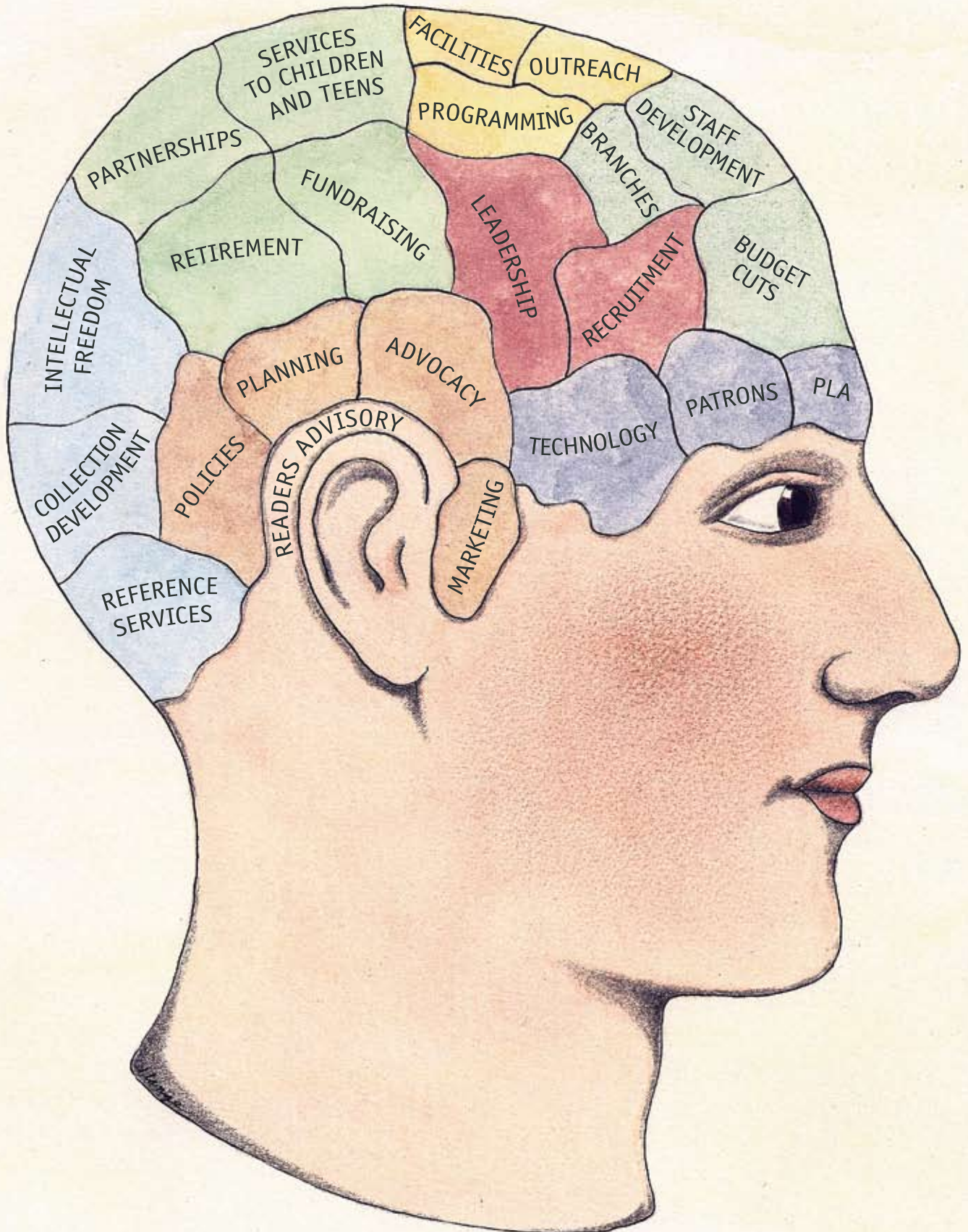


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PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 47 • NUMBER 5 • SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2008 • ISSN 0163-5506



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PUBLIC LIBRARIES (ISSN 0163-5506) is published bimonthly by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Public Library Association, a division of ALA. Subscription price: to members of PLA, \$25 a year, included in membership dues; to nonmembers: U.S. \$50; Canada \$60; all other countries \$60. Single copies, \$10. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Public Libraries*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Nonmember subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to *Public Libraries*, Subscription Department, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

ADVERTISING

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PRODUCTION

ALA PRODUCTION SERVICES: Troy D. Linker, Chris Keech, Tim Clifford, and Justine Wells.

MANUSCRIPTS

Unless otherwise noted, all submissions should be sent to Kathleen Hughes, Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; khughes@ala.org. See www.pla.org for submission instructions.

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING

Public Libraries is indexed in *Library Literature* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)*, in addition to a number of online services. Contents are abstracted in *Library and Information Science Abstracts*.

MICROFILM COPIES

Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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Editor's Note

Hello readers:

The country's current economic troubles are likely having some impact on your library and community. Is your public library helping your patrons cope with issues like foreclosures, job losses, and related concerns? Also, how has your library been impacted by these tough economic times? Share your story with the rest of the public library world! We welcome letters for Readers Respond, short essays for the Verso column, and longer feature articles. Contact me for submission instructions. In the meantime, enjoy this issue of *PL*, it's positively bursting with great ideas and informative columns and articles.

Kathleen M. Hughes, Editor (khughes@ala.org)

Kathleen is reading *The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher: A Shocking Murder and the Undoing of a Great Victorian Detective* by Kate Summerscale.

Readers Respond

Maintaining Privacy in Self-Service Holds

I am writing in response to the article entitled, "Self-Service Holds: A Violation of Library Patrons' Privacy," by Stacey L. Bowers, in the July/August 2008 issue of *Public Libraries*. I am empathetic to Bowers' concern of violations of privacy. However, at the Abington Township Public Library (just outside of Philadelphia), we have developed a system that we feel works for staff and patrons.

continued on page 74

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Library Journal,
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News from PLA

PLAspace

PLAspace.org is the new website designed to support the transition of PLA committees to Communities of Practice (CoPs). PLAspace will allow for better col-



laboration between members, without requiring face-to-face meetings, and allow for greater participation among our members and nonmembers. If you would like to transition an existing committee to a CoP, join a CoP, or form a new CoP, contact Doug Dawson, PLA web manager, at ddawson@ala.org or check out www.plaspace.org.

2009 PLA Spring Symposium

Registration is now open for the 2009 PLA Spring Symposium. The Symposium will be held April 2–4, 2009, in Nashville at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel, 611 Commerce Street. The Spring Symposium will feature six intensive day-and-a-half-long workshops focusing on subjects pertinent to public libraries and public librarians, as well as an opening general session



with keynote speaker musician Tom Chapin, an author luncheon featuring women's fiction author Adriana Trigiani, and area library tours. Get workshop and registration informa-

tion at www.pla.org. Registration deadline is February 13, 2009.

Save the Date

PLA's 13th National Conference will be held March 23–27, 2010, in Portland. Visit www.placonference



.org to submit program proposals and to get updates and information about the conference.

New PLA Tech Notes

Tech Notes are PLA publications introducing specific technologies for public librarians. We've recently added or updated the following Tech Notes—a portion of each appears below. To read the entire article, visit the URL at the end of each paragraph. To see the entire list of Tech Notes visit www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/index.cfm. If there is a specific technology that you'd like to know more about, send an e-mail to Kathleen Hughes at khughes@ala.org for consideration.

Application Service Providers

An application service provider (ASP) is a business that provides

computer-based services to customers over a network. There are several forms of ASP business models. The focus of this Tech Note is the vertical market ASPs that serve libraries (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/application-service-pr.doc).

Automated Storage/Retrieval and Return/Sorting Systems

While librarians don't like to think of libraries as warehouses for books, there are a number of technologies developed for warehouses that can be used in libraries. Among these are automated storage/retrieval systems (AS/RS) and return/sorting systems, collectively known in the warehousing industry as materials handling systems (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/automatedrev.doc).

Library Portals

Thousands of libraries worldwide have implemented a "library portal," a single user interface for access to a wide variety of electronic resources both within and outside of the library. A portal is more than just a gateway or a way out to resources. What distinguishes a library portal from a gateway is that it augments the user interface with federated searching, patron authentication, and link resolution—the last of which gets beyond the sources of the content to the content itself (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/library-portals.doc).

Open-Source Software

The term *open source* refers to software that is free and that includes the original source code used to create it so that users can modify it. It also includes the right of redistribution; therefore, there may be products that are based on other open-source products. There are tens of thousands of open-source software products, many hundreds of which are in use by libraries. This Tech Note focuses on only a small number of products, those that appear to be the most popular (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/opensourcesoftware.doc).

Open-Source Integrated Library Software

A number of public libraries have been investigating open-source integrated library system software. Their motivations appear to be both financial and a desire to tailor a system to more closely meet their requirements than the proprietary products allow (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/opensource2008.doc).

Unicode

Unicode is an international character-encoding standard designed to support the electronic exchange, processing, storage, and display of the written texts of all of the world's languages and scripts. Libraries need to be able to borrow or lend materi-

als in a wide variety of languages and scripts on behalf of patrons who cannot find what they need in their own libraries. The ability to send and receive bibliographic information among Unicode-conforming libraries is a major breakthrough (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/unicode2008.doc).

Wireless LANs

A wireless local area network (LAN) makes it possible for a desktop or notebook PC, or a PDA, to access a network without being physically connected to it. At least 30 percent of public libraries and 70 percent of academic libraries had a wireless LAN in the fourth quarter of 2005 (www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/pla/plapublications/platechnotes/Wireless-LANs-2008.doc).

PLA to Copublish Reader Series with Neal-Schuman

Each volume in the new PLA Reader Series will be specifically designed to meet the professional information needs of a specific segment of the public library community in mind—public library directors, youth librarians, managers, or trustees, for example. Each reader will include best practices, essential background information, practical wisdom, and targeted advice carefully selected and organized by PLA and Neal-Schuman.

