

# Library & Information Technology Association

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## LITA Annual Report

Submitted by Andrew K. Pace, LITA President

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### LITA's Mission

The Library and Information Technology Association continues its mission to educate, serve, and reach out to its members. That mission underlies a three-year strategic plan that ended this year amidst key changes to LITA committees, continued thriving of LITA interest groups, and the annual personnel changes to the makeup of the LITA Board of Directors. In the year leading up to the expiration of the strategic plan, LITA has embarked on several strategic thinking sessions meant to form the basis of a renewed strategy that will not only sustain the division, but propel it forward.

The effort to bring renewal to LITA began before the time covered by this annual report—the LITA Town Meeting in January 2008, focused on Communicating and Marketing the Strength of LITA. The brainstorming session focused on the List (Who?), Method (How?), and Message (What?) of LITA. Building on that done by previous presidents and boards, the LITA leadership saw an opportunity to not only rethink the strategic plan but to better empower LITA Committees and the membership to participate in this process. In addition, there remains an opportunity to define the role and status of the Board so that it will be strengthened and tasked with fulfilling any future strategic plan.

At the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the Board of Directors invited Committee chairs, LITA sponsored Emerging Leaders, and other interested parties to participate in another strategic thinking session that facilitated an excellent discussion on LITA's present and future situation. This work continues.

### The Year in Review

This year was no exception to LITA's continued strength in creating outstanding programming. From pre-conferences to un-conferences, LITA continues to draw talented keynoters, active participants, and members and non-members alike.

## Forum 2008

“Technology and Community: Building the Techno Community Library,” LITA’s 11<sup>th</sup> annual Forum took place in Cincinnati, OH in October 2008. The Forum was preceded by two excellent pre-conferences. The National Agriculture Library’s Grace Sines and Gary McCone led “Marketing the Value of the Library’s IT Department,” focusing on the IT department’s key role in business impact analysis, blueprinting infrastructure, and marketing. Andrew Nagy (Villanova University), Tim Daniels (Pines Program Manager), and Diana Weaver (Northeast Kansas Library System) led “Innovations in Next Generation Library Management Systems,” focusing on three interesting developments in open-source library applications and how they have changed and improved the library automation landscape.

The Forum itself was book-ended by provocative and thoughtful keynote addresses from LibraryThing’s Tim Spalding—“What is social cataloging and where is it going?”—and Syracuse University’s David Lankes—“Obligation of Leadership.” Attendees drew further inspiration from the middle keynote address from OCLC’s Michael Porter who presented the “Hi-Fi-Sci-Fi-Library: Technology, Convergence, Content, Community, Ubiquity and Library Futures.” The popular accompanying music video is available online at: <http://www.libraryman.com/blog/2008/08/23/hi-fi-sci-fi-library-back-story/>

## ALA Midwinter 2009

LITA kicked off a sunny mid-winter in Denver, Colorado with a workshop on “User Centered Design for Digital Projects,” led by Brenda Reeb. LITA President-elect Michelle Frisque led a thoughtful and engaging Town Meeting facilitated by R2 Consulting’s Matt Barnes. Continuing and building upon the strategic thinking sessions that began the previous year, LITA members participated in a conversation about LITA’s role in the larger information, association, community-building, and technology-related landscape. Participating organizations included Association for College & Research Libraries (ACRL) American Society for Information Sciences & Technology (ASIS&T), Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR), the Digital Library Federation (DLF), OCLC/Webjunction, Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) and TAIGA.

## LITA Camp

In the spring, Past President Mark Beatty convened the first ever LITA Camp. Based on the increasingly popular “Bar Camps,” this more impromptu and agenda-light un-conference was held at the OCLC Conference Center in Dublin, OH and boasted over 50 participants. The days included kick-off addresses from active LITA participants Joan Frye Williams and John Blyberg. Participants determined the topics and formats of the sessions, which included lightning talks on varied topics, “speed-geek”

sessions covering things like user experience and next-generation reference on-site, and several networking opportunities for all involved. The sessions were Tweeted by many participants, and the outcomes of the session were covered and made available on the LITA Camp wiki (<http://litacamp.pbwiki.com>) and blog( <http://litacamp.blogspot.com>).

