will end up getting. But what you have to really do is to be honest with yourself; you have to really look at what you are doing. I would ask myself, “Would I buy a book that looks like this, do I see anything on the stands that is this amateurish?” Some people do come up to me and they can't see what they have, whether it is good or bad, and it is very frustrating as a total stranger to give advice, and they kind of ask me to break it to them.

If you visit my **Web site** (www.jinxworld.com), I have a section on writing, and I included an essay about writing in the foreword of my Powers book. If you sat down for coffee with me, this is the sort of bullshit I would say. It’s not like I have all the answers, but what I do and continue to do as I journey through this world is to try to suck in anybody’s work I admire and use some of their philosophies.

When people ask me how to break in, I do relate to them. I spent ten years putting out my own comics, I do recommend to everybody. I was submitting to Marvel and DC every week. I got no response, until one of my close friends, David Mack, got a job writing Daredevil at Marvel. He was able to get my stuff to the editor-in-chief. So my recommendation is to have one of your good friends get a job at Marvel and then squeeze your stuff in. There was a book I wrote that I thought everyone at Marvel would really dig, and it took about four years to get anyone to read it. I had even won an Eisner award—I was expecting a call, but nothing came. So I am actually the last guy to ask. I feel bad when people ask me this question because they really think I know. I will tell you what I didn’t do: I didn’t sit in my basement, wishing someone would hire me; I was sending shit out everyday. I was at every convention. I was hustle, hustle, hustle.

**PL:** You have been doing this a long time now; do you still enjoy the process of writing?

**BMB:** I really do. It is such an honor to me. I just love to write—it relaxes me and makes me a better person. I feel like a better dad and husband just because I express myself creatively.

**PL:** What role have libraries played in your life?

**BMB:** In a time where money was scarce and materials weren't available to me, libraries were always there to let me read things I couldn't afford to buy. Everything is there. All the research I did on my graphic novels was done at the downtown Cleveland Public Library. I wrote this book called Torso, about the torso serial killings, and I spent days in the photo library getting every piece of material available.
Baltimore County Public Library Computer Users’ Survey

Who uses our public computers? When and why do they use them? What else do they do while they are at our library?

Since 1996, Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) has offered computer access to the public. Although many years had elapsed since we began to offer this service, we had little information about its effectiveness and the needs of the people who take advantage of it.

What we did know from the automated sign-up at the computers was how many people were using the computers every day at each of our sixteen branches. We used that information to decide how to allocate additional computers when we were able to provide them to the branches. In fact, we added computers earlier in 2005 at branches with the highest level of use. As of June 30, 2005, there were 242 public computers in our branches. During the last fiscal year, there were more than 725,000 uses of that equipment.

Otherwise, what we knew about computer users was anecdotal or conjectural. Conducting a survey of computer users would serve several purposes:

- Information about our computer users should help us know if we are bridging the digital divide as our county’s population becomes more diverse.
- The best possible decisions about how many computers to have in each branch can be made if we have broader data than simply numbers of users.
- Data on computer users at the library can demonstrate a need for such services. Such data have contributed to county government support for a technology center in the Office of Employment and Training near the

“Internet Spotlight” explores Internet and Web topics relevant to librarians in the public library sector. Your input is welcome.

Susan is reading Chicken Soup for the Cat Lover’s Soul and The Last New Land: Stories of Alaska, Past and Present.

This month’s Internet Spotlight was authored by Susan G. Waxter. Susan is Planning and Evaluation Coordinator at the Baltimore County Public Library, Towson, Maryland; swaxter@bcpl.net.

INTERNET SPOTLIGHT
library. We want to continue to have the best data possible to contribute to our communities as well as to the library.

- The library was beginning a major effort to identify core services and their success factors. Such a survey could provide useful information regarding these services.
- This was our first chance to conduct an online survey at our library. The experience would be useful for future survey opportunities.
- We wanted to have a baseline of data against which to compare results of similar surveys in the future.
- Finally, we could take advantage of the opportunity to glean more general customer satisfaction information and suggestions for improvements to all of our services.

**Planning the Survey**

Questions for the survey came from several sources, including a discussion with branch managers and administrative department heads. The library’s director reviewed drafts of the survey, and then about twenty staff members tested the questions in paper form. Their comments were used to create the first Web version of the survey with Perseus software. This gave us the ability to test the survey on customers at computers in one of our branches—offering them certificates for free video rentals for a few minutes of their time. We showed them the survey and asked them if:

- the survey instructions and questions were clear;
- the survey was too long; or
- they had other suggestions about the survey.

After testing, we notified the branches when the finished survey would be available to the customers, and branch staff had copies of the survey so they were aware of what was being asked. Because we were able to activate and deactivate the survey at all sixteen branches from a central location, branch staff did not have to be directly involved with the administration of the survey. When customers signed on to the public computers, they could choose to either take the survey or opt out. The survey itself is shown in the appendix.

**Administering the Survey**

We offered the survey to customers on a Monday and Tuesday in late October 2005, as well as the following weekend. We thought this would give us a good cross-section of computer users and their responses. The responses were automatically saved to a database so we could monitor how many surveys had been completed at any time. We received 407 responses on the first day and 1,008 responses overall.

**Analysis of the Results**

The data were saved into an Excel spreadsheet. This step was necessary so we could perform verbatim analysis on the open-ended questions. Responses were given category designations for more effective analysis. For example, we translated the system-filled hour, minute, and second that each survey was completed into “morning,” “early afternoon,” “late afternoon,” or “evening” time slots. Another area where we did verbatim analysis was the responses to questions 11 and 18 where customers had the opportunity to make suggestions for improved service. These responses were given category designations for analysis and for ease of sorting them for presentation to appropriate areas of the library—such as technology, facilities, or collections.

The Excel data were saved into SPSS software for completion of the analysis. Starting with simple frequency counts for each question, much additional detail was then added by performing all the cross-tabulations that appeared to be useful. For example, the responses to each question were analyzed by branch. Many questions were cross-tabulated by age of the respondent, time of day, education level, and other factors.

**Results of the Survey**

**Highlights**

Overall, the survey results were not surprising, but they were gratifying and useful.

- More than half (51.3 percent) of the respondents use our computers two or more times a week.
- Twenty and one-half percent said they do not have access to a computer anywhere else. At four branches, more than 29 percent gave this response. For users with access to other computers, we are providing Internet access they would not have otherwise, or we are providing faster or better computers.
- By far the two most popular activities on the computers are browsing the Internet and reading or writing e-mail. About 46 percent of those who responded said they would borrow or reserve a book or other print material while at the library, but 27 percent...
said they would do nothing else while at BCPL that day.
- Nearly half (47.3 percent) said they experienced no wait, and a full 83.7 percent said they waited for less than fifteen minutes to get on a computer.
- A majority of respondents (57.7 percent) said that they had a college education or higher.
- Nine percent attended computer classes at BCPL, with the highest percentage at any branch at just under 16 percent.

Who Uses the Computers? Branch, Age, Education, and Computer Knowledge

Branch
The numbers of responses by the customers who chose to take the survey ranged from more than one hundred in three branches, ninety to one hundred in three others, down to ten in one of the smallest branches.

Age
Sixty-two percent of respondents were ages 22–54, with most (33.6 percent) in the 22–39 range (see table 1).

All age groups had the most respondents on Monday, the day with the highest number of responses. By day, there was little variation by age except that those ages 13–21 were less likely to be there on Saturday and more likely to be there on Monday. There wasn’t much variation by age as to what time of day they were there except, of course, fewer young people were there in the mornings.

There was little age variation in frequency of use by age. The highest percentage (50–55 percent) of all age groups used BCPL’s computers two or more times a week. Twenty-six to 28 percent of those ages 13–54 used the computers once a week.

Education
Almost 60 percent of all respondents, and 74 percent of those older than 21, had completed college or a higher level of education (see table 2). This was the greatest surprise we found with the survey results compared to our preconceived notions. However, the branches showing the highest and lowest levels of education would have been expected based on the demographics of the areas of the county in which they are located.

Customers at all education levels were most likely to use the computers two or more times a week compared to any other frequency.

Computer Knowledge
Many respondents were quite comfortable with computers—48.3 percent of the respondents said they had high or very high knowledge of computers, and 42.5 percent claimed they had moderate levels (see table 3).

About half of the people who use the computers once a week or more had high or very high computer knowledge, somewhat greater than the skill of those who use the computers less frequently.

Those ages 13–21 had the highest percentage (67.1) of any age group with high or very high computer knowledge. Those ages 12 or younger and those ages 22–39 were the next highest at 56–57 percent.

Table 1. Age of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 or younger</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–21</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22–39</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–54</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 or older</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Highest Level of Education Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than twelfth grade</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher than college</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance at BCPL Computer Classes
Only 9 percent had attended computer classes at BCPL (see table 4). The branches where the percentages were higher (13–16 percent) might have been predicted, as the demographics of those areas suggest fewer opportunities to learn about computers elsewhere. Respondents ages 13–39 years old were the least likely (3–4 percent) to have attended a BCPL computer class.

When Do They Use the Computers? Day, Time, and Frequency
Day
All but four of the branches had the most respondents on Monday. All of the age groups had the highest percentages responding on Monday as well. We recognized that the day data might be affected by two factors: 1) when people answered the survey on Monday, they were not likely to answer it again if they returned later in the week, and 2) some of the branches are not open on Sunday. (See table 5.)

Table 3. Knowledge Level for Using a Computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>98.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Have You Attended Computer Training Classes at BCPL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. What Day Users Use the Computers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency
As table 7 shows, more than half of the respondents said they use our computers two or more times a week, and 76.7 percent use them at least once a week. 56 percent of those ages 55 and older use them twice or more a week, the highest of any age group.

What Do They Do and Why Do They Use Them?
What Will They Do on the Computers Today?
Table 8 shows that almost 70 percent of survey takers will browse the Internet. At three branches, fewer than 65 percent said they would browse the Internet, and at four branches, more than 80 percent gave this response.

More than half (58.3 percent) will check e-mail. The branch with the highest percentage using e-mail was at 67.3 percent. The lowest percentages (between 50 and 53 percent) were seen at five branches.

Activities with the next highest percentages systemwide were in the 20 to 30 percent range and included: looking and applying for jobs, reading news and sports, and using the printer.
The most popular activities by age group were:

- Those respondents ages 12 or younger were the most likely to play games (58 percent of them).
- Ages 13–21 were the most likely to do homework (49.5 percent). They were also the most likely to participate in online chat (23.6 percent) and to use word processing or spreadsheet programs.
- Ages 22–39 were the most likely group to look for and apply for jobs and to seek to learn more about personal interests.
- Those ages 40–54 were the most likely to search for or purchase goods or services, search the library online catalog, get information for their job, use the printer, and search an online database.
- Users were more likely to use e-mail the older they were, starting with 23.7 percent for the very youngest respondents, jumping to 56.6 percent for ages 13–21, then increasing until the rate was 67.2 percent for those 55 and older. Respondents older than 55 were also the most likely group to read the latest news, sports, and so on.

Relative to the day of the week, the most popular activities (using the Internet and e-mail) were done more often on Monday and Tuesday, with homework done most often on Sunday and work-related activities on Monday.

Most activities were most likely to be done in the morning. Exceptions were:

- online games in the early afternoon;
- chat and purchasing goods and services in the late afternoon; and
- checking the library catalog and library account, doing homework, and Internet browsing in the evening.

Of those using the computers only once a week, 75.4 percent said they would browse the Internet versus 72 percent of those who use them the most often. Otherwise, those using the computers most often engage in all activities more frequently than those who use them less often. For example, 20.5 percent said they would search an online database, a higher percentage than the groups using the computers less frequently.

Those users with less education (including young users) were more likely to play games, chat, do homework, and use word processing or spreadsheet programs.

Users with more computer knowledge were somewhat more likely than others to browse the Internet, use e-mail, and search databases.

Users with more computer knowledge were somewhat more likely than others to browse the Internet, use e-mail, play games, chat, do homework, or use word processing or spreadsheet programs.

Those with a computer at home or at work were less likely to use the Internet and e-mail on BCPL’s computers.

**What Else Will They Do While at the Library?**

We wanted to know if the surveyed users would take advantage of other services the library offered; 45.9

---

### Table 6. Times of Computer Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning (10–11:59 a.m.)</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Afternoon (noon–2:59 p.m.)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Afternoon (3–5:59 p.m.)</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening (6–9 p.m.)</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7. Frequency of Use of BCPL computers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is my first time</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more times a week</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less often than once a month</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
percent reported plans to borrow or reserve a book or other print material, 26.6 percent only used the computers, and 20.2 percent performed research with resources other than the computer (see table 9).

Respondents ages 13–21 were the most likely (19.2 percent) to borrow or reserve movie or music material, while those ages 22–39 were the most likely to do nothing else while at the library (31 percent).

People age 55 and older were going to borrow or reserve print materials and to research with resources besides the computer the most often (51.8 percent and 30.7 percent of them respectively).

About 34 percent of those who use the computers only once a week or once a month were going to borrow or reserve print materials compared to only 28.4 percent who use the computers two or more times a week. Of those who use the computers most often, 17.2 percent were going to do nothing else while at the library, more than those who use them once a week or once a month.

What Is the Primary Reason They Use Our Computers?
The responses to question 3, about the primary reason people used BCPL computers, were problematic (see table 10).