On the Agenda

2008

Results Boot Camp
October 20–24, 2008
Cleveland

2009

ALA Midwinter Meeting
January 23–29, 2009
Denver

PLA Spring Symposium
April 2–4, 2009
Nashville

ALA Annual Conference
July 9–15, 2009
Chicago

The first four titles slated for publication in the PLA Reader Series include *The Public Library Association Reader for Library Directors*, *The Public Library Association Reader for Youth Librarians*, *The Public Library Association Reader for Library Trustees*, and *The Public Library Association Reader for Aspiring Library Managers*.

In conjunction with the new partnership, Neal-Schuman has implemented a PLA standing order plan. For more information, visit www.neal-schuman.com. 



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The Picturing America Bookshelf will include two additional selections to appeal to audiences of all ages: *1776: The Illustrated Edition* by David McCullough and *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out* by the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance. Other book titles will be announced in September 2008.

The Bookshelf program is part of the NEH's We the People program, which supports projects that strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture.

Apply online from September 2, 2008, through January 30, 2009, at www.neh.gov and www.publicprograms.ala.org/bookshelf.

To access a list of programming ideas for your fall application, visit www.publicprograms.ala.org/bookshelf.



CAROL SHEFFER is Deputy Director, Queens Library, Jamaica, New York; csheffer@live.com.

Carol is reading *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation* by Peter L. Bernstein.

Self-Service at Your Library

(And Now at PLA)

Recently, I was interviewed by a newspaper reporter about self-checkout in public libraries. We chatted for quite awhile but I ended up with only one line in a very brief article. Hopefully, that means I convinced him that self-checkout was a good thing, but one never knows. That was certainly not his inclination when we began our conversation. There are many good reasons for libraries to begin using self-checkout machines. More and more, people look for opportunities to handle all sorts of transactions by themselves. When was the last time you went to a teller in a bank? Do you refill prescriptions by phone or online rather than speak with the pharmacist? Did you purchase something via the Internet without speaking to a customer service representative? Have you spoken to a travel agent within the last year? Or a hotel reservation clerk?

Experts tell us that we should let machines do as much as possible and use people to perform actions that machines cannot. For those of us in public service, that may sound a bit extreme. There seems to be room for compromise in customer service, however, and that is what I did my best to explain to the reporter. There is no doubt that self-checkout options allow greater productivity for library staff. With an increase in demand for public library services at the same time that library budgets remain stagnant, or are even being cut, greater productivity gains are vitally important. What may not be apparent is that by freeing up staff from routine, time-consuming tasks, self-checkout systems allow for greater personal interactions.

More time can be spent with senior citizens who view public libraries as a social outlet, with users posing very specific reference questions, and library patrons of all ages who need the intervention or guidance of a librarian. Service quality can improve dramatically when full attention can be given to a library user. Self-service also has an impact on recruitment and retention of staff. Public libraries search out employees with customer service experience and expertise, yet often these same staff members must spend the bulk of their day handling routine clerical transactions and not working on the public service floor. This can be extremely frustrating for folks who truly enjoy personal interactions and can ultimately lead to retention issues.

Circulation is not the only transaction that may be handled by the library user. In many libraries, users can place their own reserves and renew items online or by phone; and in some libraries, users can even pick up reserves from lockers or sealed envelopes, all without any interaction with a staff member. Other libraries have self-return machines, sometimes combined with sorting equipment. Still others have begun to use automatic payment machines to free staff from collecting fines and allowing users to privately

settle their accounts. Again, no interpersonal interactions are necessary.

Self-service may not be for every library. New machines can have expensive upfront costs. Space and furniture may need to be reconfigured. The trend in other customer service industries shows us that if self-service is not right for your library now, it will be in the future.

As I am writing this column, it occurs to me that there is a correlation between self-service and some of the recent changes in the PLA structure. While some traditional

committees still exist, our new Communities of Practice (CoPs) offer the same type of self-service that we are seeing in other sectors of society. Instead of waiting to be invited to participate on a committee and being tied to obligatory meeting attendance, we can now decide on our own to join a network of members who share an interest in a given topic. We do it without an interpersonal transaction. As with customers in a self-service environment, the PLA board members and staff now have more time to interact with

members who seek us out. We value member input and want to serve you to the best of our ability. I hope that you will decide to join a CoP, where you can participate virtually but can also meet face-to-face at conference, if you choose.

Please feel free to contact me at csheffer@live.com. It is helpful to hear your thoughts and concerns. I look forward to seeing you in Denver for the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting and in Nashville for the 2009 PLA Spring Symposium. 

San Mateo Main Library Meets LEED Gold Standard

The new Main Library of the San Mateo (Calif.) Public Library has received the U.S. Green Building Council's Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards for environmentally sustainable design.

"It is a great honor for the library to receive this prestigious rating," said City Librarian Ben Ocón, "the City of San Mateo stands tall for its leadership in launching the construction of green civic facilities and the library has led the way."

The Main Library was designed and built as a green facility in response to strong sentiments from the San Mateo community that the new library be a green building. In addition to the many green features, the library introduced a public education program on sustainability and established a Going Green information center in the library to help the community learn more about the library's green features as well as to promote sustainability measures that can be practiced at home, work, and in the community. This public education program was key to the library's successful efforts to achieve the gold rating.

In addition to the gold LEED rating, the Main Library has already won several other awards: "Savings by Design" recognition from Pacific Gas & Electric; Green Business certification from the City and County of San Mateo; Green Building Award 2007, Sustainable San Mateo County; Best Community Impact Award 2007, *San Francisco Business Times*; Green Building Award, Best of '06, McGraw-Hill Construction; Civic Building Award, Best of '06, McGraw-Hill Construction; and the Green Award 2008, San Mateo Area Chamber of Commerce.

The 93,000-square-foot library was designed by EHDD Architecture of San Francisco. Funding for the \$65 million project was secured from a \$35 million bond passed overwhelmingly by 72 percent of San Mateo residents, \$20 million from the State of California's Proposition 14 funds to construct and renovate libraries, and \$10 million was raised by the San Mateo Public Library Foundation. For more information contact City Librarian Ben Ocón, (650) 522-7808, or bocon@cityofsanmateo.org. 



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

YALSA's Outreach to Young Adults with Special Needs Committee selected "Breaking Boundaries" as the 2009 Great Stories Club theme, along with the following titles:

- *Luna* by Julie Ann Peters (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2004)
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2007)
- *Black and White* by Paul Volponi (Viking Juvenile, 2005)

For tips on preparing an application, a list of the titles included, guidelines and the online application, visit

www.ala.org/greatstories or contact **publicprograms@ala.org**.

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

CHIP WARD (wardchip@hotmail.com) recently retired from his twenty-nine-year library career. For the past six years he was the Assistant Director of the Salt Lake City Public Library. He served many years on the Utah Library Association's (ULA) Intellectual Freedom Committee and wrote ULA's intellectual freedom manual. This essay was adapted from his farewell newsletter to the city library's staff.

Chip is reading *The Ascent of Humanity: Civilization and the Human Sense of Self* by Charles Eisenstein.

A Green Perspective on the Importance of Intellectual Freedom

The Public Library as Cultural Ecotone

Every profession shares a set of particular concepts and a vocabulary to express those concepts that helps the members of that profession communicate ideas quickly and easily. The downside of shared definitions and jargon is that the members of that profession may be almost incomprehensible to those outside the group. For example, as librarians we know what we mean by “available holds,” but we also know that our users may not know what we are talking about when we use that term. Shared references and values can be so mutually reinforcing that they become automatic, self-evident, and transparent—too easy—for those who share them. In other words, our jargon can blind us to the peculiarities and uniqueness of our own perception of the world and to how our perceptions differ from those around us. They can become the proverbial box that we struggle to think outside of.

Conversely, seeing your world through the eyes of someone who does not share your particular reference points can be revealing and invigorating. I recently gave myself that experience when the editor of *Orion* magazine asked me to examine the Salt Lake City Public Library as a “living system.” “What is the ecological equivalent of the role your library plays in Utah’s urban culture?” he asked.

My answer was immediate: the city library is the cultural equivalent of an ecotone within the city’s culture. In the ecological sciences, an ecotone is a space where the plant and animal community that is generated by one altitude, climate, soil, or other set of geographic conditions rubs up against the

biotic and faunal community that is generated by a different set of conditions. Ecotones are transition zones where the boundaries of different kinds of habitats and their species mix and overlap—a kaleidoscopic mosaic of habitats with overlapping boundaries that shift and shuffle over time as changes in the weather, natural disturbances on the ground, competition for nutrients, and other ecological variables play out.

Living systems are never static but are always in play. They are driven by appetite, opportunity, adaptation, competition, synergy, and reciprocity. Nature is also loaded with disturbances—floods, fires, storms, droughts, earthquakes, avalanches, and constant unexpected changes. Change is constant and ecotones are the places where such creative flux

tends to happen—a dynamic carnival of shifting relationships that both feeds on and generates biodiversity. Biodiversity, conservation biologists tell us, is the most important measure of an ecosystem's viability because it can translate into options, possibilities, and potential. When an ecosystem is under stress, lots of possibilities for reconfiguration can be the difference between ecosystem health and failure. Biodiversity is also what makes life beautiful and interesting (why a lush garden, for example, is typically more pleasing to look at or explore than a geometric grid of soybeans). The biodiversity that feeds ecosystem resilience, then, is not generated by benign and constant conditions. It is generated by the response of living beings to natural disturbances and surprises

in their conditions. In other words, it takes a bit of turmoil now and then to keep life's evolutionary wheels turning. One could say that ecotones are turmoil rich.

There is a lesson in that ecological dynamic that can be applied to our civic culture: a robust democratic system, like a vital ecosystem, requires a diverse mix of options to draw from when faced with change and then needs credible feedback on how the choices we make together are working out so it can self-correct. Just as biodiversity gives disturbed or distressed landscapes lots of options to reconfigure and heal, cultural diversity is a resource for resilience in a society racked by contradictory responses to the dysfunction we are experiencing in this age of chaos and transformation. When we

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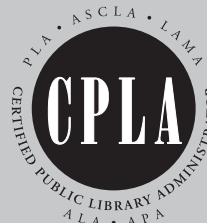
- an MSLS degree (ALA-accredited, NCATE-accredited, or accredited by the national body of another country)
- at least 3 years supervisory experience

Then, you've probably attended conferences, meetings, and workshops, and you want to do more to move your career to the next level. You may have even been considering getting another degree to prepare you for the responsibilities that come with being a library administrator.