## More to Come

LITA has more in store for 2009-2010, starting with ALA Annual in Chicago and culminating with some potential organizational changes that will be the fruits of the past 2 years' strategic thinking sessions, feedback, and planning.

### Annual 2009

LITA's ALA Annual will start in Chicago with two great pre-conferences. The first, led by Helene Blowers (Columbus Metropolitan Library), Michael Porter (OCLC), and Cindi Trainor (Eastern Kentucky University Libraries). "A Thousand Words: Taking Better Photos for Telling Stories in Your Library" is a hands-on workshop to learn the Who, What and Why of shooting, sharing and reusing your library photos to engage library users. Karen Coombs (University of Houston Libraries) will lead "Creating Library Web Services: Mashups and APIs"--del.icio.us subject guides, Flickr library displays, YouTube library orientation; with mashups and APIs making it easier to bring pieces of the web together with library data.

"Sunday Afternoon with LITA" will undoubtedly continue its success as one of ALA's most popular programming events. Starting with the Top Technology Trends Panel and its changing and growing list of "trendsters," and culminating with the LITA President's Program. This year, LITA hosts DOK Delft Public Library's popular "Shanachi Tour" leaders. Erik Boekesteijn will kick off the session to tell the story of the tour and the great programs and technology in use at his library. Bloggers and library enthusiasts Michael Stephens and Jenny Levine will serve as panel reactors to Erik's keynote address. All three authors, Erik Boekesteijn, Jaap van de Geer, Geert van den Boogaard, will be available to sign their book, ***ShanachieTour A Library Road Trip Across America.***

### Forum 2009

LITA's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual National Forum—"Open & Mobile"—will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah in October 2009. Combining two of the hottest trends not only in libraries, but in the online world generally, LITA will host three more fantastic keynoters. Joan K. Lippincott, Coalition for Networked Information, will present "Mobile Technologies, Mobile Users: Will Libraries Mobilize?" David Weinberger, author of *Everything is Miscellaneous*, will present "Knowledge in the Age of Abundance." Liz Lawley, Rochester Institute of Technology, will present "Technical/Tangible/Social." As always, the Forum is packed with great programming.

## **Communication, Innovation, and Organization**

LITA has continued its role in facilitating technical advancement for the Association, the division, and libraries at large. LITA's Interest Groups, an ad hoc group model that has been replicated by other ALA divisions, have been instrumental to LITA's nimble position within ALA. LITA remains heavily involved in ALA Website design, online collaboration, and testing new communication tools. LITA was instrumental in the testing and feedback of **ALA Connect** this year, and the LITA Board, Committees, and Interest Groups are now looking at ways to put the tools to work for the Division.

### LITA Interest Groups

One of LITA's greatest strengths is its grass-roots volunteerism. The ability to form, modify, and dismiss various interest groups with ease has led to several great LITA initiatives and discussions. BIGWIG helped bring LITA and ALA up to speed with blogs and wikis and continues its successful Technology Showcase. The Internet Resources and Services Group introduced the increasingly popular "Ultimate Debate" series. Other groups—including Distance Learning, ERM, JPEG2000, Next Generation Catalog, Open Source Systems, and Public Library Technology—indicate not only rapid changes in library technology, but also the changing makeup of the membership itself.

### LITA Task Forces

In 2009, LITA formed the Electronic Participation Implementation Taskforce to help ALA address the serious and complex issues of providing electronic participation for its membership. Building on the ad hoc success of its Interest Groups, combined with the more formal charges of LITA Committees, LITA is embracing this new Task Force model with gusto.

## **Committees**

In addition to acting with agility and alacrity, LITA remains committed to the organization structure set out in its By-laws. New committees have emerged to take on important ongoing roles of the organization. The Assessment and Research Committee continues its work to gather and assess the data that will make LITA a stronger division. Other committees, such as Publications, are addressing the makeup of their products and services given new tools and methods for communication. The Web Coordinating Committee continually addresses the form and format for LITA online communications. The Education Committee continues to search for appropriate content and formats to address the needs of the membership and libraries at large. A few other areas deserve special note below.