The question had been intended, among other things, to give us an idea about whether BCPL is the only place that users have access to a computer. However, while almost 42 percent said that the primary reason they use our computers is that BCPL is the only place they have access to a computer, only 20.5 percent in question 23 (which asked where else they had computer access; see table 11) said that they have access to a computer nowhere else. We proposed several possible reasons for this discrepancy but in the end, we decided that the question 23 response for how many respondents can use computers only at BCPL was more likely to be valid. Question 3, however, did give us some indication that in addition to providing computers at all, we provide convenience or features on our computers that are better than the users might have elsewhere.

Where Else Do They Have Access to Computers?
As shown in table 11, 44.8 percent have computers at home, 30.5 percent at work or at a friend or relative’s house, and 19.3 percent at school. We were not surprised at the branches where respondents were the most likely to say they had computers nowhere else.

Of those using computers twice or more a week, 26.3 percent said they do not have access anywhere else, a higher percentage than those using the computers less frequently. Those using them most frequently are also the least likely to have computers at home (37.5 percent). On the other hand, nearly 60 percent of those using the computers only once a month have computers at home and only 13.5 percent have them nowhere else.

Starting with the younger ages and moving through to the oldest ranges, increasingly higher percentages of respondents say they have computers nowhere else, from 10.5

### Table 8. Purpose of Computer Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search the library online catalog</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve items in the library catalog</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get information about library account</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check out E-books</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browse the Internet</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for or purchase goods or services</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in online chat</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read or write e-mail</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play online games</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use word processing or spreadsheet programs</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do homework assignments</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search an online database</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get information for my job</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for or apply for a job</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn more about personal interests</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research my family’s genealogy</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the latest news, sports, and so on</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the printer</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Survey takers checked all reasons that applied.)
percent of those ages 12 or younger
or excellent: 64.6 percent if they
to 29.2 percent of those 55 or older.
had no wait, down to 37.3 percent
The younger respondents are more
if their wait lasted fifteen to thirty
likely than the older age groups to
minutes. However, 61 percent of
have computers at home, at the
twenty-eight people who waited
the home of a friend or relative, and via
thirty minutes still said
a mobile device.
the computers was very
good or excellent.
While there was not a significant
difference by age, those ages 13–21
were least likely to respond “very
good” or “excellent.” Their percent-
age was 53.3 compared to 59.2 for
all respondents.

Have Users Asked
Staff for Help and
How Was the Assistance
BCPL staff fared well in the help
category—54.5 percent of users had
asked for help; of those, 68 percent
said the help was very good or exel-
ent. At four branches, more than 65

How Is the Experience?
Wait Time
The wait times reported in table 12
by the computer users were just their
impressions of the amount of time
they waited rather than a computer-
timed calculation. While not scien-
tific, their impressions of wait time
contribute to their overall experience
using the computers.

Nearly half (47.3 percent) of the
respondents said they had no wait
for the computers, and 85 percent
waited fewer than fifteen minutes.
Only 2.8 percent waited longer than
thirty minutes.

The highest wait times were
on Sunday, with the second high-
est on Monday. The shortest wait
times were on Saturday. Similarly,
the longest waits were in late after-
noon, followed by early afternoon.
The shortest wait times were in the
morning—including, of course,
those people who were able
to be first to sign on when the
branch opened.

The youngest people waited lon-
ger than the older ones, probably
because they were likely to be at the
library at the busier times.

Experience with
the Computers
More than 58 percent said their
experience when they use BCPL’s
computers is very good or excel-
(see table 13). People who had
shorter wait times were more likely
to rate the experience very good
percent asked for help and at four branches, more than 75 percent said the help was very good or excellent. (See tables 14 and 15)

Nearly one-third (61.3 percent) of those who use the computers two or more times a week said they ask questions of the library staff, a higher percentage than those who use BCPL computers less frequently.

Users ages 13–39 were the least likely to have asked BCPL staff for help with the computers (49.5 percent of those ages 13–21, 42 percent of ages 22–39), and were the least likely to respond that help from the library staff was very good or excellent (40.4 percent of those 13–21, 36.1 percent of ages 22–39).

Using the Results
Results of the survey were shared with several library groups in appropriate formats and degrees of detail. The data have been used in numerous ways and we expect to continue to use it in the future.

Administration
Results were first shared with the library’s administration, the director and two assistant directors. Issues and questions about the data were raised, and the administration approved a plan for further dissemination of the results. In addition, the administration asked for full profiles of two particular groups of respondents, using all data from their responses:

- those who use the computers two or more times a week, in order to know our most frequent users as well as possible; and
- those ages 13–21, as we were in the midst of a year-long effort to address the overall needs of teens.

At any time in the future, such detailed analysis can be done, as needed, on any group in the study.

The administration also addressed the open-ended responses to questions where people requested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11. Other Sources of Computer Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/Relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowhere Else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents chose all that applied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12. Length of Wait after Computer Signup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No wait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 15 and 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer than 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13. Describe Your Experience Using BCPL Computers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is first time I have used them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
improvements related to policies of the library. These included:

- Requests for more time for each computer session. Because we have to balance the time users are given against the positive experience of having short wait times to get on the computers, we are keeping the session times the same for now.

- Asking that the environment around the computers be quieter, including restricting cell phone use. Branches are asked to enforce existing rules about such issues.

- Asking other users not to play games on the computers. It is our position not to regulate what people spend their time on while using our computers.

- Suggesting a separate computer area for children. We have looked at and will continue to consider this possibility. However, at this point the challenges of administering separate computer areas outweigh the advantages.

The administration was also interested in how few people had taken computer classes at BCPL. At this writing, they continue to allow each branch to decide which classes to offer. However, especially if we find there are plenty of other options for classes in the community, such as local schools, we will consider decreasing the number of programs.

The administration asked how many of the 463 users who planned to borrow a book while at the library would also borrow movies or music—the answer was 118. This question was meant to suggest the amount of correlation between computer users and preferences for a particular format or materials, as well as giving a better picture of overall library use.

Branch Managers

Branch managers received the summary document for the survey. They also received statistics for each question and a copy of all of the open-ended responses analyzed by branch. Many managers shared the information with their staff and had a clearer understanding of their “typical” computer user. Some also reviewed the written comments and discussed what could be done to respond to them within reason.

Some customers said they wished the computers had audio capability. At BCPL, the public computers have audio programs on them, but each branch can decide whether to provide headphones. These requests were a reminder to the branches of customers’ desire to listen to music or other audio features.

Department Managers

All administrative department managers received the summary document for the survey, as well as the frequency of responses to each question. This group discussed several theories about the survey’s results.

- If the customers waited longer to sign on to the computers, they may have been less willing to take the survey.

- It is possible that those with more education appreciate the value of surveys more, so they would be more willing to take the survey.

- The department managers questioned how many people place reserves from home versus from the library while using our

Table 14. Have You Asked for Help from BCPL Staff?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. How Helpful Were BCPL Staff?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not asked for help</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid responses</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
computers. We have data on whether the computer that places a reserve is remote or in the library, so can we can look into that.

Because 16.7 percent of respondents to question 1 said they would be using the computers to search the catalog, we wondered if the library’s computers that are dedicated to catalog access could be in more prominent locations to encourage their use.

Technology Departments The heads of the departments that provide computers, technology training, and Web content were especially interested in these results:

- The perceived wait times for the computers were short. We were especially glad that respondents said their experiences were so positive, as we had just added computers to some branches to help meet demand.
- Some customers requested capabilities that we were already implementing, such as wireless access within the branches and USB ports on the computers.
- Customers also requested capabilities that we considered but resisted for security reasons. These included allowing customers to download attachments from e-mail, use instant messaging, and play certain games. Since completion of the survey, we have allowed some of those activities to occur within limits.
- Some requested features, such as Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft PowerPoint, were already available on the computers.
- Though a high percentage of customers said that they find the staff helpful when asking computer-related questions, we may want to revisit what computer competencies branch staff should have to meet the customers’ needs.

Marketing and Programming Department This department head requested the report of responses to each question broken down by branch so he could learn about the needs of each branch. In one of his monthly reports to library staff, he pointed out the numbers of people who use the computers at least twice a week and the number who also borrow or reserve library materials to emphasize the need for effective merchandising in branches. He stated that these numbers indicate a steady stream of potential circulation customers who may be interested in borrowing materials related to computers.

Facilities and Collections Comments from customers with ideas for additional equipment, seating areas, refreshment services, and suggestions for specialized collections or even for particular titles were shared with the appropriate departments.

Conclusion We determined that we are bridging the digital divide in our communities. Not only are we providing computers to those who would not have access to them otherwise, but we provide features or speed on our computers that customers might not have elsewhere. Providing high-speed access allows our customers to engage with the Internet world much more effectively than they would be able to otherwise.

In addition, we have a great deal of information that we did not have...
before, which we can use to make decisions as opportunities present themselves. The data are likely to be valid for at least two years, and will be available for our reference and decision-making until we run a similar survey. At that time, we will have the results of this survey as a benchmark for comparison. Meanwhile, we know that we are making the best possible decisions because we have more and better data than we had before doing this survey.

Finally, we were able to gain some information about the computer users’ experience with the library in general. A strikingly high amount of respondents (84.3 percent) said that they usually or always get the items or services that they want when they come to the library and nearly 70 percent said that the customer service they receive is very good or excellent.

### Appendix. BCPL Computer Use Survey October 2005

**Use of the Library's Computers**

Date and Time (System filled)

| 1. For what purpose(s) will you be using the library's computer today? (Select all that apply) |
|---|---|
| Search the library online catalog | Reserve items in the library catalog |
| Get information about my library account | Check out E-books |
| Browse the Internet | Search for or purchase goods or services |
| Participate in online chat | Read or write e-mail |
| Play online games | Use word processing or spreadsheet programs |
| Do homework assignments | Search an online database |
| Get information for my job | Look for or apply for a job |
| Learn more about personal interests | Research my family's genealogy |
| Read the latest news, sports, etc. | Use the printer |
| Other | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. If you answered “other” in question 1, please provide details.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 3. What is the primary reason you use the library's computers? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| This is the only place I have access to a computer | I am already at the library for other reasons |
| The computers here are faster | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. If you answered “other” in question 3, please provide details.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 5. About how often do you use the computers at Baltimore County Public Library? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| This is my first time | Two or more times a week |
| Once a week | Once a month |
| Less frequently than once a month | |

| 6. Did you use your library card number to sign in today? |
|---|---|
| Yes | No |

| 7. If you did not use your library card number to sign in, what was the reason? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| Not a resident of Baltimore County | Lost my library card |
| Do not have a library card | Other reason |
| I signed in with my library card | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. If you answered “other reason” in question 7, please provide details.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 9. How long did you wait for a computer today after you signed up? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| No wait | Less than 15 minutes |

| 10. How is your experience when you use the library's computers? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| Poor | Satisfactory |
| Good | Very good |
| Excellent | This is the first time I have used the library's computers |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. What other programs or services would you like the library's computers to have?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 12. What is your knowledge level for using a computer? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| Very Low | Low |
| Moderate | High |
| Very High | |

| 13. Have you ever attended a computer training class at the Baltimore County Public Library? |
|---|---|
| Yes | No |

| 14. Have you ever asked the library staff for help with the computers? |
|---|---|
| Yes | No |

| 15. If you asked the library staff for help with the computers, how helpful were they? (Select one) |
|---|---|
| | |
INTERNET SPOTLIGHT

Questions about the Library
16. When you come to the library, how often do you get the items or services you want? (Select one)
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Usually
   - Always

17. When you come to the library, how is the customer service you receive? (Select one)
   - Poor
   - Satisfactory
   - Good
   - Very Good
   - Excellent

18. What other programs or services would you like the library to offer?

Questions about You
19. Which branch of Baltimore County Public Library are you in today? (Select one)
   - Arbutus
   - Catonsville
   - Cockeysville
   - Essex
   - Hereford
   - Loch Raven
   - North Point
   - Parkville-Carney
   - Perry Hall
   - Pikesville
   - Randallstown
   - Reisterstown
   - Rosedale
   - Towson
   - White Marsh
   - Woodlawn

20. What else will you do while you are at the library today? (Select all that apply)
   - Borrow or reserve a book or other print material
   - Borrow or reserve a movie or music material
   - Purchase library materials
   - Attend a children’s library event or class
   - Attend an adult’s library event or class
   - Attend a non-library meeting or event
   - Do research with resources other than the computer
   - Read leisure materials (magazine, newspaper, etc.)
   - Ask a librarian for help in finding information
   - Sign up for a library card
   - Sign up for an event or class
   - Nothing else
   - Other

21. What is your age? (Select one)
   - 12 or less
   - 13–21
   - 22–39
   - 40–54
   - 55 or older

22. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Select one)
   - Lower than 12th grade
   - High School
   - College
   - Higher than college

23. Where do you have access to a computer besides at the library? (Select all that apply)
   - Home
   - Work
   - Friend’s or relative’s house
   - School
   - Mobile device
   - Other
   - Nowhere else
BRINGING IN THE MONEY

“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.

Fund-raising Perks of Library Cafés

In the 1990s, there was great debate in the library community about opening a café in the library. Now many of the initial hesitations have died down. As other libraries have tested the waters, the profession learned that some of its first fears—bug infestations, soiled books, or too much noise—were unfounded. We accepted the argument that patrons take books home and eat dinner while reading them, so why not let them do so in the library?