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enable diverse perspectives, talents, interests, and abilities to be shared, we have more to draw on to solve problems creatively and flexibly. We can survive our past mistakes. When citizens within a human community can learn from one another openly, we lean toward wholeness.

Cultures need ecotones, too, and American culture is a case study in the creative powers of mixing people and their perspectives. America's blending of ethnic traditions has been a continual wellspring of innovation. Our staple foods and our democratic forms of government were borrowed from Native Americans. African slaves carried to America the roots of beloved American musical forms like the blues and gospel that evolved into rock n' roll, jazz, country, and hip hop. A dynamic mixing of cultural tastes, perspectives, and possibilities has given Americans their characteristic sense of optimism and our famous openness to technological innovation. If biodiversity is a measure of an ecosystem's potential for resilience when faced with stress, cultural diversity is a measure of a society's creative potential when stressed and challenged. And like biodiversity, cultural diversity is what makes life interesting and beautiful.

American public libraries have long provided venues for self-improvement and assimilation—many were built with funds from Andrew Carnegie, an immigrant who understood the value of education and the potential for public libraries to help turn-of-the-century immigrants learn, integrate, and succeed. Libraries still offer basic literacy but are also bridging digital divides by teaching computer literacy and

making databases, software applications, and Internet access available on public workstations. And the role of the public library in making information available remains central, especially in an era where we have learned once more that distorting, delaying, sequestering, suppressing, and ignoring information can have tragic consequences. But it is in the provision of public space where civic encounters can happen that the public library can realize new potential to empower citizens to be full participants in a democratic society. By bringing diverse opinions, perspectives, and traditions together, we are fostering the kind of creativity and resilience in our culture that one finds in ecotones in the natural world.

We enjoy a democratic culture, not because we are like-minded, but because we realize that we are not like-minded and because we facilitate dialogue and debate, respect dissent, and encourage open-minded behaviors. But we can do that only if we create safe places for options to be explored, for challenges and critiques to be forwarded, for information to accrue, and for reason to be practiced. Otherwise, we lob our disagreements with one another like bombs from behind walls where we harden and become brittle. Or we get caught between feuding fanatics.

Nature is amazingly reciprocal and integrated—rich with feedback loops, synergy, and the constant exchange of information and energy. Societies that have lots of feedback and the means to exchange information and energy easily are likewise more adaptable and resilient than those where ideas are constricted

and controlled. The continual concentration of publishing, radio, and television into a few media conglomerates means more choices but less substantial variety, less experimentation, and fewer controversial or unpopular ideas are available. But in the public library, such diversity, experimentation (I would cite this little essay as an example), and risk-taking is still possible. More than possible, it is encouraged.

These insights from the ecological sciences do not replace or diminish the very compelling reasons we have to defend the First Amendment for all the arguments we refer to when we talk about “intellectual freedom.” We can continue to use concepts and vocabulary rooted in sociology, politics, and economics to explain why libraries are important. But the earth's natural operating systems also provide models for how information and energy can be exchanged and cycled, and not just for architects, designers, and inventors to mimic, but for citizens engaged with one another as well. In ecosystems with diverse habitats, ecotones are where environmental resilience is generated, and the ecotone is an apt model for a place where democracy lives—where citizens can seek their voices, understand choices, and practice that awkward dance of mutuality that is the very signature of a democratic culture. The open space for democracy—the cultural ecotone—that we have created in Salt Lake City is not the answer to all our worries, but if we earnestly intend to understand our world and each other, it is a good place to start. ■

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Lecture* by Randy Pausch
and *We Don't Make Widgets*
by Ken Miller.

Growing Our Own Leaders

A Proactive Effort

The Johnson County (Kans.) Library (JCL) started on a leadership journey in 2005. At that time, we did not know where it would lead, only that we had a need to develop leaders from within the organization. The projections of Baby Boomer retirements, shortage of new librarians, and difficulty recruiting mid-level and senior managers led us to a strategic initiative to develop an internal leadership program.

Our proactive response was geared to create our own recruitment pool within the organization utilizing a two-tiered Leadership Development Program. Tier One, open to all staff, was implemented in 2007. Tier Two, for managers, launched in March 2008.

Implementation of Tier One demonstrated how a large organization can flex in an exceptional effort over a year's time—under great stress—to achieve an essential institutional goal.

We opened Tier One to all levels of staff very deliberately because the library needs staff members who can make decisions and lead projects *at their level* to make the library more stable and more nimble. This is the impetus for creating a *culture* of leadership development that naturally generates leaders and succession, rather than a series of programs or initiatives.

The first twenty-seven participants in the program's year-long Tier One graduated in December 2007 after investing 240 hours *each* in the program. As hoped, Tier One participants in 2007 ranged from pages to branch managers and reference librarians. The library organization of 365 employees in thirteen facilities had to absorb 6,480 hours (3.5 FTE)—mostly in public service frontline staff—week by week throughout 2007.

Therefore, making this program successful was a systemwide effort and the system did feel the stress. Staff in technical services, Web content, and youth services helped to cover desks. Library staff at all levels contributed to 360-degree evaluations for participants. Leadership Development Program Committee members assisted in designing the curriculum and projects and acted as mentors. Key managers and University of Missouri-Columbia staff taught classes.

Planning and Costs

I chaired the Leadership Development Committee until March 2008, and we realized rather quickly that our discussions focused around *behaviors* rather than technical *skills*. In prior years, JCL had developed behavioral competencies that supported our library's values, and these competencies became the basis of program discussions. However, the committee felt that the current

competencies were not extensive enough for full leadership development. Thus, the two-tier program was born.

Knowing that everything could not be completed internally, the committee focus became Tier One, and consultants were enlisted (with the help of a \$25,000 gift from the Friends of the JCL) to help design Tier Two.

Funding for Tier One was absorbed by the library budget: \$500 for supplies and course materials, and \$3,000 for catering. Library professors and budget experts on public and library governance contributed in-kind time valued at \$500. Library staff back-filled the time frontline participants spent in the program, and other managers and I taught and facilitated classroom sessions. Had the library hired frontline substitutes and paid for all instruction, we estimated a total cost of approximately \$50,000.

Components for Tier One

Armed with a focus and foundation, the committee began planning the Tier One components. The seven competencies serving as the basis for all learning are: personal accountability, listening and responding, teamwork and cooperation, initiative, flexibility, customer service orientation, and genuineness.

Allocating 240 hours per participant to Tier One, four components were identified:

1. Classroom learning included:
 - Monthly four-hour sessions about project management, conflict management, meeting management, library governance, public governance, listening

and responding, personal accountability, and flexibility. Attendance at a Board of County Commissioners budget hearing meeting complemented the governance sessions.

- Systemwide overview was another clear deficiency among staff at all levels, and these were addressed by visiting managers in monthly “Lunch and Learns.”
2. Independent study was initiated with a 360-degree evaluation on the seven competencies. This feedback was used for developing Individual Development Plans (IDPs), and the evaluations were conducted again at the end of the program. For this learning, participants used reading, external classes, journaling, etc. to hone their skills on self-selected competencies.
 3. Project work, based on real library needs from the strategic plan, was the most effective component—but the most difficult to plan.
 - Using a *Project Runway* format (without voting anyone off), these projects were fun, interesting, and interactive challenges.
 - For each project, participants were given background information on the program, a budget to spend, and parameters in which to work.
 4. Mentoring: The program development committee acted as mentors to the program participants. External specialists provided training to this group on how to be an effective mentor. Over the course of the year, the pairs developed relationships and provided a

source for questions, concerns, and program feedback.

We aspired to change—organizationally and individually—and now we are evaluating the impact of our yearlong pilot.

Everyone—program participants, their managers, and committee members—learned a great deal in this first round about what works, what doesn’t, and the impact on the organization. As follow-up, both participants and their managers were surveyed.

Least Successful Aspects

Time constraints proved to be the biggest impediments to success, and IDPs were the highest casualties. Perhaps because they were to be addressed individually, IDPs were dropped in favor of projects that required more immediate attention, team interaction, and revolving deadlines. Lack of time off-desk was especially a problem for participants because of public-service pressures. Some participants felt that not all managers supported the program, perhaps again because of stress felt at the frontline level, inflicting a sense of guilt on participants.

Mentors were uneven in assisting with IDPs and with overall guidance. Mentoring worked very well for some assigned pairs, while other relationships did not flourish. Because of these factors, the IDPs and mentors were the weakest portion of the program.

Most Successful Experiences

The best learning came from the projects, according to the participants—actually doing *real work with real elements and real applica-*

tions. Projects were selected and honed until they were manageable, cross-functional, and something the system was ready to implement. Three of the four projects were high-impact and have created change in the system. For example, the participants created a revitalized “Art-in-the-Stacks” public exhibits program with a new name, logo, and contact list. One participant stated that the projects allowed them to “work together to create a solution to a real need in the JCL. We positively impacted our organization.”

Managers noticed that participants had acquired a better appreciation for the complexity of decision-making processes in the library. One manager commented, “Staff has a much better understanding of how the organization runs and a sense of accomplishment.” In addition, library board members were particularly impressed with the participants’ work on strategic projects and their commitment to the program.

Overwhelmingly, participants most valued the opportunity to

become acquainted with other staff from around the system of thirteen facilities to practice teamwork and to gain a systemwide overview. One participant noted that the most valuable part of the program was “meeting new people and working with them.” Camaraderie offset the stress of time constraints and deadlines.

Participants cited the opportunities in project teams to demonstrate skills that they did not know they had, including the ability to listen and assess information before responding, project management, and meeting management.

They also cited improved overall confidence in their abilities. In some cases, the opportunity to lead a project team had been their first leadership experience.

Finally, an unintended consequence is marked growth in our biennial staff engagement survey reports. Scores for areas including empowerment, satisfaction, loyalty, growth, and development improved more than 7 percent in two years. While we cannot directly tie the increases to the leadership program,

anecdotally we feel the program contributed to this improvement.