### Publications

Information Technology and Libraries (ITAL) remains a strong and branded publication of the division. On the other hand, the Publications Committee is seeing a decrease in monographic output, and its

Technology Electronic Reviews (TER) ceased in 2009. The Committee is addressing these challenges through change and adaptation.

## Mergers & Dissolutions

In 2007, LITA merged two committees—Regional Institutes and Education. In 2009, LITA continued to look for efficiency in organization by disbanding the Legislation & Regulation Committee. It's work was well covered by the Technology and Access Committee and often rendered superfluous by the activities of the ALA Washington office and the Office of Information Technology Policy. LITA maintains its active involvement with the OITP through a key liaison appointment.

## Awards

With the generous support of its sponsors, LITA continues to issue awards to both the biggest contributors to the profession and its newest members. Awards for 2009 include:

### [Hugh C. Atkinson Memorial Award](#)

Ray English

### [Frederick G. Kilgour Award for Research in Library and Information Technology](#)

William H. Mischo

### [LITA/Brett Butler Entrepreneurship Award](#)

John Blyberg

### [LITA/Ex Libris Student Writing Award](#)

T. Michael Silver

### [LITA/Library Hi Tech Award For Outstanding Communication for Continuing Education in Library and Information Science](#)

Meredith Farkas

### [LITA/Christian \(Chris\) Larew Memorial Scholarship in Library and Information Technology](#)

Nicholas Taylor

### [LITA/OCLC Minority Scholarship in Library and Information Technology](#)

Victoria Chu

### [LITA/LSSI Minority Scholarship in Library and Information Technology](#)

Diane Kay Doctor

## Committee Support

Finally, fulfilling its IT advisory role, LITA was able to suggest many enhancements to the online Committee appointment system. This system, which now benefits all Divisions, streamlines the appointment process for committees.

## **Membership & Finances**

Naturally, most of the changes and adaptations that LITA makes are done so to address the changing nature of the Division's membership and the makeup of ALA generally. Despite LITA's praise as a great division for professional networking, fun, and camaraderie, one result of the ubiquitous nature of technology in libraries and across divisions has been an overall 20% reduction in membership over the last decade. As ALA members address the difficult financial and time constraint issues of participating in divisions, it's worth noting that eighty percent of LITA's members are members of one or more other ALA Divisions. This presents a significant challenge for LITA as it refocuses on its mission, planning, and membership development.

Despite the onset of the global financial crisis in the last year, LITA remains financially sound. Prudent budgeting and reduction in costs due to changes in service offerings have allowed LITA to invest locally in new initiatives like the LITA Camp, while simultaneously supporting the ALA Endowment. Though dues have not been raised for five years, the LITA Board decided in 2009 that a dues increase amidst financial crisis would be unwise. The challenge in the coming years will be for LITA to continue to do more with the same resources. This will require careful assessment of products and services being offered, associated revenues, and the return on the investment of volunteer and staff activity.

## **Change**

Change is inevitable and its opposite is deadly in today's landscape. As such, the LITA Board and staff are fully engaged in exercises that will take the ALA, the Division, and libraries forward into the second decade of this century. LITA, which continues its position of esteem for the technological know-how of its membership, can now be lauded for its nimbleness and agility. Nevertheless, it is more clearly its model of adaptability that has contributed to LITA longevity. Whatever change may come LITA will be there.

## **Board and Staff**

### LITA Board of Directors

Andrew K. Pace, President

Michelle L. Frisque, Vice President

Mark A. Beatty, Past President

Mary Alice Ball, Director at Large

Mona C. Coutts, Director at Large

Colleen Cuddy, Director at Large

Susan Logue, Director at Large

Jonathan Rothman, Director at Large

Debra S. Shapiro, Director at Large

Lorre B. Smith, Director at Large

Colby Mariva Riggs, Councillor

Clara Ruttenberg, Parliamentarian

Mary Taylor, Executive Director

#### LITA Staff

Mary Taylor, Executive Director

Melissa Prentice, Programs and Marketing Specialist

Valerie Edmonds, Program Coordinator