Many urban public libraries, academic libraries, and new library buildings have incorporated some type of café or coffee cart and generated thousands of dollars in revenue. Now small- to medium-sized libraries are entering the coffee zone as well. Here in the Valley of the Sun, many libraries are just beginning to open library cafés.

The different funding models used to start up the library café, in particular, attracted my attention. Several libraries received large grants, as much as $250,000, while others invested their own funds, from $75 to tens of thousands. And the variations continue with profits, as some libraries gross hundreds of thousands of dollars while other libraries generate much less. There are also libraries that may only accrue a small revenue stream but find themselves earning equally important, unexpected benefits—such as increased community support and even private donations.

When I first began research for this article, I was excited to share with other libraries how cafés and food and drink sales could provide needed funding for libraries. So I was surprised when a few library staff members insisted they weren't running their cafés to make money. I was told, “The café was not installed as a moneymaker for our library, but as a convenience for customers and staff” and “Don’t [start a café] as a fund-raiser or money-maker as much as a way to increase the number and durations of visits to the library.” They mentioned they were more interested in selling ambience, a sense of place and community, than making money.
As I thought more about this concept—sales without motivation to produce income—I wondered how that philosophy affects profits. Could libraries make more money if they set goals to do so? Libraries certainly are not less deserving of the money than Starbucks or Barnes & Noble; they could use extra money for books, computers, DVDs, programming, outreach services, children’s learning games, furniture, new technologies, databases, or self-check-out machines. I know no one is in the library business to make money, but why can’t libraries be in the café business to support their greater mission?

I’m not advocating that libraries try to take advantage of people or overcharge for a library cup o’ joe, but it really seems that they will miss an opportunity if library cafés aren’t treated as the business enterprises that they are. Many libraries are more successful when they outsource the café or let their Friends group manage it. As chef Anthony Bourdain wrote in *Kitchen Confidential*, “The most dangerous species of owner . . . is the one who gets into the business for love.”

Just like any food business, there must be marketing, merchandising, legal compliance, and wise decisions based on menu selection and avoiding waste.

### Begin with a Plan

Planning is a critical component of a successful business, and all fundraising projects should begin with a plan. For a café, an enterprise that involves food handling and sales, a business plan is especially important to increase success and sustainability while decreasing liability. A café should be part of a library’s strategic plan, based on feedback from community members as to what services they would like to have. One of the commonalities I found in successful library cafés was integrating the café into the library’s mission and services. This may mean adding programming, wireless access, and a more comfortable environment.

While making the plan, library staff should be clear on whether they hope to generate income. Outsourcing can be easier, but may lead to less revenue. Easy isn’t always bad though—especially if the library pays for someone with experience instead of losing money due to the lack of it. The requirements of running a successful café are most likely outside the purview of most librarians. There are many considerations, such as health codes and other laws, plumbing, electrical and trash implications, licenses, inspections, and tax requirements. The library should also complete a break-even analysis to determine the volume of revenue from sales needed to balance the expenses.

### Some Questions to Ask before Opening a Library Café or Coffee Service

Just beginning to plan a library café? There are quite a few questions that need to be answered first:

- What are the library’s goals for generating ongoing income?
- How much space can be dedicated to this area?
- Is remodeling necessary for aesthetics or compliance to health codes?
- How will the café be marketed?
- How will the café fit into the library’s larger services model?
- Will the library add programming, wireless access, or other services for the café?
- Will the library sell used books or other merchandise in addition to food?
- Will the library, the Friends group, or an outside vendor manage the café?
- Who will staff the café?
- What equipment does the café need?
- Who are the library café’s closest competitors and what are their product and service offerings?
- Does the library have a plan for sustainability?
- Does the library have current vendor relationships for products and services, or does it need to establish new ones?
- If the library decides to outsource, will it charge rent and a percentage of the profits?

If answering all of these questions gives the library staff a collective headache, they can find help and answers in many locations. Ask other libraries about their stories, as there are a lot of best practices in place! If the library decides to outsource the café, the vendor may be able to address a lot of concerns. Small business groups may be helpful, as might a local college or university. In the February 2006 issue of *C&RL News*, Linda M. LaPointe wrote of how her college library collaborated with a marketing professor, who designed a class project...
in which his students developed marketing plans for the library café. The students profiled the targeted customers, made cost projections, examined demographic statistics, and considered marketing strategies. Along the lines of start-up funding, an unexpected benefit emerged—the library was the recipient of that year’s senior class gift to use as seed money for the café. The library used the funds for plumbing and electrical costs and for café furniture. It now uses the café for events, and the staff “have maintained a healthy bank account.”

Library Café Profiles

Here are a few examples of how several libraries started cafés—from small to large budgets, from vending machines to coffee stands and full-scale restaurants.

Indian Hills Library

If you are working in a rural library and you think this article is about yet another great idea for which you don’t have the time, space, or funding—don’t despair! Jana Ponce-Wolfe, the La Paz County (Ariz.) librarian has a solution. As part of Jana’s job, she supervises the Indian Hills library in Salome, a town of a few thousand people near the California border.

Jana asserts, “I didn’t want them to not have a café just because they are really small. They deserve to have what the big libraries have.”

So she set out to build a little library coffeehouse for this small Western town that would fit the community’s personality. She enlisted the help of her husband, Mark Wolfe, whom she calls her personal carpenter. She proudly explains, “When he married me, he married my second love as well—the library and all my little projects!” One weekend, he came across an “antique” table in a vacant lot piled with old wood, which he purchased for $25. He built the ingenious coffeehouse pictured in one weekend, following Jana’s instructions to add a tin roof and shelving for supplies. After investing another $50 and utilizing Jana’s decorating skills, the coffeehouse was ready.

Sharon Hillhouse, library manager for Indian Hills library, sells coffee, tea, soda, water, candy, chips, cookies, granola bars, peanut butter crackers, and “anything else [she] can find that is packaged individually.” She uses the money generated from coffeehouse sales to provide refreshments for all library programs, including burritos and nachos on movie night, homemade ice cream for reading programs, cookies for meetings, and coffee and brownies during programs for winter visitors. While Sharon takes in only a small profit, it is enough to provide complimentary edibles during her library programs.

Hastings Public Library

After not receiving any responses from local vendors to provide coffee service on a regular basis at the Hastings (Neb.) Public Library, the library contracted with a local vending company to install drink machines. The coffee vending machine makes each cup of cappuccino, latte, decaf, mocha, and hot chocolate individually. The library also provides cold beverage machines with soft drinks, tea, water, and fruit juices. The library doesn’t pay for the machine, the cost of utilities used, or any maintenance. They receive a portion of the profits.

Glendale Public Library

The Glendale (Ariz.) Public Library staff recently identified a decline in library visits and a decrease in circulation. As a solution, they are reinventing and remerchandising their library to make it more appealing to their customers. As their first step, they installed wireless Internet access and a new café, Perfetto de café, which opened in April 2006. Diane Nevill, public information officer, attests that she was interested in having a café in the library because “a coffee bar in the library creates a friendly, warm, inviting ambience for the library. It becomes a central gathering place for the community. When we were doing our strategic plan in 2005, a coffee
Bringing in the Money

Glendale (Ariz.) Public Library’s café, Perfetto de Café.

The bar was suggested by one of the committee members.”6

Glendale outsourced the café to a vendor selected through a request for proposal process. The vendor hired its own staff and took out a $40,000 loan to pay for site improvements, café furniture, equipment, a phone line, and so forth. The library did not charge rent or receive any profits the first year, and will begin collecting 5 percent of the net profits in the second year. The library invested approximately $600 in electrical work when the vendor set up the coffee bar area. This is a great solution for a library that doesn’t have money for remodeling and isn’t interested in managing a coffee enterprise. The vendor also provides catering when needed by the library and customers using the meeting rooms. Glendale Public Library was recently awarded a LSTA grant to continue their merchandising project.

Everett Public Library

An anonymous donation of $175,000 to the Everett (Wash.) Public Library provided the funding for furniture and necessary renovation for a café. The library now receives 9 percent of the gross income from the outside vendor who runs the café, about $800 per month. The café also offers live music on Friday and Saturday nights.7

Tempe Public Library

The Tempe (Ariz.) Public Library, located right outside of Phoenix, obtained funding for its café from a grant. The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the largest foundation in Arizona, awarded a three-year, $547,644 grant to the City of Tempe for the construction and operation of the Tempe Connections Café and program space.

Civic Ventures (www.civicventures.org) is a community-focused think tank that partnered with Tempe Connections to open the café. Tempe Connections is part of Civic Ventures’ national initiative, The Next Chapter, which encourages communities to create new approaches that help retiring adults transition to new life phases by providing a supportive community for ongoing learning, development, and societal contributions.

The Friends of the Tempe Public Library operate the café and program space, with all profits used for the support of Connections programs and services. The library hired two grant-funded staff members, including a program director and a café manager, who has a degree in business and previous experience operating a coffee shop. Community collaboration and citizen involvement is a key part of the Tempe Connections program. During the planning for the grant, Tempe Task Force on Aging members provided input, and now a Connections Advisory Council sets project goals, hires staff, and plans for operations.

The library built meeting and program space into the café. More than two dozen community organizations and educational institutions partnered with the City of Tempe to participate in the planning and delivery of program offerings.

A few highlights include:

- lifelong learning and new career opportunities in partnership with Arizona State University, Maricopa County Workforce Development and other partners;
- life planning workshops;
- wellness classes, screenings, and exercise programs provided by St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center;
- civic engagement through peer mentoring; and
- volunteer information through Civic Ventures’ Experience Corps and the Tempe Volunteer Office.

The Lexington (Ky.) Public Library Café—Good Foods, Chapter 2.
Lexington Public Library
The Lexington (Ky.) Public Library has a café in its Central Library, staffed and operated by a local co-op natural foods store that has become one of the city’s most popular groceries and restaurants. Good Foods Market and Café named its library spin-off Good Foods, Chapter 2. It serves coffee, soft drinks, light lunches, desserts, and snacks. Good Foods partnered with the library on other projects that have proven popular and viable. The library’s general funds were used to set up the café. The vendor was not charged rent until the café’s business volume increased.8

The Lexington Public Library included the goal of serving as a community commons in its initial strategic plan seven years ago. Board members saw that cafés enhanced the public space of other libraries and also saw a local bookstore’s success at establishing itself as a commons, partly through opening a café. A few years after the cafe opened, a local philanthropist donated a major public art installation in the library, which adds to the atmosphere.9

Seattle Public Library
Seattle Public Library’s new Central Library has a coffee cart and collects 10 percent of the vendor’s revenues, usually around $500 per month.10 The vendor is a nonprofit called FareStart, which runs a barista training and education program that provides job training and placement, life skills, and on-the-job and classroom training for homeless, runaway, and street-involved youth.11

Chandler Public Library
Chandler (Ariz.) Public Library’s café, Pages, opened in August 2003. Library director Brenda Brown views the café:

as an amenity that adds value to the library. It creates a welcoming atmosphere, and helps the library be a community-gathering place and destination location. And income is generated for our fantastic Friends of the Library group to further support the library and its programs.12

The Friends of the Chandler Library were instrumental in the development of Pages. Before Pages opened, the Friends sold used books, gift items, and very popular homemade fudge in the library. The City of Chandler invested about $300,000 in renovation funding. The Friends group purchased all equipment and inventory. Paid staff work at Pages about ninety hours a week, employed by the Friends; around twenty-five to thirty volunteers also contribute time. Pages serves muffins, bagels, smoothies, coffee, sandwiches, salads, fruit cups, ice cream, chips, candy, and always the homemade fudge. Pages also hosts programs for Baby Boomers, including conversation cafés, book discussion groups, and parties. Wireless Internet access is available. The café generated $174,000 in sales in fiscal year 2005–2006. This includes used and donated

Tips for Starting a Library Café

Chandler (Ariz.) Public Library
■ Develop a business plan that includes customer service. When you promise an amenity, take it seriously. Folks expect you to be open when they visit the library so make sure that the resources are in place to be open and to deliver as promised.
■ Do not forsake the value of selling donated books and materials. They continue to be our bread and butter!
■ Do a thorough analysis when considering product lines to insure that there is a market.—Brenda Brown, Director

Glendale (Ariz.) Public Library
■ Be sure you have a good location for it, with a suitable area nearby for comfortable seating with tables.
■ Checking with local roasters is a good way to locate possible vendors if the library wants an outside group to finance and run it.
■ Have constant communication with the person running the coffee bar and a designated library staff member.—Diane Nevill, Public Information Officer

Lexington (Ky.) Public Library
■ Firmly establish the specifics of the relationship between the operator and the library, including what role the library will play in marketing the business.
■ Clearly think out and enforce your food policy.—Doug Tattershall, Media Relations Coordinator
book sales, school supplies, and adult educational texts.

**Conclusion**

Library cafés have proven to be popular with all ages of customers—mothers with children, teens, adults, lunch crowds, and library staff. Staff members at libraries with cafés reported that their cafés brought new traffic into the library and that regular patrons also are enjoying the new “perk.” A library café makes good business sense—and not just in profits. Libraries need to keep up with today’s changing world, with the competition of bookstore chains, Internet cafés, and the modern needs and desires of customers.

**References**

4. Sharon Hillhouse, e-mail to the author, July 24, 2006.
5. Linda M. Rae, e-mail to the author, July 20, 2006.
10. Wise, “Books, Hot Coffee, and a Comfortable Chair.”
Poetry Slammed

When I was a blushing library graduate student, I was inundated with a single, ubiquitous idea when it came to teen programming: a “poetry slam.” I vividly recall sitting in one classroom listening to a classmate go on and on and on and on about the rave reviews she received for hosting a poetry slam at her library. Every one of my classmates cottoned to the idea, many of them enthusiastically vowing to one day hold poetry slams of their own because they were not presently employed at a library. It was one of those “so brightly shines the idea” moments where everyone joins hands and beams smiles into the faces of tanks.