Long-Term, Systemwide Impact

Personal accountability and accepting *and seeking* responsibility at all levels were major thrusts of this program and we are now waiting to see the long-term effect.

Though the retirement crunch hit in 2007, the leadership program eased the impact on the organization. To date (August 2008), sixteen of the initial Tier One participants have accepted new positions within the library, several in management. Many expressed that they applied for jobs they would not have considered prior to the program, as even partway through the year they had gained new confidence and had a better understanding of the organization.

Our leadership program is an ambitious endeavor, but its positive impact makes it well worth the investment. There is already substantial gain for both the organization and participants. One participant summed it up nicely, “The Leadership Program has been a lot of work—and the rewards are a deeper attachment to the organization through knowing and working with staff. I feel a deeper commitment to our organization and a stronger appreciation of our staff after having this opportunity.”

We are confident our efforts today will provide us with future leaders for tomorrow. 

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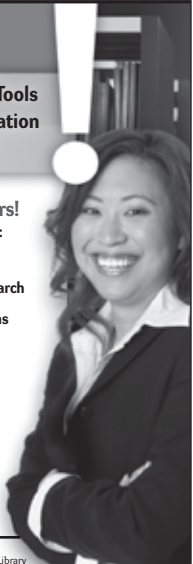
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Jennifer is reading *The Sea* by John Banville, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* by Jules Verne, and *The Flanders Panel* Arturo Perez-Reverte.

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

New Bookmobile on the Road @ Tulsa City-County Library

Tulsa City-County (Okla.) Library’s (TC-CL) new bookmobile hit the streets this past June. The colorful, eye-catching, kid-friendly design was an instant hit with children and families at the twenty-five economically challenged neighborhoods it serves. As a part of the library’s outreach services department, the bookmobile brings books, magazines, videos, and audios to children and their families in low income neighborhoods. Circulation for the bookmobile runs about 35–40,000 for an average year.

TC-CL’s first bookmobile was purchased in 1930. Over the years, the Tulsa Library System had a fleet

of bookmobiles that were used as temporary locations in some of the remote areas in Tulsa County. As the library system grew and branches were built in these remote areas, they went to a single bookmobile that focused on service to low-income areas. The previous bookmobile, purchased in 1991, took the place of its seventeen-year-old predecessor.

For more information, call Brad Thomas, outreach services manager, at (918) 596-7922 or e-mail bthomas@tulsalibrary.org.

Webkinz Party

Shaler North Hills Library in Glenshaw, Pennsylvania recently held a Webkinz party for children. Although Webkinz toys are similar to many other small plush toys, they come with a special code on their labels that allow access to Webkinz World, which is a website where you can own a virtual version of the pet for virtual interaction.

The children were excited to go around the room and introduce their Webkinz to others and talk about what their favorite activity was to do on the Webkinz website. One young boy mentioned he had \$6,000 in KinzCash. For the uninitiated, the user on the Webkinz website receives money, called KinzCash, by adopting new pets, playing games, answering questions, and through such daily activities as spinning the Wheel of WOW, playing Wishing Well 2, or completing jobs. There is also a



First TC-CL Bookmobile in 1930



Sixteenth TC-CL Bookmobile in 2008

game of the day which can be played for bonus KinzCash.

The children who attended the program participated in a Webkinz trivia quiz and paraded through the upstairs children's area and downstairs area of the library with their pets while excitedly repeating "I love my Webkinz." The parade continued to the library's community room where the children made a sofa, bed, and collars for their Webkinz using small cardboard boxes, fabric, felt, buttons, sequins, elastic cording, and beads.

For more information about the program, contact Susan McClellan, outreach coordinator, at (412) 486-0211 or e-mail mcclellans@einetwork.net. For information about Webkinz, visit www.webkinz.com/us_en.

Girls Love Tech @ the Santa Clara City Library

On a recent evening at the Santa Clara (Calif.) City Library, in the heart of Silicon Valley, preteen girls and their parents gathered to learn what makes "Girls Love Tech."

They met members of the Space Cookies, an all-girls robotics team sponsored by the NASA Ames Research Center and the Girls Scouts of Northern California, and saw the robot the girls built in six weeks to compete with robots from around the world at the FIRST (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science and Technology) National Competition in Atlanta. They learned it's all in a days work for girls to run drill presses, wire up electronics, and program a robot.

Michelle Hutton, computer science teacher at The Girls' Middle School in Mountain View, took the group through a "parity bits" activ-

ity that demonstrated the "magic" of logical thinking. Laura Reeve, engineering teacher at GMS, initiated a small group girls-only activity—building the tallest tower possible from twenty straws and as many rubber bands as you need.

Shoba Krishnan, engineering professor at Santa Clara University, challenged the parents to write specific instructions, a la a computer program, for making a jelly sandwich. The results, when demonstrated by the Space Cookies were, predictably, hilarious.



Girls Team UP

For more information, contact Ellin Klor, youth services, Santa Clara City Library, at eklor@santaclaraca.gov. To learn more about the Space Cookies and FIRST, visit www.spacecookies.org and www.usfirst.org.

City Library Helps Patrons Gear Up for All Digital TV Conversion

The Saint Louis Public Library teamed up recently with the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to present an informational program to help patrons gear up for the upcoming conversion to all-digital television (DTV). Patricia Chew, from the FCC, spoke at the Buder Branch.

The U.S. Congress set February 17, 2009, as the final deadline for

most TV broadcasting to make the transition to digital. To help consumers with the DTV transition, the government established the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of eligible digital-to-analog converter boxes.

For more information, contact Gerald Brooks at (314) 539-0315.

Queens Library Partners with Queens High School

Queens Library is partnering with the New York City Department of Education to provide curriculum support and supplementary programs for the new Queens High School for Information, Research & Technology (Queens-IRT). The new school will be located at 8-21 Beach 25 Street, Far Rockaway.

Queens-IRT will provide a rigorous, pre-college academic learning environment. Students will work toward becoming experts in information fluency, scientific inquiry, and communication. They will participate in year-long research, service projects, and summer internships that extend and enhance academic work. Additionally, students will have a full range of athletics, art, music, and extracurricular activities to round out the experience. New Visions for Public Schools is also a partner on the project.

Queens Library will be providing supplementary programming in information literacy and research skills through grant funding. "Our society is rich in information. The ability to find, authenticate, interpret and use information are competencies that will continue to be much in demand, as life skills and

by the world of work,” said Maureen O’Connor, director of library services. “Queens Library’s core business is enriching lives with education and information. Supporting the new high school is a natural extension of our mission.”

Robert L. Hughes, president of New Visions for Public Schools, said the collaboration with Queens Library has the potential for enormous success. “We are committed to creating schools with rigorous academic standards to give our students the skills they’ll need to succeed as lifelong learners. There’s no better partner in this endeavor than the Queens Library, with its comprehensive resources and dedication to the missions of literacy and learning.”

For more information, call (718) 990-0700.

Pilot Project Brings More Services to Local Libraries

Checking out books from Pierce County Library System and Tacoma Public Library in Washington State got a whole lot easier because people who live in either the county library’s service areas or the city of Tacoma may check out books from both library systems for free. Up until recently people who lived in these areas could only check out books

from their non-community library by purchasing a library card.

This new service is a fifteen month pilot program, outlined in a reciprocal borrowing agreement between the two library systems. Through September 2009, library managers will study public response and effects of the programs including customer response, satisfaction and use, revenue changes, and resources to return books to appropriate libraries.

With the new borrowing agreement, people may get a library card from the system they want to check out materials from. Checked out materials will need to be returned to the library system where they checked them out. “The pilot program will make it easier for residents to use the library or libraries most convenient to their home, school or workplace as they move around the county,” said Susan Odencrantz, director of Tacoma Public library.

For more information, contact Mary Getchell at (253) 536-6500, ext. 136 or e-mail mgetchell@piercecountylibrary.org.

Kentucky’s Oldest Newspaper Gets New Home

More than a year after flooding, damaged historic documents will

find a new home at the Lexington (Ky.) Public Library’s Kentucky Room with newly expanded space with more seating and a better protected vault.

The state’s oldest newspaper, the *Kentucky Gazette*, will be brought to the new room. The Lexington Public Library houses the only complete set of the *Kentucky Gazette*, which has been kept with the library’s other historical documents in temporary quarters since February 2007, when a burst pipe caused water damage to the Central Library’s top three floors. The recent opening also included unveiling of the writing desk that belonged to James Lane Allen, Fayette County native and Kentucky’s first notable novelist. Joe H. Murphy of Lexington has loaded the desk for display in the New Kentucky Room.

Renovation of the Kentucky Room included diverting pipes away from the vault. Funding for the new room included \$50,000 each from the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation.

For more information, contact Doug Tattershall at (859) 231-5515. 



DENISE M. DAVIS is Director, Office for Research & Statistics, American Library Association; dmdavis@ala.org.

Denise is reading *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen, *Turning the Mind into an Ally* by Sakyong Mipham, *Ethics for the New Millennium* by the Dalai Lama, and *Marley and Me* by John Grogan.

This occasional column will focus on topical issues related to public library research and statistics. What do you need to know? Send ideas for topics to Kathleen Hughes, Editor of *Public Libraries*, at khughes@ala.org.

A Comparison of Public Library Data

PLDS in Context

For those new to public library data there are two primary reporting venues: the PLA Public Library Data Service (PLDS),¹ a voluntary survey of public libraries, and the national system that collects data from all public libraries. The national public library data program was established in the 1980s by state libraries, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), and recently was transferred to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).²

Both the PLA and the IMLS data sets are available online, have peer tools for comparison, and print summary reports. The PLDS includes responses from Canadian public libraries; the IMLS is limited to U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia. The online data files and utilities developed by PLA and NCES/IMLS are useful for forming peer groups, comparing specific library characteristics across a range of libraries, or for downloading in full by librarians or library researchers interested in analysis beyond that supported by the predetermined criteria established in each of the survey comparison tools.

The differences between the two surveys (PLDS and IMLS) are considerable both in range of data reported, survey methods, and editing procedures. Despite the differences in the two surveys (thereby creating inherent differences in the final data sets), comparisons are possible by a few characteristics—funding, services, staffing, and total collections.

