

**Spring Executive Committee Meeting
April 17, 2013, via conference call**

Topic: Awards & Lists on Web Site

Background: In February 2012 YALSA began collecting email addresses from nonmembers who accessed YALSA’s booklists or book award information. At the same time, the web site was modified so that members logged in to view this same information. Refinements to the log in and email form were made since the initial change so that members and nonmembers only need to log in once or fill out the form once to get access to URLs they can bookmark and reuse in the future. Just prior to the announcement of the 2013 booklists and awards, YALSA staff removed the log in requirement, due to the fact that the ALA website typically experiences high volume and often outages due to increased use of the site during a focused timeframe. The Executive Committee discussed the status of the web site at their fall 2012 meeting and agreed to recommend to the board to allow the change to stay in place for one year, or until the marketing project was completed. After that time, the group would evaluate the change along with the recommendations from the marketing consultant and make a decision about how best to move forward.

Action Required: Discussion

Reasons for the Change

- Allows YALSA to share its other resources with non-members who might only be interested initially in our awards--helps us to promote our mission more holistically
- Helps YALSA build capacity:
 - Of the 16,000 email addresses we collected in spring 2012, 1,600 of those individuals requested follow up information about Advocacy, which is the single most important issue that members have asked us to address
 - Since the changes in Feb. we’ve collected over 7,000 email addresses of people who say their interested in membership and we sent a survey out to them in Sept. to get feedback on what their needs and interests are
- Supports YALSA’s strategic plan by encouraging member recruitment and creating a list of advocates to engage.
- Helps YALSA better understand who is using our website and why, primarily the non-members who use our resources, which can inform the marketing project that YALSA is currently undertaking.
- Organizations such as NTEN (The Nonprofit Technology Network) identify what YALSA is doing—collecting email addresses of those who support our cause—as a best practice for not-for-profits.

Primary Concerns from Members & Others

- View it as an intellectual freedom issue and say that access is blocked to the lists
- A privacy matter: people don't want to provide an email address
- Access within a library setting: people are unsure how best to provide access to the lists on public computers and at the reference desk
- Lack of knowledge about how the site works: many individuals were unaware they could bookmark the URLs to avoid future log-ins or repeated form completion
- Technical challenges: toggling back and forth between different awards or lists web pages wasn't always a smooth process for the user.

Relevant Findings & Recommendations from Marketing Project

- The consultant recommended creating a better balance between free/public offerings and Members-Only offerings in order to increase the perceived value of YALSA membership. Other strategies for increasing the perceived value of membership include:
 - More clearly defining what members get for the cost of membership
 - Enhancing members-only benefits
 - Providing a listserv free to members; others pay
 - Evaluating list of other free offerings to see what should become free to members; others pay
- The consultant saw a need to increase marketing efforts to sell more product to non-members, and recommended utilizing the emails gathered via the web site to publicize products and services for purchase.
- The survey to members indicated that the majority of respondents participated in YALSA mostly via usage of the booklists and book awards on the web site, and that members wanted to see improvements to the site

Web Site Statistics

2011 www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists:

- 39,217 total page views
- 25,442 unique page views
- Direct entrances (went directly to the url) 16,305

2012 www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists:

- 355,837 total page views
- 210,201 unique page views
- Direct entrances (went directly to the url) 84,017

The Nonmember form <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/books/nonmembers>:

- 96,714 total pages views (Feb. 6, 2012 – Jan. 27, 2013)
- 69,410 unique page views
- Direct entrances 2,514
- 44,024 completed the form
- 80% bounce rate

Questions to Consider

- Is this practice worth continuing? Is YALSA getting an adequate return on its investment?
- If the practice continues, how best to get the word out about how members and nonmembers can access the lists and how to improve the site so user access is more streamlined?
- Has members' perceived purpose of the lists changed? Committee charges state that the lists and awards are for librarians to use for readers' advisory and collection development. They are created to be tools for librarians, not resources for the general public.
- Is YALSA using the information we've collected via the email form strategically?
- Is the web management software for the ALA/YALSA site capable of streamlining the log-in process?
- Other?

Additional Resources

- Posts from Sarah Flowers about the site:
 - <http://ow.ly/eynbl>
 - <http://ow.ly/eyniH>