Well, almost everyone.

Before I light the taper and begin firing up bridges, I should say I write poetry—quite a bit of it actually, and have since grade school. My favorite piece of written literature is Dante’s *Inferno*, and I’ve fought back tears listening to Dylan Thomas’ powerful words. Poetry is the music of the literary mind. My stubby Irish fingers can’t work a keyboard or a fret but I can put pen to paper and write a sestina that winds out the thoughts from my brain. That’s right, a sestina. One of those terrible “forms” of poetry that the slam movement avoids like a stinking gym shoe, the slam idea being that you should just scribble down some words and get up in front of your peers to bleat your beat to the world. Just throw some ideas at the wall and see if they stick. It’s improvisational theatre, not poetry, and it just does not work for me.

The crux of my beef with poetry slams finds voice in a quote from the Gus Van Sant film *Finding Forrester*. Sean Connery plays a reclusive author tutoring a young aspiring writer. Connery’s character, the titular Forrester, is appalled that the young man has to perform a reading of his work for class. “Do you know why writers do those readings?” Forrester asks, and answers, “To get laid!”

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It’s not just Connery’s pitch-perfect comedic line reading that sells the line; it’s the truth behind it. Reading your work for others is performance, not craft. When you’re dealing with young adults, you know that performing is a huge part of their interaction with the world around them. There is a sense, in a room filled with teens, that you are surrounded by the most boister-
ous of stand-up comics, the most loquacious of smooth-talkers, and the most rhyme-savvy of rappers. So why do I frown upon poetry slams as a vehicle for this shining, shimmering mass of youthful energy?

It's the performance aspect that most irks me—the idea that poetry must be bodily performed in order to hold value sends a very mixed message. Is "Howl" less effective when you read it versus seeing Ginsberg reading it like a dirge in some divey Brooklyn coffee house? No. Those are simply two ways of experiencing the poem. The poetry slam movement overemphasizes the immediate and visceral experience of performing over the innate power of words in and of themselves. Poetry slams turn poetry into ephemera when in truth poetry is a poet's way of turning the ephemeral emotion into written substance.

Make no mistake, the emotions that teen poets pour onto the page are as valid, powerful, and shocking as anything an adult can summon. I recall reading the work of a young patron and realizing that this young person suffered profound physical and emotional abuse. This patron would have never read his or her work to a crowd, but bled on the page and shared it only with some trusted folks. I was honored to be one of them.

Rather than hold a poetry slam, try an open mic night at the library. Be free-form and accept everyone from the aspiring singer to the kid who does a dead-on Christopher Walken impression. For the poets, especially those using poetry to process, try a small-scale poets' circle. It takes the performance aspect out of it, instead building a review and discussion group for young writers. To go even further, invite artistically inclined teens to create interpretations of works of poetry, famous and home-grown. Just imagine your teen section walls covered with remix art honoring William Blake and Eminem. That's the kind of slam kids can get behind.
To reinvigorate the public library as a meaningful social institution for young people, library designers and youth advocates have been programming teen spaces, special zones within the library intended to attract young people. These playful and often colorful environments negate the conventional image of the public library and have been advocated as a way to correct a long-standing institutional bias against youth culture. Much of the literature on teen spaces has addressed the need to market the library to young people by appealing to their aesthetic sensibilities. Anthony Bernier, the director of youth services for Oakland (Calif.) Public Library, who has advocated designing in response to both teens’ kinesthetic and aesthetic preferences, stated, “Libraries represent an unparalleled spatial resource for adolescents, and yet most public libraries give more space to restrooms than to YAs. Young adult areas need design elements to harmonize with the way teens sit, study, relax, read, and socialize.” He also wrote:

Close observation of teen bedrooms tells us how they sit, study, relax, what recreations they like, what they read. . . . Libraries cannot program service space like a bedroom. But bedrooms do suggest clues. They tell us, for instance that young bodies don’t always fit into chairs. So let’s design spaces with a variety of seating options: chairs designed to tilt back without tipping over as well as spaces for sitting on the floor.

His thinking builds upon the physiological and educational arguments about the advantages of movement developed by the author. Bernier explicitly wanted an active space that would accommodate a variety of postures, rather than only the classic right-angle seated posture. He saw an opportunity to realize this theory when a new location was planned for the Cesar Chavez Library in the Fruitvale Transit Village, a mixed-used development built around the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station. In 2004, this bilingual branch
of the Oakland Public Library reopened its doors on the second floor to the largely Mexican-American community it has served in east Oakland’s Fruitvale neighborhood since 1966.

Bernier convened a Youth Leadership Council to consult on the design and furnishing of the space, which, in his terms, more closely resembles a contemporary Internet café than a traditional library. He designed the teen center according to both the somatic and ergonomic principles of body-conscious design. (The somatic perspective considers emotional, intellectual, and cultural ideas about movement rather than just the biomechanical possibilities for movement that characterize most ergonomic approaches.) Body-conscious design includes a variety of postures, accommodation of different body sizes, and the opportunity to move from one posture to another. Cranz has stated, “Probably the single most important principle of body-conscious design is to use design to keep posture varied and the body moving.”

Movement is the basis for early learning and continues to be the basis of health throughout life. Adolescents are not yet fully socialized to learning only abstractly, so they may need to retain movement in order to learn. Moreover, different styles of learning differentiate individuals—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—so having all learning environments, not just those for teens, with options for different postural attitudes would be ideal. A. C. Mandal has argued that socializing children to expect movement in schools will help them create a demand for postural freedom in adulthood in offices. Finally, the recent interest in childhood obesity makes physically active learning desirable.

To promote and accommodate postural variation and movement, Bernier designed this space to include a variety of seating options including high stools, benches, carpeted platforms, and cushioned stools. As soon as the library opened in February 2004, a research team using both observation and interviews focused on how many of these opportunities were taken advantage of in actual use. The team’s interest was whether the design of the space and its furnishings were alone sufficient to induce people to adopt the unconventional postures and movement that the furniture invited. Nine and ten months later, the team’s lead authors visited again for phase two of the research project.
The Cesar Chavez Library’s teen space is decorated with posters of Bruce Lee, deceased rapper Tupac Shakur, and characters from *The Simpsons*, among others. A broad bookcase employs display techniques akin to bookstores, with some books propped on stands, covers facing front, as opposed to the monotonous line of book-spines. These shelves also feature music CDs, DVDs, and comic books.

Workstations were not designed for traditional right-angle sitting, but rather offer a choice of standing or sitting. Curved work surfaces at two different heights are accompanied by several adjustable-height stools. In this way, the space accommodates both tall and short people, either for standing or perching on stools halfway between sitting and standing. The sit-stand position (also called perching) is particularly beneficial physiologically, as it allows the legs to rest while retaining the spine’s curves. A long, deep bench with a back that tapers from high to low marks one edge of the space and offers several types of seating—conventional right-angle seating as well as cross-legged seating—for more than one person. Because the bench is not subdivided, several people can sit together—half a dozen if the group can tolerate body contact, or one or two people lying down. Several leather-upholstered ottomans can be moved freely throughout the teen space.

A raised carpeted platform in the corner, abutting two walls of windows facing the street, features a large, cylindrical disk, also carpeted on its top and sides. This “round thing,” so dubbed by the research team, or “circle” as the teens eventually came to call it, was intentionally designed to be abstract and multiuse. It was also the most unconventional feature in the teen space. A patron could lie down on the carpeted platform and rest his or her legs, bent at the knees, on the top of the carpeted round disk. Alternatively, he or she might sit on top of it cross-legged. Another option would be to sit on the platform, leaning against the disk to read. This could be used independently by several individuals at the same time or by groups who wanted to read together. Yet none of these options were indicated either in writing or in illustration, so initially this feature proved to be the design element most open to interpretation, uncertainty, and sometimes puzzlement. Some used it as a tabletop—not an ergonomic appropriation because there was no knee space under the top of the disk. By the next autumn, local teens discovered this space and its potential for
what the dance community would call "contact improv." That is, they made physical contact with one another, piling up similar to puppies, switching positions as the mood struck.

Research Design and Data Collection
After an initial exploratory visit as a group, four researchers each made two visits to the Cesear Chavez Library and collected data for two hours on each visit. On the first visit they each collected observational data about behavior, and on the second visit they interviewed library users.

During the first visit, each observer used a floor plan of the teen space, including furniture and design features, to record the number of users and path of each trip through the space. The floor-plan diagram was also used to document the range of spatial and social behaviors exhibited in the space. Researchers charted the variety of postures—sitting, standing, perching, reclining, lying, leaning—as well as the range of social activities—chatting, studying, reading, taking notes, browsing the Internet, browsing the bookshelves, listening to music—that they observed in the space.

On the second visit, each researcher conducted no fewer than five interviews with visitors to the teen space, taking care to speak with male and female, young and old users.11 In wide-ranging conversations, researchers attempted to draw out users’ attitudes toward the space in terms of both its aesthetic properties and spatial attributes. Each conversation was guided by, but not limited to, the following questions:

- How do you like the new library (in general)?
- How often do you come here?
- Is this space different from other parts of the library? How so?
- Do you like this space? Why?
- Was this space designed for a particular age group?
- What do you like most about the space?
- What do you like least about the space?
- What is the round thing for?
- What is the raised platform for?
- Would you ever feel comfortable lying on the raised platform or the round thing to read? Why or why not?
- Why are some of the tables so high?
What activities do you do in the space? What would you like to add or change? How long do you usually stay in this part of the library? What would encourage you to stay longer? Pillows? Sofa? Something else?

The field notes and behavior observation maps were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, summarized as a narrative report, and returned to both Bernier and Christy Thomas, the teen specialist librarian at Cesar Chavez, along with a set of suggestions regarding how to encourage diverse and healthful use of the teen space. These results have been synthesized below. Figure 1 shows the summary of observation and interview data from four researchers.

Finally, a second research phase occurred in November and December 2005, when the two authors from the project visited the site again, this time to test the generalizability of these initial findings. Both similarities and differences were observed.

**Findings**

Generally, the teen space, as part of the library as a whole, has been well received by users, who find it more spacious than other libraries. Many visitors seemed delighted, if not a little surprised, to find an inviting, playful space not commonly associated with a library. A lot of the users described the openness and lightness of the space as positive qualities. “On several occasions, entire families (sometimes three generations, sometimes rolling strollers) would stroll through the Teen Space or sit on the wooden bench. . . . they were proudly surveying their community’s new facility.”

Some people reported that they stayed in the space because of the quality and character of the activities and services provided within it—access to the Internet, comic books to check out, and a place to socialize with friends. Yet others said that they like the space because of its homey and informal atmosphere—clearly spatial qualities. In this respect the design of the physical environment is important.

As libraries enter the information age, it should come as no surprise that one of the most popular activities in the space is Internet use (e-mailing and browsing). Within the teen space, there was also quite a bit of conversation. It is not the silent space of the stodgy library, though adult chaperones (when present) would not tolerate overly exuberant or loud behavior.

Despite its name, the teen space was not used exclusively by teenagers. The research team’s early observations suggested that the most frequent user was between six and twelve years old. Later observations and reports from the teen librarian indicated that fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds dominated the use of the space, although it also drew in younger children.

The teen space’s users engaged in varied activities. Several groups of teenagers came to the teen space to sit on the high stools, chat, and do homework. On a Tuesday night in February, one observer noted:

The poster featuring characters from *The Simpsons* served as a fascinating attraction to many young people (ages four to ten), who would wander in for further inspection. Teenagers would sit on stools at both of the curving desks, often working intently on homework, sometimes flipping through magazines, checking e-mail, or socializing quietly with a study-partner. One girl seemed to be babysitting for her two younger
siblings, who were peacefully drawing together on the large sketchpad. This cross-age association was not uncommon.\textsuperscript{13}

Users enjoyed the active motion that the stools allowed. Adjusting seat height and spinning on the stools were commonly observed behaviors. Many users wanted to try this activity. Some purposefully induced the sensation of dizziness. Yet no one observed users moving stools or ottomans to a different place in the room. Some users wondered why the work surfaces were so high and wanted chairs with backs.

The raised platform and “round thing” were generally ignored in the opening weeks. When asked, many people were hard-pressed to describe their potential uses for it. When users did approach the platform, it was often an instance of younger children (preteen) enthusiastically charging, flinging themselves upon the round thing, and rolling their bodies across it. One researcher noted, “People tend to think the round thing is a stage for teachers who read storybooks for children. Only one five-year-boy thinks the round thing is for sitting.”\textsuperscript{14}

### Figure 1. Summary of Observations and Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Features</th>
<th>Frequency of Use*</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Range of Postures</th>
<th>Patterns of Use</th>
<th>Users’ Opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall space/floor</td>
<td>25 on average</td>
<td>Browsing Wandering Playing</td>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>People tended to stay shortly for browsing and leave.</td>
<td>Homey and informal atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Preteens &gt; Kids &gt; Teens &gt; Adults)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Squatting Lying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curved workspace with adjustable-height stools</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Playing Chatting</td>
<td>Sitting</td>
<td>Intense Internet use. Many children played with the stools by spinning and adjusting the seat heights.</td>
<td>The most popular spot. Kids loved <em>The Simpsons</em> poster on the column.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Crawling</td>
<td>Lying Squatting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottomans</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly adult users. There was not very much moving around the ottomans.</td>
<td>People loved the carpeted area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disk</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Playing Reading</td>
<td>Jumping Romping</td>
<td>Various postures from kids. Some adults used a disk as a reading table.</td>
<td>The younger the user, the more innovative the use of the space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Resting Waiting</td>
<td>Sitting Leaning</td>
<td>Less frequently used.</td>
<td>Some people thought it was uncomfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Frequency of Use = Number of users per hour. High=more than 10, Medium= 5–10, Low=fewer than 5.
team member is relevant: “The younger the user, the more innovative his use of the furniture.”