The research question is: Can the PLDS data be used for early identification of trends in library funding and expenditures? Yes and no.

Get your copy of the *PLDS Statistical Report 2008*. See the order forms on pages 30 and 31 of this issue.

Issues to Consider Data Quality—Census versus Self-Selection

Not only do the survey questions vary, but so do response rates. Whereas the IMLS data series is a universe of public libraries, the PLA series reflects only those libraries that choose to participate, and this may vary year to year.³ This means that longitudinal comparison is not possible because with the PLDS a library can opt in or out of the survey. In addition to being a universe of public libraries, the IMLS data are edited to improve quality and missing values are imputed. Imputation is a mathematical method of estimating what a response might have been for a specific question. Imputations for missing responses are only used to prepare national estimates; the imputed figure is not present in the individual library response record.

Many state libraries subscribe to a data reporting utility—Bibliostat Collect—for the coordinated national survey.⁴ This utility leverages the federal editing criteria, as well as specific state editing requirements, to improve the quality of initial responses from libraries. About forty states are using this software to collect data from their public libraries, and other states have their own reporting methods that often include response edit checks. Libraries reporting to the PLDS survey are often using the locally edited data, thereby increasing the comparability of responses between the two surveys. The PLDS data benefit from these preliminary edits and publish about one year ahead of the IMLS data. Further, PLA provides linking to its data files within the Bibliostat Collect utility thereby providing access to data for libraries in states that may not be using the Bibliostat Collect tool.

Reporting Most Current Fiscal Year

One of the biggest issues for both of the data sets is the ability of a library to report in a timely way because of its fiscal year. Libraries do not share common fiscal years, and this variation adds to the complexity of reporting library data at both a state and national level. The PLDS is releasing data within a year of collection (e.g., fiscal year 2007 library data are published in summer/fall 2008) because libraries that can participate do. For the IMLS data, publication may take as much as two calendar years from the close of the annual survey because of the number of libraries reporting and the variations in local fiscal years. Further, the IMLS data undergo additional quality checks beyond those available to libraries through their state reporting. Points go to PLA for quick turnaround, but with the caveats already mentioned.

Response Rates

Overall, the response rate for the 2007 PLDS, which reports for fis-

cal year 2006, was 883, about 9.6 percent of the universe of U.S. public libraries. As noted in figure 1, response was highest among libraries serving the largest population ranges. Between 61 and 96 percent of libraries serving more than 100,000 residents responded to the *PLDS Statistical Report 2007*. About 9.2 percent (851) of U.S. public libraries responded to the *PLDS Statistical Report 2008* (fiscal year 2007).

How the Data Hold Up— Library Revenue and Expenditures

Both the PLDS and IMLS surveys collect core revenue (sometimes referred to as income or funding) and expenditures data. Library revenue data reported in both surveys are characterized by source—local, state, federal, and other—and library expenditures by broad category—staffing (salary/benefits), collections, and the catch-all other. Each survey has definitions to guide libraries in reporting these figures and, for the most part, the definitions are comparable. The PLDS reports responses

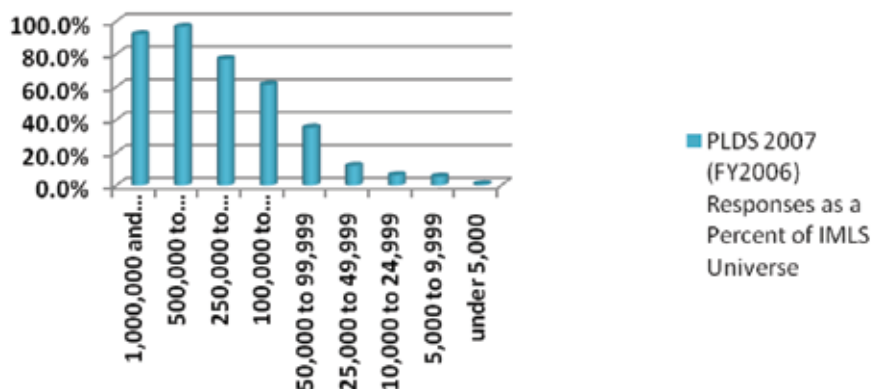


Figure 1. PLDS 2007 (FY2006) Responses as a Percent of IMLS Universe by Population Served

in means (averages) and quartiles, as well as the highest and lowest reported response. The IMLS data are reported in a variety of ways—totals by state and nationally, by population served range, as per capita, and percentage distributions.

The PLDS 2007 (FY2006) and the IMLS FY2005 data sets are used for the purposes of this analysis. Keep in mind that PLDS response rates will impact results as compared with the IMLS data, and variations in the actual figures reported even in population served ranges where response rates are strong may vary from IMLS. The data align more closely when viewed proportionally—percentages within population served ranges. This will become more evident as the figures are discussed. Figures 2 and 3 provide detail on operating revenue reported to the PLDS and IMLS surveys, and figure 4 compares them.

As noted in figure 4, the distributions of funding by source varied enough from the census of library reported to IMLS for two population served ranges: 100,000 to 249,999 and communities serving fewer than 5,000. It is interesting to note that there is little difference in the overall proportion of funding distributions between the PLDS FY2006 and the IMLS FY2005. This can be explained by

the high responses from libraries serving larger communities (see figure 3). The very low response from the smallest public library communities does not impact the summary results. Even though there are many more libraries serving smaller communities (about 78 percent of libraries—7,194—are in communities serving fewer than 25,000 people), their funding levels do not significantly impact the overall picture of library funding when such a high proportion of larger public libraries report (see figure 1).

Given libraries serving smaller communities have lower overall responses to the PLDS, those data should be used with caution and it is recommended that the IMLS data be used for libraries in communities under 25,000. This is not to discourage response to the PLDS, but rather to encourage it. Since data timeliness is critical, all libraries are encouraged to respond to the PLDS.

There are some anomalies that emerge when comparing PLDS and IMLS data despite the higher response rates for libraries serving 100,000 to 249,999 (see figure 4). It is important to understand that the proportions of funding data by source (e.g., local, state, etc.) do not vary significantly year to year. That is, the proportions of funding by source reported by IMLS remain fairly consistent over time. Therefore, comparison of the PLDS and IMLS data presented in figure 4 are useful to consider despite the difference in fiscal years used for comparison (2005 and 2006, respectively).

For libraries serving 100,000 to 249,999, the following differences exist:

- Local revenue is lower than national reporting by about 3.7 percent (79.3 percent versus 83 percent).
- State revenue is lower by about

Population of Legal Service Area	Local	State	Federal	Other
1,000,000 and above	85.7%	5.2%	0.5%	8.6%
500,000 to 999,999	81.5%	10.0%	0.4%	8.1%
250,000 to 499,999	77.8%	13.8%	0.4%	8.1%
100,000 to 249,999	79.3%	7.2%	0.4%	13.1%
50,000 to 99,999	79.0%	13.1%	0.2%	7.7%
25,000 to 49,999	83.3%	9.2%	0.2%	7.3%
10,000 to 24,999	83.4%	8.0%	0.5%	10.3%
5,000 to 9,999	79.0%	9.7%	0.3%	7.5%
Less than 5,000	71.2%	16.8%	0.8%	11.2%
Total: N = 883	81.3%	9.2%	0.4%	9.1%

Figure 2. PLDS 2007 (FY2006) Percentage Operating Revenue by Source, U.S. Libraries Reporting

2.3 percent (7.2 percent versus 9 percent).

- Other sources of revenue (non-tax dollars) is nearly twice that of nationally reported figures (13.1 percent versus 7.1 percent).

For libraries in the smallest communities, the following differences exist:

- State revenue accounted for more than twice that in the federal survey (16.8 percent versus 7.2 percent).
- Other revenue (non-tax dollars) was about 7 percent lower than what is typically reported nationally.

Local operating revenue per capita reported by PLDS respondents versus the universe of public libraries are presented in figure 5. Although different fiscal years, the gap in reported local income grows

the smaller the library. Surprisingly, the proportion of expenditures reported in the PLDS is reasonably close with that reported by the universe of public libraries (see figure 6). It may be that what libraries report in the PLDS under specific income categories is more accurately reported in the IMLS data as a result of the editing processes.

Many smaller libraries may attribute income to local sources when, in fact, the funding comes from a variety of non-local tax support. This type of correction would be made in collaboration with state library staff before data are reported as final by IMLS.

The comparability of expenditures reported between the PLDS and IMLS data may be the result of a number of factors, including budgeted expenditures being reported versus actual expenditures or that expenditures may be more easily and accurately tracked by libraries

of all sizes. Regardless the reason, the variation in reported income between the PLDS and IMLS surveys raise a flag of caution, whereas the closer proportional alignment of the expenditures data does not. It would be reasonable to use the PLDS expenditures data to track trends for any size library.

Other Pesky Data

About every four years the PLDS asks supplemental finance questions (1998, 2001, 2005, and 2008). These detail how many libraries charge for services; sources of funding including detail for E-Rate discounts, state aid, and federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding administered by state libraries; and, alternative sources of income (e.g., funding from foundations, overdue fines, rentals, interest, and so on). These data are useful for a number of reasons—PLDS is perhaps the

only aggregated source of this information (especially state aid and E-Rate discounts), the response rates are robust with little drop-off from the core survey to the supplemental questions, and it is possible to benchmark a library against its peers for many of the items reported.