For example, a young boy used a stool as a reading table, and teens used the perch position (although adults did not). Even if users usually ignored both the raised platform and the disk, this unusual piece of furniture succeeded in making half of the young people say they felt comfortable enough psychologically to lie down. However, a twelve-year-old girl told one team member that she hesitated about lying down, because if she did that in a public place like the library, her mother would be upset by her behavior. Such cultural inhibitions are examples of the somatic emphasis on the role of culture in physical posture and movement.

A large sketchpad had been left on the lower of the two curving work surfaces, and it quickly became a cumulative art project. Library users did not need a special invitation or instruction to engage in this popular activity—the presence of crayons and colored markers was enough. This suggests that users are responsive to cues in the environment, an important point regarding our recommendations, laid out in the following section.

**Initial Recommendations**

On the basis of these initial findings, recommendations were submitted to Bernier and Thomas. The first suggestion was to display photographs on the walls of the teen space to show all the different postural options and promote their social acceptability. Specifically, those in charge of the teen space needed to explain the health benefits of having work surfaces at perching height. Special attention needed to be focused on how the disk might be used: lying down with legs bent at the knees to rest on the top of the disk, sitting cross-legged on top of it, and leaning against it to read, among others. Using characters from *The Simpsons* to illustrate the postures and their benefits was recommended as being particularly effective. It was predicted that without clear information about how to use the round, raised platform, it would end up being used as a place to display books, exhibits, or other information. Another minor recommendation was to place cushions on the wooden bench to improve comfort and attractiveness.

**Research Phase Two**

In summer 2004, Thomas took digital photographs using two teens, sisters from a local junior high and high school, as models. The photos were printed on a color printer and mounted on the walls of the teen space. She said that reclining needed the most encouragement, so she showed the teens lying on their stomachs, propped on elbows; lying on their backs; and to be funny, lying on their backs with their heads hanging over the edge. These images had disappeared by the time the research team made its second set of visits in fall 2005, and the librarian no longer has them on her computer, so the team had to rely on her verbal descriptions of them. The photographs must have been effective, because by the time of the team’s fall visit, any initial reticence to using the round platform had completely disappeared.

The second round of visits revealed that an expanded range of activities and uses of the circle thing had developed. Our interviews with two other girls, fourteen and fifteen years of age who had become regular users of this space, revealed that they lay on the round thing—and on top of each other. They demonstrated this for us with a larger group of four and five friends.
But first the girls talked about their experiences. Lying around on the circle thing was an activity in and of itself, sometimes supplemented by reading, doing homework at the tables, and sometimes babysitting a younger sibling. When asked how they knew to use the furniture this way, one said that the curved shape itself invited them to lie down and use the space informally. When asked if they would ask their mother for one of these circles at home, one of the girls replied that she would “love to have a round bed,” and the second added, “that goes around.”

Even though they talked mostly about lying down, they claimed that they usually would sit in this space. They would surround the circle with backpacks on the floor and lean them against the edge of the structure. They felt comfortable leaving the backpacks there when they moved throughout the library. They said it was safe to do so, adding that nobody wanted to steal school textbooks.

The group of girls came alone or together. When they came with a group, they laid their backpacks down and laid on top of each other, sometimes up to ten people at a time, but usually in little groups. They got to know the regulars. Their response to being asked if they felt like puppies was that they were friends, adding that the “boy-girl thing” would not be a deterrent. The researchers asked the girls if they felt like puppies when lying on the circle. The girls replied that they laid on it with friends, and the “boy-girl thing” was not a deterrent to doing so.

When asked if they and their friends laid on each other in similar fashion at school, the girls made a distinction between public school and Catholic school. It was not common practice to do so at the Catholic school, but even so, one girl from the Catholic school insisted, “I sit on everybody.” In public school they were more likely to be physically close, but when a boy is involved, they acknowledged that some others might jump to conclusions: “Oh my God, you’re sitting on a guy—you like him—you like him.”

When asked if they do this at home, one girl said “yes” because she came from a physical family, and her friend agreed that the other’s family is not as physical as they are as a group of friends. When asked, “Will you continue this as adults?” one replied, “Yes, I’m going to keep it up—I’m going to give hugs.” The other acknowledged that as an adult the practice would probably fade away.

The group has used all the furniture in the teen space, including the stools, which they considered more fun than regular chairs because the stools could move up and down and spin around. The girls use the bench both to sit on and to lie down on.

The higher table is used for computer work and for homework. When asked how they pick one work-surface height versus another, the girls said they go where the others are already assembled. Here social forces are much stronger than consideration of body mechanics. Researchers asked whether the girls had considered those who had longer legs when choosing a work surface, the pair confirmed that they never thought about picking the height that would be best for their bodies.

Conclusions and Final Recommendations
The findings and recommendations generated by this post-occupancy evaluation gave the team insight into the interaction between designed spaces and their users in an institutional context loaded with culturally conditioned expectations. Even in the playful and relatively open teen space, healthy postures must be illustrated, legitimized, and even taught. It cannot be presumed that a body-conscious environment that
enables these activities will necessarily bring healthy postures about without active encouragement. Design features generated possibilities for various postures, but at least initially, opportunity alone was not sufficient to overcome the inertia of established social norms for library space. The photographs of teens using the unconventional furniture freely had the right informational tone—playful rather than didactic. (It cannot be stated for certain that this tone was better than any other approach, however, because it was not compared to any other.)

This case study suggests that instructions for use of space by teens should be presented as an invitation, rather than instruction. Here, the invitation approach asked teen library users to try a new posture, to experience new standards of comfort for reading and Internet use, and to expand one’s repertoire of socially acceptable body postures. To generalize, the new furniture can be compared to the crayons—if they are there, they will be accepted. The difference is that most people have had prior experience with crayons, so they know what to do with them. The same familiarity could not be presumed with this new furniture, so basic instruction was necessary. The photographic example of others having fun in the space was at least one of the catalysts teens needed. Body-conscious design is new enough to need cultural reinforcement from media other than design itself. Because librarians have access to so many different kinds of media, they should have no problem supporting cultural and architectural innovations in this way.

References and Notes
4. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
9. The research team was made up of the authors and graduate students Elihu J. Rubin, Ki Yeong Kim, and Therese Peffer.
11. For demographics of interviewees, see appendix.
14. Ibid.
16. This is consistent with communication theory that claims that culture is redundant, which is to say that cultural content (the message) is reinforced through different media.

Appendix. Demographics of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age and Sex</th>
<th>Kids (younger than 8)</th>
<th>Preteens* (8–12)</th>
<th>Teens (13–19)</th>
<th>Adult (20 or older)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5–9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7–11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The numbers of male and female preteens were estimated, as gender information for four preteens was lacking.
The subtitle of the book *Teens & Libraries is Getting it Right*. Getting it right requires that librarians understand the information-seeking behaviors and preferences of their clients. When it comes to urban teens, however, little research of this nature exists. To begin to fill this research gap, a three-year project was undertaken to understand the role that information seeking plays in urban teens’ everyday lives and to explore how successful libraries are at fulfilling urban teens’ everyday information needs. Two models of urban teens’ information needs and behaviors emerged from this research. The models provide insight into the common reasons urban youth seek information and the types of information they seek; both have direct relevance to the practice of librarianship. In this article, each model is explained—beginning with the theoretical. Implications for practice are then discussed.

**A Theoretical Model of Urban Teen Development**

Twenty-seven Philadelphia teens aged fourteen through seventeen participated in the project. Twenty-five of the teens were African American, one was Asian American, and one was Caucasian. Five data collection methods were employed: surveys, written activity logs, audio journals, photographic tours, and semi-structured group interviews. Data analysis showed that in their everyday lives, inner city teens seek information to support their social, emotional, self-reflective, physical, creative, cognitive, and sexual development. Based on these results, the authors developed a theoretical model (illustrated in figure 1).

It is important to point out that these seven areas of teen development are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they often overlap, as some information needs support the development of multiple selves. For example:
I really am interested in Savannah, Georgia, because that’s where my Grandma was born, and I’d like to go back to my roots. If I could go to school down there and could find more about my heritage, that would be great.

This teen’s interest in learning about Savannah, Georgia, serves to support the development of the reflective self (of which a sense of cultural identity is a part), as well as the development of the cognitive self (of which gaining new knowledge is a part). This is seen by the teen’s desire for information about Savannah, which is motivated both by a desire to understand her cultural heritage and by intellectual curiosity about an unfamiliar location.

Explaining the Theoretical Model
In this section, the seven areas of the theoretical model will be explained by discussing the developmental tasks associated with each area. Verbatim transcript excerpts will be included as real-life examples for each of the seven selves: social, emotional, reflective, creative, physical, cognitive, and sexual.

The Social Self
I went to my friend named Tamara and I asked her what’s been going on. I told her that I’m ready to snap because she is really getting on my last nerve. We’re supposed to be best friends and all she does is compete against me. What does that feel like? You’re either my friend or you’re not. I would love to address these issues to her, but her attitude has to change.—Tamika, age 15

Social self refers to teens’ understanding of the human social world and to learning how they fit into that world. The social self includes developing stable and productive peer relationships. For example, one of the girls wrote in her activity log: “Boy problems. What should I do?” A number of the other teens dealt with friends who were fighting with their peers, and the study participants themselves engaged in a number of conflicts with friends and other members of their peer group.

The Emotional Self
I’m just worried about my cousin sometimes, ’cause I think about him, how he’s in trouble a lot, and how he’s always in the middle of something, or how he’s seen something that involves the cops or something.—Charles, age 16

Whereas the social self refers to the external world, the emotional self refers to a teen’s inner world of feelings and emotions. The emotional self includes establishing emotional and psychological independence from his or her parents and developing increased impulse control and behavioral maturity. Examples of increased independence from parents included one girl’s desire to wear a dress she worried her mother might find too risqué.
My sock hop is a tenth-grade dance for the tenth graders in my school and it's like a little prom. . . . You bring a date and you dance and stuff. I want to wear something casual, like not all dressy-dressy, but casual. But the only thing is, I want to have a little bit of my cleavage out, but I'm scared to ask my mom. If I do ask her she might say no. So before I get my outfit made, I gotta go over it with my mom.

As for increased impulse control, another girl decided to control her anger and not fight a friend to avoid possibly being arrested.

Development of the emotional self also includes seeking emotional health and security and establishing relationships with adults other than parents/guardians. A number of the participants sought methods of protecting themselves from emotional harm or struggling to heal after an emotional setback. For example, students wrote in their activity logs, “Who should I talk to when I’m mad?” In interviews, many of the teens explained that they actively seek adult mentors who can guide them in their lives, especially in the areas of employment, career, and health information. One young woman periodically visited her physician to discuss issues relating to sexuality; a young man sought out his minister for advice on a number of life issues, and so on.

The Reflective Self

While I was getting dressed, I turned on the TV and I saw Operation Iraqi Freedom. And while I was watching it, it [showed] Saddam Hussein’s statue being dropped down, and how the Iraqis—how the Iraqis started to try to break it. And that’s—that was a symbol of their freedom. And that made me start to think about our freedom. About Black people's freedom—Charles, age 16

The reflective self also refers to a teen's inner world, but differs from the emotional self in that the focus is more introspective. It involves questioning one's self-identity, one's personal beliefs about the world, and one's place in the world.

It includes:
- developing a personal sense of identity;
- establishing adult vocational goals;
- adopting a personal value system;
- developing a sense of civic duty;
- establishing a cultural identity; and
- questioning how the world works.

Many of the information needs that fell into this category were philosophical in nature and did not have concrete answers. For example, in her audio journal one teen asked, “Why can't I say who invented diseases? Why do people get sick? Why are so many people dying?”

The Physical Self

At my school there are some safe havens, like some quiet places [where] nothing goes on: the office, the counselor's office, and the library. Other than that everywhere else is a wild zone. That's why I spend most of my [free] time at the library, looking up books or on the Internet, even if I'm just surfing the Web.—Sonya, age 15

With the physical self, the focus returns to the external world and issues such as personal safety, daily life routines, finances, health, and job responsibilities. Specifically, development of the physical self includes:
- adjusting to a new physical sense of self;
- developing physical self-sufficiency; and
- seeking physical safety and security.

The need for these teens to be self-sufficient was evident in all of the data collected. They were responsible for getting themselves to school and to work using the public transportation system. In many cases, adults relied on them to make dinner for the family, or at least to get it started. A few of them even talked about shopping for groceries and needing to read circulars from the newspaper to find the best prices. Most of them were also responsible for managing their cell phone accounts—negotiating the plans as well as paying the bills.

Concerns about physical safety were also common. As the quote above demonstrates, even schools were not safe. Fights were an almost daily occurrence and often spread from individuals to whole groups of teens. One young woman, for example, related this story:

After school, my charter school got into a big fight with Ben Franklin High School. I was talking to my cousin and the next thing you know I see, like, eighty people came running across the street to my school. I thought back to Friday and I remember when two boys were fighting from my school. The two boys won, but then they came back with more people and we got beat down, not
The Creative Self

It’s Tuesday afternoon. Me and my friend are wondering where we can get some recording studio time, ’cause we’re trying to write—trying to make a demo or CD to get it out there so people will start—so we can look at some contracts or something. So we could get signed to a record label or something. So I think we should listen to the radio and get a phone number and ask them, call them, do they know anything about it.—Eric, age 14

The creative self refers to fulfillment of aesthetic needs. Two tasks are involved in developing the creative self: expressing artistic preferences, which involves the forming of a creative product or act, and expressing aesthetic preferences, which involves the judgment of or appreciation of a creative work.

Most of the needs in this category involved expressing aesthetic preferences through the consumption of creative works, such as listening to music or watching a dance performance. Only two of the teens seemed to be involved in the formation of creative products—Eric, from the above quote, and Jane, who wanted to locate a studio where she could study dance.

The Cognitive Self

I have a five-page term paper due on Down’s Syndrome and sickle cell anemia for 3rd marking period. I researched for my paper on three different days. . . . I know someone with sickle cell anemia so I interviewed her and asked her questions about her life and how she grew up. And then I combined what she said with the information I got off the Internet for Down’s Syndrome. I looked on the Internet and encyclopedia.—Sonya, age 15

The cognitive self refers to intellectual processing and navigation of the physical world. The development of the cognitive self includes:

- adjusting to new intellectual abilities;
- adjusting to increased cognitive demands at school;
- expanding verbal skills; and
- understanding the physical world.

The participants dealt with information relating to three areas of the development of the cognitive self: academics, school culture, and current events. The term academics refers to the various scholastic disciplines, such as biology or history. Some of participants’ information behaviors in this category were related to school, while others involved satisfying personal curiosity. School culture entails understanding or questioning the rules, norms, customs, and methods of school operations. For example, one participant wondered, “Why must children attend school?” and “What is the purpose of taking tests?” The participants showed varying levels of curiosity about current events. Most of the interest focused on the Iraq war, which was just beginning at the commencement of this study.

The Sexual Self

I was trying to figure out how I was going to get to this center . . . for transgender, bi/gay youth. . . . So I looked in the PGM (Philadelphia Gay Magazine). That gave me the information . . . the phone number and stuff like that if I want to call.—Natasha, age 15

The sexual self refers to understanding issues involved with sexuality, from personal sexual identity to sexual health and practices. The tasks related to the development of the sexual self are: learning to manage his or her sexuality and learning to recognize and accept his or her sexuality.

Many of the participants expressed worries about contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Several even related stories of friends who continued to engage in risky behavior despite warnings about possible health risks. There was one teenager who was struggling to understand whether she was bisexual. She engaged in a number of related information behaviors, primarily searching for an objective adult who she could talk with about her concerns.

The Empirical Model: Moving from the Theoretical to the Practical

The theoretical model includes abstract areas of urban teen development. While an understanding of these seven areas can help young adult librarians better understand the changes and major issues with which teen patrons are grappling, it is also helpful to understand the specific kinds of information that teens need when dealing with these issues. Figure 3 presents the empirical model that emerged from this
research. In this model, the twenty-eight needs topics identified during study are shown as they relate to the seven areas of urban-teen development.

Implications for Young Adult Library Services
Both the theoretical and empirical models clearly demonstrate that the essence of these urban teens’ everyday life information seeking (ELIS) is the gathering of information to facilitate their teen-to-adult maturation process. For them, ELIS is self-exploration and world exploration that helps them understand the world and their place in it, as well as helping them to understand themselves now and to understand who they aspire to be in the future. So what does this mean for library services?

Recommendation 1
The developmental needs of urban teens must drive the selection of resources and the development of library services for them (figure 2).

While many libraries recognize the potential to support the development of urban youth, others continue to focus mainly on such traditional areas as homework help and leisure reading. This is especially true for school libraries, yet these two categories represent only a fraction of the needs expressed by the teens in this study. Figure 3 can be used as a checklist by librarians to evaluate the library’s current level of support for each developmental need and each specific needs topic, as well as develop a plan for future services.

Recommendation 2
Educate the board and all staff, not just librarians, about the developmental needs of urban teens. It is important that everyone understands that the library’s goal is to support the teen-to-adult maturation process; all staff need to be aware of the important role they can play in this process. For example, the board might review its mission and policies to ensure that the library emphasizes its role in youth development. Guards might reexamine their interactions with teens, developing ways of setting high expectations and encouraging reasonable behavior without turning teens away.

Recommendation 3
Libraries should involve urban teens in planning and implementing services designed for the latter. This study shows that urban teens can provide rich data. Although participants expressed little interest in schoolwork or other academic pursuits, most of them expressed great interest in participating in the study, saying that they were excited that adults were interested in hearing their thoughts and opinions. In fact, twenty-five of the twenty-seven teens ended their audio journals either by thanking the team for allowing them to participate or by saying they hoped their contributions would prove useful. Again, figure 3 can be used as a basis for beginning a conversation with teens about how the library might more effectively meet their needs.

Recommendation 4
As the library sets priorities and establishes goals, it should work with community partners to develop strategies for addressing urban teens’ developmental needs. The teens in this study talked about adults in their community—ministers, physicians, Boys and Girls Club counselors—who served as mentors for them. Build on these relationships. As the Urban Libraries Council points out, to effectively support young people’s development, libraries must work collaboratively with their community partners. Libraries can act as hubs for community information and resource referrals. They can provide a safe place for teens to confidentially access information about subjects such...
as sexual health, but they cannot be providers of basic social services.  

**Recommendation 5**

Establish personal relationships with urban teens and their families. Whenever possible, these teens consulted *people* as favored sources of information, turning first to friends and family to fulfill their information needs. They decided which people to consult based on established human relationships, question topics, and location of the information seeking. Librarians need to become part of the teens’ network of trusted adults to effectively address and meet teenagers’ needs. Families, too, are important for librarians to get to know, because it may well be a family member who turns to the library for information that is then shared with the teen.

**Recommendation 6**

Do a better job of marketing your services to urban teens. Consider the following quote:

> I really hate having arguments with my mom, but I’m a teenager. You’re going to have arguments with your parents. So I just been thinking about some hotlines I can call, maybe like a Boys and Girls Club kind of hotline. I think that’s what it’s called, to call to ask them, you know, give me some advice or something, on how to deal with arguments with your mom or dad. . . . From what the commercials say, I guess they can help you out in those kinds of situations.

This quote from a Free Library of Philadelphia user, not a Boys and Girls Club member, shows that advertising works. Librarians need to advertise their services in popular mainstream media outlets to spread the message that they can support the wide range of teens’ ELIS needs, not just their school-related and leisure-reading needs.

**Conclusion**

This is my last day of recording, and I just thought this experience was great. . . . This made me realize how many questions do come up in a teenager’s life, especially my life. A lot of them [weren’t] that important, but it is things that I need to know, and I still have more questions. . . . Peace.—Lamont, age 16

The findings of this study serve to remind librarians that urban teens have information needs that far

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Urban Teen Development</th>
<th>Information-Needs Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>social self</td>
<td>friend/peer/romantic relationships, social activities, popular culture, fashion, social/legal norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional self</td>
<td>familial relationships, emotional safety, religious practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflective self</td>
<td>self-image, philosophical concerns, heritage/cultural identity, civic duty, college, career, self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical self</td>
<td>daily life routine, physical safety, goods and services, personal finances, health, job responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative self</td>
<td>creative performance, creative consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive self</td>
<td>academics, school culture, current events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexual self</td>
<td>sexual safety, sexual identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. Urban Teens’ Information-Needs Topics**
exceed homework help and leisure-reading support. Public libraries can and should become students’ first source for information to support their social, emotional, reflective, physical, creative, cognitive, and sexual development. In this way, librarians can help to ease some of the difficulties of the often tumultuous teen-to-adult transition period.

References and Notes

5. Ibid.
The Library Balanced Scorecard
Is It in Your Future?

Author’s note: The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded funds for a Library Balanced Scorecard Project to the Carlsbad (Calif.) City Library. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this article do not necessarily represent those of IMLS.

Primarily for historical reasons, the vast majority of public libraries collect a plethora of performance measures and statistical information. Some of these measures are reported to the library’s stakeholders, some are used to complete ad hoc surveys or annual surveys required by the state library, and sadly, many are gathered but then ignored.

The goal of the Library Balanced Scorecard (LBS) is to assist the public library in determining what performance measures and metrics are important within a broader context of strategic planning and management. These important measures should focus on what defines the success of your library and show the difference it makes in your customers’ lives. LBS provides a framework for assessing the library’s performance and communicating the value of the public library to its community of stakeholders.

The scorecard approach is well suited to complement the planning process detailed in Planning for Results. However, it is not a requirement that a library complete the processes outlined in Planning for Results prior to developing its own scorecard.

Origins of the Balanced Scorecard
Robert Kaplan, a Harvard accounting professor, and David Norton, a consultant, collaborated on a project to develop a set of performance measures that would complement the heavily weighted financial measures found in almost all company annual reports. Financial measures by their very nature are backward-looking or lagging measures and reflect results of the prior month, previous quarter, or past year. The result of this project was development of the balanced scorecard.
The performance measures selected for the balanced scorecard should reflect the vision and strategies of the organization and include four perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes, and innovation and learning (sometimes called organizational readiness, learning, and growth or potentials). Within each perspective, three to five measures are chosen to reflect the strategic goals and vision of the organization. The balanced scorecard is shown in graphic form in figure 1.3 Originally developed to fit the needs of for-profit companies, the balanced scorecard has been successfully adapted by many governments and nonprofit organizations.

As shown in figure 2, the balanced scorecard is read from the bottom to the top. In effect, the scorecard requires the organization to create a cause-and-effect relationship between the perspectives. For example, if a company invests in additional training for its staff and provides the necessary information technology (IT) infrastructure (the organizational readiness perspective), then the staff members will be better able to develop improvements in procedures and processes (the internal processes perspective) and thus work more productively. The staff will also be better able to respond to customer needs and requests that will lead to more satisfied customers (the customer perspective), which in turn will lead to higher revenues and better profits (the financial perspective).

The four perspectives are designed to balance:

- the financial and non-financial;
- the internal and external; and
- current performance with the future.

Once an organization can clearly articulate its strategy, it should create a strategy map, a graphic method for showing how its strategy is reflected in each perspective. The organization then selects performance measures to reflect the chosen strategies; it should also identify both short- and long-term targets for each measure. The balanced scorecard requires collection of data for each measure (data may be collected by an automated system as the result of each transaction, or sampled periodically), and the scorecard typically should be updated on a quarterly basis.

**The Organizational Readiness Perspective**

This perspective, sometimes called learning and growth, innovation and learning, or potentials, is designed to assess the organization’s ability to compete in the future. The organization may assess the skills of its employees to determine if the right mix and depth of skills are present to meet the changing demands of the future.
competitive environment. IT readiness assessment is designed to ensure the IT network and software applications meet the needs of the organization today and into the future. The organization may also wish to determine whether its organizational culture will support change and action as reflected in such measures as employee morale and staff turnover rate.

This perspective attempts to answer the following type of questions:

- Are staff members equipped with the right skills to deliver quality services?
- Are new technologies being tracked so that skills likely needed in the future are being identified?
- Do staff members possess the proper tools and training to perform their jobs in an excellent manner?
- Is the organization’s IT infrastructure (local-area network, link to the Internet, and application software) adequate to meet the needs of the library today and into the near-term future?
- Are the morale and motivation of library staff members high?
- Does the organization have a culture that is willing to carefully and systematically assess the quality of services currently being delivered?

The Internal Process Perspective

The goal of the internal process perspective is to understand the processes and activities critical to enabling the library to satisfy the needs of its customers and add value in their eyes. In developing its balanced scorecard, the library should be identifying and implementing strategies that allow it to offer distinctive and sustainable competitive advantages.

Costs, quality, throughput, productivity, and time measures are usually included in this perspective (figure 3). Quality-improvement initiatives attempt to monitor and improve existing library practices and processes by streamlining workflows and eliminating nonvalue-added work. Nonvalue-added work is tasks that may be done for some time but do little to improve access to the collection, such as catalogers penciling in the first three characters of the author’s name for the fiction call number.

In developing its own scorecard, the library may identify new services and processes at which it must excel in order to meet customer expectations and changing conditions of the marketplace.

While the library may focus on the continuous improvement of existing internal processes and procedures, it may decide that it needs a radical
process reengineering such as advocated by Michael Hammer and James Champy. The focal point of process reengineering is not efficiency (although efficiency will most likely be improved), but rather effectiveness: discovering what will add value for the customer. In a majority of process reengineering projects, tools such as activity modeling, data modeling, statistical quality-control techniques, activity-based costing, and cost-benefit analysis can be used to help achieve breakthrough results.

The Customer Perspective
For any organization, the heart of its business strategy is the customer-value proposition that allows the organization to differentiate itself from competitors. The performance measures or indicators chosen for this perspective show the extent to which the company is serving its potential market (market share) and how well the customers’ needs are met by the product or service being delivered (customer-satisfaction measures).