The added value of having this periodic detail is

Population of Legal Service Area	Local	State	Federal	Other
1,000,000 and above	81.1%	6.3%	0.7%	11.9%
500,000 to 999,999	83.5%	9.1%	0.4%	7.0%
250,000 to 499,999	80.0%	11.7%	0.4%	7.9%
100,000 to 249,999	83.0%	9.5%	0.5%	6.7%
50,000 to 99,999	80.7%	11.1%	0.5%	7.7%
25,000 to 49,999	83.4%	8.8%	0.3%	7.5%
10,000 to 24,999	81.7%	8.7%	0.4%	9.2%
5,000 to 9,999	78.2%	9.9%	0.5%	11.4%
Less than 5,000	73.1%	7.2%	1.1%	18.5%
Total:	81.5%	9.6%	0.5%	8.4%
N = 9,198				

Figure 3. IMLS FY2005 Percentage Operating Revenue by Source, All U.S. Libraries

	Population Served		Percentage for All Population Served Ranges
	100,000 to 249,999	Less than 5,000	
PLDS 2007 (FY2006)			
Local	79.3%	71.2%	81.3%
State	7.2%	16.8%	9.2%
Federal	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%
Other	13.1%	11.2%	9.1%
IMLS FY2005			
Local	83.0%	73.1%	81.5%
State	9%	7.2%	9.6%
Federal	0.8%	1.1%	0.5%
Other	7.1%	18.5%	8.4%

Figure 4. Percentage Operating Revenue by Source, PLDS and IMLS

Population of Legal Service Area	PLDS FY2006 Local Operating Revenue Per Capita (Income)	IMLS FY2005 Local Operating Revenue Per Capita (Income)
1,000,000 and above	\$29.04	\$26.54
500,000 to 999,999	\$31.03	\$31.10
250,000 to 499,999	\$29.10	\$26.68
100,000 to 249,999	\$28.79	\$25.20
50,000 to 99,999	\$33.65	\$26.30
25,000 to 49,999	\$44.23	\$30.45
10,000 to 24,999	\$36.57	\$29.21
5,000 to 9,999	\$60.53	\$26.63
Less than 5,000*	\$36.22	\$25.20

*estimated for IMLS

Figure 5. PLDS 2007 (FY2006) and IMLS FY2005 Local Operating per Capita, U.S. Libraries Reporting

to understand the range of funding sources that comprise “other funding sources.” Library stakeholders and those unfamiliar with libraries benefit from reviewing these data and

discovering the complexity of public library funding. Having this periodic detail goes a long way in the education process. The ALA Office for Research & Statistics refers individu-

als interested in understanding more about public library funding to these PLDS supplemental reports.

Conclusion

So what does all this cross comparison tell us? The PLDS is a valid source for revenue and expenditures for the larger public libraries; it is not as reliable for libraries serving communities under 100,000 and less so for communities under 25,000 residents. Also, responses to services, staffing, and supplemental questions are valuable and may be used to understand emerging trends in library services—are funding rates dropping overall or in just some service area ranges, what is happening with staffing levels or hours open, are libraries spending less for materials, or are director salaries increasing or remaining static? These trends are visible if you compare the print reports side by side, but are very easy to identify in the online tool where multiple years of data may be compared. The *PLDS Library Trends* function supports

cross-analysis for 2006–08 data. Use it . . . you’ll like it. 

Population of Legal Service Area	PLDS 2007 (FY2006)			IMLS FY2005		
	Percent Salary Benefits Expenditures per Capita	Percent Library Material Expenditures per Capita	Percent Other Expenditures per Capita	Percent Salary Benefits Expenditures per Capita	Percent Library Material Expenditures per Capita	Percent Other Expenditures per Capita
1,000,000 and above	64.7%	11.9%	23.5%	64.1%	12.3%	23.5%
500,000 to 999,999	63.6%	14.2%	22.2%	65.2%	14.1%	20.8%
250,000 to 499,999	63.4%	13.7%	22.8%	65.0%	13.3%	21.7%
100,000 to 249,999	65.5%	12.9%	21.7%	66.8%	12.9%	20.3%
50,000 to 99,999	64.6%	12.8%	22.6%	67.0%	12.6%	20.3%
25,000 to 49,999	64.5%	12.8%	22.6%	66.6%	12.8%	20.6%
10,000 to 24,999	65.6%	11.9%	22.0%	65.8%	13.0%	21.2%
5,000 to 9,999	65.0%	13.2%	21.8%	63.6%	14.0%	22.4%
Less than 5,000	59.7%	12.6%	27.7%	57.9%	15.7%	26.4%
Total:	64.3%	13.1%	22.6%	65.5%	13.1%	21.4%

Figure 6. Percent Total Operating Expenditures per Capita PLDS 2007 (FY2006) and IMLS FY2005, All Sources

References and Notes

1. Public Library Association, "Public Library Data Service Statistical Report," www.ala.org/ala/pla/plapubs/pldsstatreport/pldsstatistical.cfm (accessed Aug. 4, 2008).
2. The Public Libraries in the U.S. is a longitudinal data series published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) until October 2007 when responsibility for collecting public library data transferred to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Information about the data series is online at <http://harvester.census.gov/imls/index.asp> (accessed Aug. 4, 2008).
3. The FY2005 IMLS universe was 9,189 library systems; the 2007 (FY2006) PLDS response was 851. See figure 1.
4. Information about Bibliostat Collect is available online at www.btol.com/pdfs/biblio_collect.pdf (accessed Aug. 4, 2008).

Does your library participate in the *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report*? Help us provide a better picture of what's happening in North American libraries. Send an e-mail to Kathleen Hughes, khughes@ala.org, if your library would like to participate in the upcoming survey.



NANCI MILONE HILL is the Head of Readers' Services at the Nevins Memorial Library in Methuen, Mass; nhill@mvlc.org.

Nanci is reading *Seven Moves* by Carol Anshaw and *Archeron: A Dark Hunter* Novel by Sherrilyn Kenyon.

"Perspectives" offers varied viewpoints on subjects of interest to the public library profession.

Whose Job Is It Anyway?

The Relationship between Trustees and Directors

The relationship between library boards and library directors is often a fragile one, yet it does not need to be. Education and understanding of each other's unique roles and responsibilities can help to smooth the path to a more fruitful relationship.

Unfortunately, these relationships are not always without friction. While directors generally have an educational background in library science, small libraries in rural areas may not require an MLS degree for their directors. While many trustees run for office because of a genuine interest in helping out the library, many run and are elected because of their standing in their community. Many trustees are not elected, but rather hold their seats for life and are replaced only by other board members. At the last library I worked for, the trustees included only elected officials and settled clergy in the community. We had trustees who never used the library. Many never showed up for meetings. Those who did were there because it was required of them.

My first experience as library director was a disaster. I was young and fresh out of library school. I had an ideal vision of what public libraries should be. I believed they should be a critical force in their communities. My library served a population of just seven thousand. The trustees had all served on the board for upward of twenty years. They were all prominent members of the community. Not one of them had any idea what the role of a trustee should be. Their need to micromanage (to the point of telling me what books to order or to "send back") was legendary. The previous director had only lasted three months. Had I had more experience, I would have shown more patience. I would have plodded onward in a slower manner, giving my board time to adjust to me as a director and to the idea of change. As it was, I spent every evening that year going home feeling completely beaten. I left after that year. The library got a new director; trustees left the board and new ones were appointed, and today it is a thriving library with a brand new building.

Library schools need to provide more education for future managers on the relationship between directors and trustees. State library boards need

to provide more education for both directors and trustees.

What follows are two essays—one from a former library director and one from a veteran trustee. I hope you will appreciate what they have to say and that, in some small way, these essays may help you at least begin a discussion with your own trustees.

Buyer Beware

MARY WILKINS JORDAN (WILKINSJORDAN@YAHOO.COM),
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The relationship between public library boards and library directors can be tricky, but when well-balanced it can produce some great things for both parties and for the library. Library board members can contribute a lot of things to libraries, including their ideas, time, energy, and resources. I have seen them function well and provide a great spark of energy to their libraries—just exactly what is most desired and needed in public libraries. However, this was not the case with my first library.

I'm sure the members of my board were actually humans and not demons from hell, but at the time I was not so positive. They certainly seemed devoted to the total destruction of the library and spending their time planning new ways to torture me. Let's just say we got off on the wrong foot.

I had seen this position open for a few weeks but thought I might not be qualified for a director job right out of school. However, I thought I should give it a try; the worst they could do was to say no. When they called me for the interview I was very excited. When I showed up, I

was much less so. The library looked very nice and the staff seemed good at first glance. There were several patrons sitting around reading and it all looked fine. Then the reference librarian came up to me and said something like, "Oh, thank goodness you came; none of the other people showed up!" This was a bad sign, but I persevered.

The board kept me waiting nearly an hour before showing me into their meeting—another bad sign. When I got there, it was obvious none of them had looked at my resume; no one knew what kinds of things they should be asking me, or what the director should be doing for the library. The president snapped at me—more than once—to tell me they were not going to pay for any degrees for me. I was baffled. I not only had an MLIS but also a JD, BA, and BS; what degree could she mean? After a confused twenty minutes or so, I departed. The next day I got an e-mail from the reference librarian, with the board's offer of the job. They offered more money than I expected and I decided to give it a try.

On my first day, my new secretary met me at the door, handed me a key to my office and the front door, and left—that was my orientation. The previous director had left stacks of paper all over the floor of the office; I spent two weeks cleaning it all up and trying to figure out what was going on. At 10 o'clock that first morning, I got a phone call regarding an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) hearing being rescheduled an hour later that Friday. No one had mentioned this to me, and no response had been filed. I also discovered there was no real budget (after some conflict, the city stopped giving the library copies of the budget), and—

three months into the fiscal year—we were absolutely on track to run out of money soon.

I did not see or hear from the board members until the next month's meeting. By then I had discovered the president had been on the board for about twenty years and the vice president for about fifteen. In addition to not caring about these pieces of news I had uncovered (about the EEOC hearing and the lack of a budget), I learned they also did not know the difference between reference and circulation. They were confused by grants and very suspicious when I said we needed to start looking for them. They were also resentful of the idea that we needed to start doing publicity because the local newspaper "never said anything good" about the community. When I brought guests to the board meetings, the guests inevitably emerged dazed from the vitriol spewed by the board members.

So, what did I learn from all this? Pay attention to the danger signs before you start a new job! But, with some distance from the situation, I also see mistakes I made in our relationship. It was a mistake not to stand up for myself and the ideas I thought were important. Although the board is the employer, it is the director's job to provide the subject expertise and to help educate the board. I also should have picked up some skills in conflict resolution to help us move past their suspicion and develop a better dialog. If I had been more secure with my own role and responsibilities, the situation might have been different for everyone.