Customers generally evaluate a product or service by considering three discrete categories of benefits: product or service attributes, a relationship, or its own image.

Possible product or service attributes of interest to a customer are:

- **Availability.** Does the organization have the product or service when requested by the customer? For a library, this translates into determining whether the desired item is on the shelf or if the service can be delivered. For a library, an availability study or fill-rate survey is generally used to determine how often the library is able to provide the desired item.

- **Selection.** Some companies compete by providing a wide variety of product or service choices (for example, Nordstrom in the retail sector) while others offer fewer choices and compete using other service attributes.

- **Quality.** Some companies compete in the marketplace on the basis of high quality (for example, Mercedes or Lexus in the automobile sector). It is important to note, however, that a great many organizations have been spending considerable time and energy in quality-improvement projects so that high quality is now often an assumption made by customers.

- **Functionality.** Some companies find that providing a greater amount of product functionality—for example, a software application—will differentiate them from their competitors. The challenge for those that wish to compete by using functionality is that the bar is constantly being raised, and what is currently superior functionality becomes the minimum standard in a year or two.

- **Time.** Assuming the customer decides to physically visit the library, the time and energy required to retrieve the desired material or receive the desired service may be considerable. The customer may also need to wait in a line for assistance or to receive services. Ultimately, the customer determines whether the effort involved exceeds the likely value of the information or materials being sought. The determination of customer value versus effort in a library setting has been formalized as Mooers’ Law, which states: “An information retrieval system will tend not to be used whenever it is more painful and troublesome for a customer to have information than for him not to have it.”

- **Price.** The customer incurs a cost to fulfill an information need, even if the materials or information service is free, as in a public library. Given the low price of using the tax-supported public library, an important question to consider is why more citizens are not using the library. While it is obvious that the answer involves a number of factors, competition is clearly one of the more important concerns.

The relationship that exists between the customer and an organization can be manifest in one of two ways:

- **Service.** The service provided by an organization to its customers may be one of the most important differentiating factors in the customer-value proposition. For example, some of the higher-priced four- and five-star hotels maintain an extensive customer profile so that customer preferences are anticipated and provided without any action on the part of the guest. The goal is to develop a level of customer intimacy such that the customer would never consider staying at a different hotel. The customers are willing to share more and more information about themselves with the hotel because their stay will be more relaxing and refreshing. Some people in marketing circles call this willingness of customers to divulge increasing amounts of personal information an opt-in personalization service.
Partnerships. An organization may develop a vital and important relationship with one or more of its customers. This relationship is sometimes taken beyond the normal supplier relationship when both the organization and customers can foresee developing a win-win relationship.

And finally, an organization can define its customer-value proposition using its image or brand name. Some brand names have a lot of value and are quite old (consider Coca-Cola or Pepsi), while other valuable brands have relatively recent origins (for example, Google or Amazon.com).

Rethinking and modernizing branding can be useful for an organization as well. For example, the library district in London’s East End decided to close seven traditional branch public libraries and replace them with seven radically new “Idea Stores.” The library district saw the transition as an attempt to change the general perception of the library as a quaint, outdated, and obsolete institution to one that is vibrant, relevant, and hip.6

The Financial Perspective
The bottom line for any for-profit company is to choose a set of strategies that deliver long-term shareholder value by increasing the growth of revenues (and profits) as well as increasing its overall productivity—that is, improving its asset utilization. Thus, in a company's annual report you will see the presentation of information about market share, revenue growth, profitability, and so forth.

A public library can use the financial perspective to assess the amount of local support for the library using a variety of measures such as budget per capita, growth in budget compared to inflation, a share-of-the-pie measure, and so forth.

Integrating the Perspectives
The power of the balanced scorecard is that it allows the organization to focus on identifying the impact of its strategies using each of the perspectives. That is, using a logic model, the company is able to formulate a cause-and-effect relationship between the perspectives.

For example, consider the normal balanced scorecard, as shown in figure 4. Four broad assumptions about the interrelationships are hypothesized in a general cause-and-effect scorecard.

The strength of the scorecard is demonstrated by its balance—showing how well you have been doing (lagging indicators), how well you are doing (current indicators), and can expect to do in the future (leading indicators). Using a balanced scorecard will assist an organization in focusing on the factors that create long-term value for its customers.

Research has validated the underlying structure of the scorecard. For example:

- increased employee satisfaction leads to higher performance;
- service quality is correlated significantly with customer satisfaction; and
- rework and waste significantly affect performance.7

Experiences in Using the Balanced Scorecard
Due to its flexibility, many companies, whether small or large and in almost every sector of the economy, have used the balanced scorecard quite successfully. The scorecard's framework provides the necessary structure, but the detail can be tailored to fit the needs of any organization. The results of introducing

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**Figure 4. Cause-and-Effect Relationships**

| Increased customer satisfaction will lead to better financial results |
| Improved work processes will lead to increased customer satisfaction |
| Skilled, motivated staff members will improve the way they work |
| Knowledge and the skills of staff members are the foundations of all innovation and improvements |

---
and using the balanced scorecard can often be quite dramatic and generate very positive results.

The use of a scorecard is not a one-time event but rather must be integrated into the fabric of the organization so that it influences how people perform their jobs on a daily basis. The scorecard’s popularity is attested to, in part, by the fact that the Balanced Scorecard Technology Council has more than ten thousand members.\(^8\)

Organizations are using the scorecard to:

- clarify, update, and communicate strategy;
- link strategic objectives to performance measures with associated long-term targets;
- broaden management’s focus on issues that affect sustainable long-term performance;
- provide a focus for continuous process improvement efforts and quality-enhancement initiatives;
- identify and align strategic initiatives;
- identify critical employee competencies;
- learn about those capabilities critical to realizing strategic intent; and
- demonstrate accountability.

One of the primary reasons for the balanced scorecard’s success is that it assists an organization in translating its vision and strategies into concrete actions by its staff. In short, selecting the correct performance measures will show how well the organization is doing in terms of implementing its strategy. When used in this way, the scorecard becomes a strategic management tool rather than simply a new format for monitoring performance.

Strategic management is a system’s approach to identifying and making necessary changes and measuring the organization’s performance as it moves toward its vision. Rather than merely a collection of performance measures or a wish list for continuous improvement, the scorecard prescribes a plan for strategic execution.

The balanced scorecard assists the organization in answering two very fundamental questions:

- What do we want to achieve and what must we do to achieve it?
- Are we doing what we set out to do?

Organizations that have successfully adopted the scorecard concept have found that:

- It is important to recognize that developing and implementing a scorecard is an ongoing and iterative process and not a one-shot project.

- The scorecard becomes the central focus for management meetings, and the perspectives are often used as a means of focusing the agenda of meetings.

The use of multidimensional perspectives found in the balanced scorecard will change the focus of the library’s performance—\(\text{away}\) from past performance and \(\text{toward}\) what the library seeks to become.

The Library Balanced Scorecard

Nonprofit and government organizations have adjusted the sequence of the perspectives and added one or more perspectives. A general purpose Library Balanced Scorecard (LBS) is shown in figure 5. A new perspective called information resources is included, because the library’s physical collection and provision of access to electronic resources are the raison d’être of the public library.

After selecting three to four performance measures for each perspective, the library then selects improvement targets for each measure. In some cases, the library may decide that staff members need to participate in improvement projects or initiatives to achieve the desired targets.

![Figure 5. The Library Balanced Scorecard](image-url)
Other scorecard models have been suggested, but none of these approaches have achieved anywhere near the popularity of the balanced scorecard.  

The LBS Project
The other participating project libraries, all located in California, are Cerritos Public Library, Chula Vista Public Library, and Newport Beach Public Library. The LBS Project has two phases. Phase One activities involve working with the four project libraries to develop their own LBS. In addition, a workbook detailing the process that any public library may follow to develop its own scorecard has been prepared and can be downloaded from the project’s Web site, www.ci.carlsbad.ca.us/imls.  

Phase Two involves a number of large and small public libraries from across the United States testing the workbook by developing their own LBS. This phase began in September 2005, and each participating library developed and updated their scorecards. In summer 2006, a survey was distributed to the stakeholders of these libraries to determine their assessment of the value and utility of LBS.  

Libraries interested in participating in or learning more about LBS are encouraged to visit the project Web site or send an e-mail to the project consultant, Joe Matthews (joe@joematthews.org).  

References and Notes
2. The Balanced Scorecard was first introduced in a January 1992 Harvard Business Review article. A whole series of articles by Kaplan and Norton followed over the succeeding years further expanding and explaining the scorecard concepts.  
“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 Whole Library Handbook 4


The Whole Library Handbook 4 is the indisputable World Almanac of the library profession in ten chapters. It’s even more readable and entertaining than the always helpful Bowker Annual (R. R. Bowker). Edited by George M. Eberhart, senior editor of American Libraries, this collection includes reprints of excerpts from other books and articles. Chock full of statistics, advice, and curiosa about the library community, this latest version includes sixteen more pages than its previous one.

The compiler notes that significant developments have transpired since The Whole Library Handbook 3 appeared six years ago. Back then, he explains that blogging had not become all the rage, 24/7 virtual reference services hadn’t proliferated and the USA PATRIOT Act did not vex intellectual-freedom warriors. Despite these technological and political changes, The Whole Library Handbook 4 retains its singular focus on library professionals, library operations, library marketing, library technology, and core library issues (such as patron behavior, intellectual property, and information literacy), and more.

By far, one of the most entertaining chapters is chapter 10, titled “Librariana.” It begins with a lesson on how to say the word “library” in 131 different languages. Other highlights of this chapter include library quotations as well as a piece on “Libraries and Librarians in Film, 1999–2005” (533).

In sum, this book is timely, humorous, and informative. Everyone who plans to enter this profession would do well to own a copy. Those who are entrenched in the field will benefit from it, too.—C. Brian Smith, Reference/Electronic Resources Librarian, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library.

Negotiating Licences for Digital Resources


My education in library science—as solid as it was—did not prepare me to work with information vendors, scrutinize legal documents, and haggle for online wares. I’ve learned about this process in the heat of the flames (I have burn marks as proof). How I could have

If you are interested in reviewing or submitting materials for “By the Book,” contact the contributing editor, JULIE ELLIOTT, Assistant Librarian, Reference/Coordinator of Public Relations and Outreach, Indiana University South Bend, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., PO Box 7111, South Bend, IN 46634-7111; jmfelli@iusb.edu.

Julie is currently reading Miami Blues by Charles Willeford.
used Negotiating Licences for Digital Resources as my primer for securing the best deals for online subscriptions. (I will no doubt consult it now as a reference tool.)

Written by Fiona Durrant, a knowledge manager, this guidebook offers sage advice on navigating the complexities of providing digital content to patrons, end users, customers, and others. The author leaves no stone unturned in her five chapters, which walk the reader through determining an organization’s information needs, researching and testing appropriate products, analyzing contracts, and, most important, negotiating. “Sustainable negotiation has the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement,” explains Durrant. “It is not about one side taking advantage of the other” (xiv).

One of the most informative chapters is chapter 1 (“Preparation”); it discusses negotiation outcomes. Durrant advises negotiators to forecast a few scenarios—such as Most Favoured Position (MFP), Walk Away Position (WAP), and Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). Equally interesting is chapter 3 (“Negotiation”), which highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the following negotiation media: e-mail, telephone, letters, and face-to-face meetings. What’s more, the author provides a tutorial on the “language of negotiation” and offers helpful tips on how to decipher body language in the cauldron of the meeting room.

This guide has a distinctly British flavor. Translation: all references to currency are in pounds, not dollars. Next, the bibliography includes excellent sources on negotiating (such as Getting to Yes) and body language. Last, the book includes three appendices, which feature the following: frequently asked questions, a negotiation timeline, and a log to document one’s personal negotiation experience.

In sum, Negotiating Licences for Digital Resources is required reading for public librarians and any information professional (administrator, information technology worker, trainer, lawyer, librarian, and so on) who plays a role in the online subscription process. It is chock full of charts, diagrams, checklists, and real-world examples that will benefit tyros and veterans alike. Library science educators would do well to assign this book for reading in an elective on negotiating digital content, too. —C. Brian Smith, Reference/Electronic Resources Librarian, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library

Classic Connections: Turning Teens on to Great Literature


This work, one in the series of Libraries Unlimited Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians, is a valuable guide for both the public and school librarians. Its goal is to bring enjoyable classic reading experiences to young adults. Librarians, educators, as well as other professionals who work with teens will find numerous tips and techniques for making meaningful connections between teens and classics. How to meet the challenge and make the connection is what the author intends to accomplish in this book.

Koelling, an experienced young adult librarian, lays down the foundations first and then provides a step-by-step guide for working with teens. Part 1 of the book explains the benefits of classics reading, the importance of understanding teens as growing individuals and readers, and also the needs of librarians themselves to know classics. In Part 2, she offers tips and techniques for developing and maintaining a classics collection, displaying books, giving booktalks, conducting readers’ theater, offering readers’ advisory, and gaining access to teens in schools. The flow of thought in developing the book chapters and organizing them seems flawless, which enables readers to follow the work easily. Yet, seasoned professionals can still pick and choose the particular areas they want to freshen up and strengthen.

A unique and useful feature of the book is its rich resources, including abundant booklists, provided throughout the text and at the end of book chapters as well as in the appendixes. The appendixes contain annotated lists of free full-text classics available online with resources about classics in general. Although the booklists contain mostly American classics, they also include some worldwide literature both past and present. The lists of short classics should be welcome by reluctant teens when they need one for assignment. Classics are by no means limited to novels only; instead, they encompass a wide range of literature—poems, dramas, biographies, histories, and philosophies. Contemporary young adult literature, nevertheless, is not addressed, although a number of outstanding and enduring works, such as The Pigman (by Paul Zindel, Harper & Row, 1968) and The Outsiders (by S. E. Hinton, Viking, 1967), are found in the lists.

The book gives a variety of reading motivational techniques for librarians or teachers to work with young adults in reading classics. The techniques discussed can also be utilized to motivate students in general reading. The book is filled with practical sugges-
tions and examples for librarians. It is well researched, organized, and written with a sense of humor. All in all, this is a great resource that librarians and teachers should own and refer to from time to time.—Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty, GLIS Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.

**Fundamentals of Children's Services**


“Children's services drive libraries,” claims Michael Sullivan in Fundamentals of Children's Services (1). He presents statistics to make his case: Thirty-seven percent of library users are under the age of twelve, and they make-up close to the same percent of circulation. “By focusing on children’s services,” he reasons, “a public library becomes more efficient and more effective—to the benefit of the whole library”(2).

Sullivan seems to suggest that as the driving force of libraries, children's services need to consider the entire library organization to function effectively. As Sullivan puts it, “children’s specialists should concern themselves with any aspect of the library that affects children, whether it traditionally falls within their realm” (3). Fundamentals of Children's Services includes step-by-step directions for everything from placing a book order to writing a press release.

I found the cursory coverage of gift policies, mission statements, weeding, and writing press releases distracting. While children's librarians may need to perform these tasks, these tasks are by no means unique to children's services. This book's greatest usefulness is found in sections where Sullivan draws on his experience and speaks directly about children's services. A beginner's guide on how to tell a story and tips on how to manage after-school traffic are highlights of the book. Sullivan offers a good discussion of readers' advisory for parents versus readers' advisory for children themselves.

Of the chapters focused on topics usually not associated with children's services, the most successful is on continued on page 79
New WorldCat Selection Service to Streamline Selection Process

www.oclc.org/selection

OCLC is working with Cornell University Library to develop a new service that will streamline the selection and ordering process for new library materials and the delivery of corresponding WorldCat records.

The WorldCat Selection service will allow selectors of new library materials to view records from multiple materials vendors in one central, comprehensive system. Libraries will be able to get WorldCat records for newly purchased materials into their integrated library system early in the technical services process, and the library’s holding symbol will be automatically set on the WorldCat records for the materials.

The WorldCat Selection service automates the middle part of the acquisition workflow—the selection process. Librarians still “select” materials, but the need for sending items via paper slips or selecting items in multiple vendor systems is eliminated with WorldCat Selection. Acquisitions staff automatically load WorldCat MARC records into the integrated library system, eliminating the need to rekey data or import data from multiple sources.

WorldCat Selection is being developed in partnership with Cornell University Library and is based on software known as the Integrated Tool for Selection and Ordering at Cornell University Library.

Howard County Library Reimagines Online Library Experience

www.TLcdelivers.com

Howard County Library (HCL), Maryland, will integrate book purchasing, Overdrive e-resources, library-selected Web content, and other content with its AquaBrowser Library OPAC.

HCL’s new integrated book purchasing capability (based on a cooperative relationship between HCL and SuperBookDeals.com) will give patrons an instant purchase option. When a patron searches in the library catalog, holdings from the library’s catalog and from SuperBookDeals.com’s title collection will display. If an item is available in the combined catalog, the patron will be able to place a hold, borrow the item, or simply purchase it. SuperBookDeals.com’s free shipping is an added convenience for patrons, who can pick up both their library items as well as their purchased items at their local branch library.

Patrons who want to immediately borrow a book or audiobook will be able to choose an integrated option to download e-books from Digital Library Reserve at Overdrive, Inc.
Completing HCL’s new online experience for patrons will be the AquaBrowser Library’s integration of additional local sources into the HCL catalog. AquaBrowser provides integrated indexing and searching of additional local database sources, including photo collections, news indexes, and community information files. The AquaBrowser-focused Web crawler will enable integrated searching of library-specified Web sites. These “best of Web” locations will be indexed and integrated with the library catalog.

Greenwood Premieres The African American Experience

www.greenwood.com

Greenwood’s new online collection, The African American Experience (AAE), is an easy to use research tool for African American history and culture with two primary goals: to provide solid information from authorities in the field, and to allow African Americans to speak for themselves through a wealth of primary sources. Drawing on more than three hundred titles and designed under the guidance of leading librarians, this database gives voice to the black experience from its African origins to the present day.

Topics covered in AAE include history, biography, literature, arts, music, pop culture, folklore, business, slavery, civil rights, politics, sports, education, science, and technology. The African American Experience includes:

- hundreds of primary documents: manuscripts, speeches, court cases, quotations, advertisements, statistics, and other papers;
- more than four thousand interviews with former slaves from the acclaimed The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography; and
- sixty-seven Negro University Press texts from the late 1700s to the early 1970s—classics in black scholarship.

Other features include:

- “In their Own Voices” audio clips, such as interviews with former slaves and music files;
- enhanced browse and search functionality, powered by an index of more than twelve thousand terms;
- links to vetted Web sites; and
- hundreds of photographs, maps, and other images.

New Self-playing Digital Audiobook Now Available to Public Libraries

www.playawaydigital.com
www.bwibooks.com

Follett and Findaway World have formed a strategic partnership that will allow distribution of the Playaway to K–12 schools and public libraries. Playaway is the first self-playing digital audiobook. Not an MP3 or CD player and not software, Playaway is the self-contained audio equivalent of a book, small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. Findaway currently has licensing agreements with several leading publishers and content owners, including HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster, Hachette, Penton Overseas, Brilliance Audio, Franklin Covey, Random House, and Recorded Books.

Follett Library Resources and BWI will partner with Findaway to distribute the Playaway to schools and public libraries. This distribution agreement marks the first of its kind for Findaway, which currently distributes direct-to-consumer.

ProQuest Provides Upgrade to All Public Library Historical Newspaper Subscribers

www.il.proquest.com

ProQuest Information and Learning announced plans to provide all public library ProQuest Historical Newspapers customers with Extra! Edition at no additional charge. Extra! Edition offers a new way of looking at Historical Newspapers, featuring the same powerful research capabilities along with a graphical interface and features especially relevant to public libraries.

Extra! Edition’s Timeline Topic Browse includes nearly 14,000 editorially selected articles from 5 newspapers, covering more than 320 topics and nearly 1,000 events in U.S. history since 1851. Extra! Edition features:

- advanced searching capabilities by article type, publication, date range, and more;
- a “What Happened On?” quick-search box that allows users to research a specific day in history, such as a birthday or anniversary;
- “Famous Dead People” highlights article-length tributes and retrospectives of the more than four hundred famous and influential people from the past fifty years; and
- “This Day in History” showcases a high-impact front page of a major...
AccessMyLibrary.com and OCLC Open WorldCat Now Linked

www.gale.com
www.oclc.org

Thomson Gale has a new partner in the AccessMyLibrary.com project—OCLC’s Open WorldCat program. The partnership between AccessMyLibrary.com, Thomson Gale’s library advocacy initiative, designed to increase the visibility of library content on the Internet and in search engines, and OCLC WorldCat, will enhance users’ search experiences in both platforms.

When a search is performed in AccessMyLibrary.com, a contextual link will direct the searcher to related material—books, serials, digital images, or other items—available in their library’s collection through the OCLC Open WorldCat program, which makes records of library-owned materials in OCLC’s WorldCat database available to Web users. Conversely, searches performed through the OCLC Open WorldCat program will link users back to full-text journal articles and e-Books found in AccessMyLibrary.com.

Polaris Hosted Offers Affordable Pricing and Worry-Free System Administration

www.polarislibrary.com

Lepper (Ohio) Public Library and Kearny (N.J.) Public Library are the latest libraries to sign up for Polaris Hosted. They join eight other libraries that are successfully running a remote version of the Polaris integrated library system. The recent addition of a twenty-four-hour, natural gas–powered generator ensures that the server running Polaris Hosted databases at Polaris Library Systems’ headquarters in Syracuse, New York, will not be affected by loss of electricity at the host site.

Designed to meet the needs of libraries with fewer than twenty simultaneous staff users and unlimited public users, Polaris Hosted allows small- to medium-sized libraries the opportunity to implement Polaris at a fraction of the price of a traditional upgrade.

With Polaris Hosted, libraries do not have to purchase a server because the system is operated and maintained at Polaris. Polaris staff handles routine maintenance, from cleaning of systems and tape drives, to daily backups, off-site archiving, monitoring of system health, and execution of daily processing tasks. Libraries do not have to install, manage, or maintain client workstations, so they can use their older PCs (Windows 98 or higher) or inexpensive thin clients to access the database hosted at Polaris.

Salemi Industries Launches the First Sound-Resistant Cell Phone Booth

www.thecellzone.net

Salemi Industries Inc., a provider of sound-resistant technology, announced the launch of The Cell Zone, the first commercially available, sound-resistant cell phone booth. Based on patent-pending technology, The Cell Zone enables libraries and other venues to offer consumers a quiet environment where they can place and receive phone calls without disturbing others. The Cell Zone helps establishments offer all patrons a better customer experience and discourages leaving an establishment to make or receive calls.

The Cell Zone’s design is based on acoustical technology and is built using several layers of acoustically sound material. It’s large enough for one person and is fitted with a motion-activated safe light for an environment conducive to placing and receiving private calls. It also features adjustable casters for easy relocation within a venue. All models are equipped with handicapped-accessible ramps and one is fully ADA-compliant.

Blackwell Book Services Unveils Series Manager

www.blackwell.com

Blackwell Book Services has unveiled the latest innovation in series management, Series Manager. Built for librarians, this convenient new system allows for the purchase, tracking, and updating of ever-growing series collections.

Series Manager is based on the framework of Collection Manager with the added depth of Blackwell’s extensive series database, containing more than 200,000 print and electronic titles, including more than 90,000 active titles, and 600 electronic titles. The addition of the title database allows for detailed searches using ISSN, Blackwell’s Series Number, and keywords for series title, author, publisher, and subject.

Beyond its extensive database, Series Manager gives librarians the ability to track standing orders, create new orders, get instant series details, view volume activity and billing history, as well as send claims, with the click of a mouse.
DVD and CD Security Solution for Libraries

www.3M.com/us/library

3M and AGI Polymatrix announced a strategic marketing alliance under which 3M will offer the unique Red Tag DVD and CD security solution to libraries. 3M Library Systems and AGI Polymatrix together will help the library industry address the protection and management of rapidly growing DVD and CD collections.

The Red Tag system is simple to implement and works in conjunction with standard DVD and CD cases. A red tag inserted into the media case locks the disk onto the case and locks the case closed. Only the special unlocking device can quickly and easily remove the red tag and free the disk for library customers. For maximum security, 3M electromagnetic strips and radio frequency identification tags can also be incorporated into the Red Tag system.

By the Book

cataloging. Such issues as how to organize a children's collection and how to choose subject headings that are meaningful to children help keep the chapter relevant and focused.

I would recommend this book to anyone just entering children's services and to anyone looking for an articulate argument for expanding or enriching a children's department. Sullivan makes a strong case for developing and funding a stellar children's services department. As he writes, "The quality of a community—and that community's pride—are usually tied up in the quality of life for its children" (8).—Ellen Moore, Youth Services, Peter White Public Library, Marquette, Mich.

The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books


This guide, like its previous versions, includes all award-winning titles and honor books from the inception of the Newbery Award in 1922 and the Caldecott Award in 1938 to the present year. The guide has been published since 1990 in similar format and coverage. It contains medal and honor books in reverse chronological order, with bibliographic information and brief annotations for all titles. The photos of the author, artist, and book covers of the winning titles are included only for Newbery and Caldecott medals of the current year. Librarians, teachers, and other professionals should find the book useful and convenient when searching a complete list of all winning titles, authors, and artists in what are considered the most prestigious two awards in children's literature.

In addition to award titles and honor books, the book also contains three articles. Janice M. Del Negro discusses whether children's literature is art or a tool in "Literature for Youth: A Means to the Endless." She also explores whether contemporary children's literature is too dark, as deemed by some. Another article lists the media used for Caldecott medal books and honor books. The information could be useful and interesting for artists, library professionals, or general readers. The article "Newbery and Caldecott Awards Authorization and Terms," appearing in every version since 1992, explains the establishment of the awards, selection process for winners, award criteria, and definitions of some terms.

The book is an excellent quick reference for brief information about Newbery- and Caldecott-winning titles, authors, or artists. However, for more substantial information, readers need to use other resources. Newbery & Caldecott Medal Books 1986–2000 (ALA, 2001), Newbery and Caldecott Medal Books 1966–1975 (Horn Book, 1975), and Newbery and Caldecott Medal Books 1956–1965 (Horn Book, 1965) provide very rich information such as book notes, book reviews, awards acceptance speeches, and biographical sketches written by other writers or family members. For library professionals or general readers, it is a real pleasure to read the aforementioned books, yielding rare insight into the works and lives of these distinguished Newbery authors and Caldecott artists.

In summary, the book is a concise and useful book for librarians, teachers, and other professionals to obtain brief information about Newbery and Caldecott winners and their works.—Shu-Hsien Chen, retired faculty, GLIS Queens College, Flushing, N.Y.
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