I did learn about persevering in the face of difficulties. I learned to appreciate the staff members that were helpful (and to be careful about those who were not). I learned

It was a mistake not to stand up for myself and the ideas I thought were important. Although the board is the employer, it is the director's job to provide the subject expertise and to help educate the board.

important lessons about working with community groups; if I had not been desperate to find support I might not have worked with so many great people and organizations that turned out to be really helpful for the library.

Working with other library boards later in my career, I saw that the delicate relationship between directors and board members may not always run smoothly, but keeping those lines of communication open can go a long way toward solving problems. Starting with a basis of mutual respect and an understanding of the importance of focusing on the needs of the library, above all else, will help smooth the borders of responsibility between directors and boards. Board members have a lot of great contributions they can make to a library; conflict between them and the director will only drag everyone down, so making that relationship a priority is important, not only for your own peace of mind but also to maintain a better library.

From the Other Side

SHIRLEY LANG (MORLANG@JUNO.COM), MEMBER AND PAST PRESIDENT, SYOSSET (N.Y.) PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES; PAST PRESIDENT, NASSAU LIBRARY SYSTEM; PAST PRESIDENT, NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARY BOARDS; SPEAKER AND AUTHOR, *ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES*

Some years ago, the Association of Library Trustees & Advocates (ALTA) and PLA cosponsored an ALA Annual Conference program titled "Trustees Are from Venus, Directors Are from

Mars." The program explored the relationship between trustees and directors. I was amazed at the interest evidenced by the standing room only audience. Clearly the subject had touched a nerve on both sides of the aisle. I served as moderator that morning. When we finally cleared the room, it was evident to me that there was a lot of confusion, misunderstanding, and unrealistic expectations of each other's role in the governance and management of the library. It also surprised me to learn from a survey done by ALTA that many schools offering an MLS degree provided little information on the role of the board of trustees. Although viewed from different perspectives, trustees and directors have similar gripes. The board of trustees is the policymaking body with fiduciary and oversight responsibility for the institution. The director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility and the implementation of policy. Trustees complain about the lack of information they receive from their directors and directors complain about what they perceive to be trustee interference.

It appears that most of the misconceptions and problems arise when communication breaks down between trustees and directors. This occurs when information is inadequate, nonexistent, incomplete, or blurred. Frequently this is compounded by personality clashes and sensitive egos. Trustee questions are seen as thinly disguised criticisms and are often mislabeled as micro-managing.

It should not take a wizard to figure out how to ease these tensions and bring about some clarity and harmony. As a member of ALTA for twenty-seven years, I know the answer—at least for trustees—is education. ALTA programs at ALA Annual Conferences focus on education. Trustee speakers are available for local and state meetings and articles in our newsletter, *The Voice* (including my column "Ask a Trustee") bring relevant information to trustees.

Whose job is it to educate trustees—the board president or the local or state trustee association? There should be an orientation for every new trustee with the director and the board president. In most states, trustees—as public officials—must be fully cognizant of all of the laws that apply to them. In these litigious times, while it may not be possible to avoid legal challenges, every precaution should be taken to see that library policies are clearly defined and enforced. Conduct all board meetings in full compliance with the *Open Meetings Law* and in conformance with *Robert's Rules of Order* on parliamentary procedure. Have the library's attorney review policies and ask for frequent updates on new laws, regulations, and court decisions that affect libraries. Be sure that the library has adequate liability insurance including director and officer coverage.

Most directors appreciate the function of the board of trustees. As the legal caretakers of the library, trustees act with special obliga-

tions for the administration and investment of assets that belong to someone else. The board of trustees is responsible for the governance of the institution. The concept of governance is more than setting policy or approving annual budgets. It requires having accurate facts in order to act with due diligence.

So, where's the beef? The following is an example of what I mean. The subject of *Public Libraries'* May/June 2008 Perspectives column was about providing services to the home-schooled. Eleven library employees contributed to the discussion. Except for the notation from one librarian that their trustees were appointed by the school board and the coincidence that, at another library, the parent of a homeschooler also happened to be a library trustee, not a single contributor mentioned anything about bringing this concept to their trustees. I expected to read that

a preliminary outline for this was first presented to the board. Then, when given sufficient supportive data, the board would have the facts needed to endorse the project. Some directors may say that this is a management issue and not one for the trustees to get involved with. To those directors I say: if you can support the need and can show the potential benefits, you should disclose this to your trustees and include them when making a decision. What are you afraid of?

Trustees bring a broad range of skills and a commitment to act with the best interests of the community in mind. We need to learn how to talk and listen to one another. Perhaps one way to improve this communication issue would be with a future column in *Public Libraries*. Directors could send in their pet peeves and a trustee could respond. Any ideas? 

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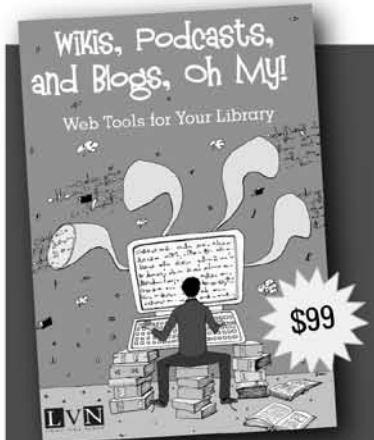
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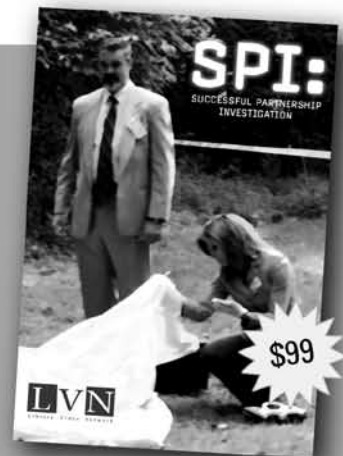
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Brendan is reading *The
Likeness* by Tana French.

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The Story That Came Out

An Interview with Donna Freitas

Donna Freitas is assistant professor of religion at Boston University. She is the author of *Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and coauthor of *Killing the Imposter God: Philip Pullman's Spiritual Imagination in His Dark Materials* (Jossey-Bass, 2007). She recently ventured into the world of young adult literature with the publication of her novel *The Possibilities of Sainthood* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008). She spoke with *Public Libraries* by phone in August.

Public Libraries: The main character of *The Possibilities of Sainthood* is pretty unusual. Could you describe her for people who haven't read the book?

Donna Freitas: Antonia Lucia Labella is a fifteen-year-old girl and she is in many ways a regular high school girl. She goes to a parochial school—Catholic school—and does the whole plaid-skirt-wearing, knee-sock-wearing, Catholic-school-gear thing. But one of the most defining parts of her life is that she comes from an immigrant Italian family and she lives above the Italian market that her family owns and she works there. So her life is filled with food and loud Italian family members. And the other thing that really defines her and really drives the story is the fact that once a month every month since she was seven she's been writing the Vatican proposing new saints and then herself as the ideal candidate. And then eventually her other big hope is to have her first kiss coincide with her desire for sainthood in what I hope is a quirky, funny way.

PL: One thing that really struck me about her was that while she wanted romance, she also really wanted respect from her partner.

DF: Antonia is very irreverent in a lot of ways and I hope she's got a pretty good sense of humor. She has really *no* experience in the romance department, or very little, at the beginning of the book, and so she's not quite sure how to handle herself in these kinds of situations when they come up. So she gets really nervous around boys even though she is really excited to get going in the romance department. There's sort of a love triangle in the book and the boy she really has her heart set on is not a very good person in the end even though he's very good-looking. In the end, she realizes that what's most important is to be with somebody who she can be herself with, who really respects her, who she can talk to and she can have good conversations with, who likes her for her, and who she can tell her secrets to without fear of him thinking she's weird or strange; someone she can confide in. So it takes her a while to get there and a couple of perhaps funny and bumbling moments, but she eventually gets to the boy who is good for her, not just the one who's good-looking.

PL: Did your experiences teaching and writing *Sex and the Soul* influence the creation of Antonia?

DF: Well, it's funny that you ask it in that particular way because at first I would say not at all. My experience working at a college and working on *Sex and the Soul* had no bearing whatsoever on Antonia. She really came from Rhode Island which is where I grew up. I grew up in a big Catholic Italian family, even though my father was Portuguese which is where I get the last name Freitas. So much of the story comes from my mother's side of the family and the way she and my grandmother

would tell stories. But what's funny about what you asked is that I wrote the entire story while I was doing the field work for *Sex and the Soul* and I'm not sure if it was unconscious or what but in many ways *The Possibilities of Sainthood* is the opposite of *Sex and the Soul*, because a lot of what that book is about is hookup culture on college campuses. I was gathering stories from students about their romantic and their sexual lives on campus and what I got from them was largely very sad stories about how much they didn't like hookup culture, but they felt forced to participate in it, and how much their lives lacked romance and the kind of romance they wanted. So I don't know whether it was truly accidental or unconscious on my part that *The Possibilities of Sainthood* is sort of the opposite of *Sex and the Soul*.

PL: In many ways Antonia seems the ideal interview candidate for *Sex and the Soul* because she has such a strong sense of self and is so secure in her religious beliefs.

DF: She's definitely a very feisty strong-willed character and she gets that from the women in her family. I think all the women in the book, whether they're sympathetic or not, are very strong-willed and expressive and opinionated. Antonia may be innocent in some respects, in terms of [being] inexperienced, but she certainly doesn't lack character or opinions or the will to pursue what she wants. She's very persistent and she has this strength of character. When she gets this opportunity with this boy who she's been lusting after for several years and he completely dashes all of her perceptions of him, she's not about to settle for him. She storms off from him and says, "To



Donna Freitas

heck with you!" She's not going to settle for anything less than her ideal sense of romance. I think that comes from her strong will.

I wouldn't actually describe Antonia as religious. I grew up in a house just filled with saints and more so than anything else my mother and grandmother were always invoking the saints in life—saints and cooking, basically. So Antonia, I think, occupies this very strongly Catholic world but in a cultural sense. And the saints to me are just a wonderful, very comical aspect of Catholic culture. And so she's not so much worried about going to church or God or Jesus or anything like that, she's just in her own world doing her high school things and the saints are just all around her as they are in her family and she just talks to them like she would her friends. So I think it's more of a quirk of who she is.

PL: So you wouldn't describe her as devout?

DF: No! I guess she's devout with regard to the saints. It's more that Catholicism is her culture. So she's just moving in her culture like anybody else. It's hard to be Italian and not be Catholic, they're almost one and the same. I liken it to my husband who is Jewish—he's culturally Jewish—but he's not religiously Jewish. And I often think Italians are Catholic in that way, but the one thing that really gets them is the saints. Italians love the saints. They talk to them as if they're around. But it's much more about the saints and how they can help you with the little things in life than anything else. And then just the rituals of Catholicism are very much a part of immigrant Italian life. So I guess I think of her more in that way. She's not praying to God or Jesus, she's like, "Okay Saint Sebastian tomorrow I have gym and I am just terrible at soccer can you please help me?" So Catholicism is more of a funny cultural aspect of the story than anything else.

To me, Italian culture is just so filled with life and also with humor. Everything is so big in Italian families and Italian culture. You talk with your hands—I'm talking with my hands on the phone with you, I often realize that when I'm talking on the phone with people that I'm gesticulating wildly. But there's a loudness, a bigness to being Italian because everything's so big and so boisterous and everyone's talking at once and no one wants to wait their turn and everything's very melodramatic. It was just such a vibrant world in which to tell a story and it's also the world that I know, it's how I grew up. So for me, that world is just so alive, I just heard Antonia's voice. I heard it very strongly and it was very loud,

much like an Italian. That was the story that wanted to come out while I was writing. That world was so alive around me, it was just such a fun setting to play around with and tell a story. I hope people enjoy entering that world because I think it's a pretty fun one.

PL: What made you write a YA novel?

DF: I've long been interested in children's literature. I've been going to conferences for a very long time. I went to CLNE, Children's Literature of New England, for about five years. Part of my academic research has been in children's literature, in particular young adult literature and fantasy. So I've been in that world and reading that genre for years. When it came time for me to write a story—which I didn't expect ever to do—this is the story that came out. So I'm not sure if it's that I'm so involved in the genre that that's where my head was but the voice of my character was clearly a fifteen-year-old girl and so I wrote the book that wanted to be written. I don't know. I guess it was just fate.

PL: You've said before that reading *Holes* had a big impact on you?

DF: The first time a character ever popped into my head or the idea of even writing a story popped into my head was after I finished reading *Holes*. I was on vacation lying in a hammock reading the story and I loved Stanley Yelnats. I loved the quirkiness of the story. And I was wondering to myself if I ever came up with a character with a quirk, like Stanley's, what would that character's quirk be? So it's *Holes* that even

made me imagine writing fiction and it was finishing that book that sparked the story and writing a novel for me.

PL: So what were the influential YA books you read when you were growing up?

DF: I loved anything by Judy Blume and Beverly Cleary—Judy Blume has lasted me a lifetime! But my mother fed me on a good supply of Judy Blume and Beverly Cleary, especially when I was younger, and then Madeleine L'Engle. I loved fantasy stories and also when I got older I started reading *Sweet Valley High*, I have to admit. I think I might have had all the books. I bought them as they came out.

PL: Can you tell us about your next book?

DF: The next book is called *The Patron Saint of Kissing*. I just finished it last week and happily got it off to my editor before my computer died. Antonia has a special visitor very early on from the Vatican and chaos and excitement ensues. But she becomes the patron saint of the first kiss and kissing and experiences what it's like in some ways to have her dream come true but then also to have all these complications that come with it. So there's a bit of a "be careful what you wish for" theme to it but it's still filled again with her family and working at Labella's Market and lots of food and her conniving cousins and her best friend Maria and of course there's a couple of love interests including one from the first book. So there's a lot of romance in the second book too. 



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If you have feedback about this article, would like to suggest a topic for future Internet Spotlight articles, have an interesting Internet resource to share, or if you just want to say hello, please feel free to e-mail the editors.

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

Hi-Fi, Sci-Fi Libraries

As we write this issue's column, the video project we discuss has been on the Internet for less than 72 hours. In that short time the video has already been blogged about in seven countries, in five languages, and has been viewed more than 2,200 times. While not everything you create as a library professional will garner this level of quick attention, it does show the power of the medium, the tools involved, and the environment we work in. This is about a project by Libraryland for Libraryland, but just imagine if this power could be harnessed for your library's marketing, outreach, and funding! As you'll see from the column that follows, that idea is really not that far out of reach.

You Have Some Homework!

For the first time since we have been writing this column, we are actually asking you to go on the Web and find something specific. It's something fun, yet can still be counted as “work.” We need you to go find a specific music video. A library-themed music video. A library-themed video and song that we made together talking about, well . . . the point of this column. It's a song and video made using lots of the tools you have heard us talk about in this column.

First off, to see exactly what we're talking about (and even what we look like—eep!) you're going to have to invest a good ten minutes. But it will be worth it! For that small time investment you will be amused, more informed, and hopefully even a bit inspired. And by the time you are done watching the video and reading this column, you may very well have some ideas for new ways *you* might be able to collaborate, create, share, and help your library become what we are calling a “hi-fi, sci-fi library.”

So here's what you need to do first. Using your favorite general Web search tool, search for “hi-fi sci-fi video” (include those dashes, and add the word “king” or “libraryman” to target your search). This will get you a series of results. Most will be blog posts or articles about the project, and most will direct you to the video you need to watch for this assignment (of course, the results linking through libraryman.com or davidleeking.com are the best). Oh, and in case you notice some links in other languages, which may very well happen, don't worry, you are in the right place. So, go watch that video and come right back, and we'll give you the scoop.

What's Up with Your Video, Anyway?

Oh, hi! You're back! Well, what did you think? It was silly, wasn't it? But it made some serious points, too. And you have that "Hi-Fi, Sci-Fi Library" chorus stuck in your head, don't you. It's quite the earworm, eh? But it really is more than that. This was truly a collaborative work, with library staff all over the planet contributing content. In fact, in the sidebar of this article you will find both the lyrics (which may clarify a few things because they fly by quickly) and a list of the librarians that you see singing along in the video.

But what made this song and video possible? Where did the idea come from and why on earth would we both put so much work into a project like this? Well, we decided to give it a shot for this column and for libraries. Also for our careers (hey—it can't hurt, right?). And for you, too! We believe that Libraryland needs some inspiration *and* amusement. We all work hard and believe that libraries *must* endure as society evolves. So why not talk about libraries present and future in light of current tech, future tech, academic futurism, and, yes, science fiction! But what might get people's toes tapping? Yep, a groovy library song!

This idea sprang to life when Michael was invited to present one of the keynotes at the upcoming Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) National Forum (October 16–19, 2008). This made him happy, proud, excited, and maybe even a little nervous. It also left him wondering: What should the theme of this presentation be? Hmm . . . LITA, eh? Well, let's see: Internet Spotlight column, presentations on emerging practical technology, ubiquitous computing, electronic community, gaming, and

(always) the future of the library? What we need is a hi-fi sci-fi library!

Michael wanted some unique multi-media with a fun and funky punch to go along with this session. What could be better than a song? But alas, Michael knows how to play only the most basic of notes on the most basic of instruments. So, *knock, knock, knock* (or *ring, ring, ring*), Michael approached me (David) with his idea. Before I was a librarian, I worked in Nashville, in the music industry (primarily setting up microphones and making coffee for musicians. Lots and *lots* of coffee). And as you might imagine, I get more than a passing grade on an instrument or two (or five).

So Michael said to me, "David, I want to make a song and a video for

Lyrics to "Hi-Fi, Sci-Fi Library"

Here-in contains collected thoughts from our brains when it comes to the subject of wow!

Like wow, it's amazing for thousands of years that libraries have survived at all.

The razing, book blazing, and the techno staff crazing fighting competition new tech and how to emerge like a rocket ship, speedy and fast that is demanded in our world right NOW!!!

Hi-fi, sci-fi library!

S. R. Ran-ga-na-than 'long with Benjamin Franklin, Dewey, Kilgour and good people like YOU.

Learnt that mashed up with currents and a whole bunch of circuits, info went to many not just the few.

Now we wrestle with techno, money, and limitations that might sometimes make a good man go "ewww." But we're telling you brothers, sisters, ladies, and others that we're near a massive "WOW!" breakthrough. It is your hi-fi, sci-fi library!

To prepare our libraries we must be informed, explore lots, and have fun learning how to evolve. Learn about things like gaming, social software, and being just where our users are: that brings us HUGE wows.

Look at open-source software and the Creative Commons, look at Netflix and iTunes and learn how. We can take competition, turn it into fruition THE LIBRARY FOR TOMORROW AND NOW!

It will be hi-fi, sci-fi libraries!

Now we sometimes might wonder how to succeed not blunder since we're underneath the specter of "how?"

It's a do-or-die sea change and we cannot just remain, what we were before or we'll just sink down. Take time daily, read lib blogs, build community, and slog through the learning, practice, wisdom, and "pow!"

It will be fun we promise, you'll work hard but will harness and endow your libs tomorrow with "WOW!" The wow of hi-fi, sci-fi library!

this LITA presentation I am doing in the fall—something that both you and I could do together and can both believe in and get behind. I'm slightly nervous about this presenta-

tion for some reason, but I also see it as a great opportunity to help get the word out about what we both believe when it comes to society, library futures, and technology. I have some basic song ideas and all the lyrics ready. Would you like to help me make a song and a video?"

And I, being the generous and thoughtful friend that I am, said "Of course!" Actually, I said something like "Well I like the idea for sure. Why don't you write down your ideas and lyrics, send them to me and we might be able to work on it once things settle down a bit." And, of course, things never did settle down, for either of us. So, slowly but surely we worked on it like a hobby for a few months. (I would later generously blog: "I honestly wasn't sure Michael's idea would work when he first suggested it to me, but then I'm game for just about anything, so I thought let's try it and see what happens!")

Michael: "Over the course of those months David and I sent musical ideas and lyrics and rhythmical concepts back and forth."

Me (David again): "And as we started writing the lyrics, rhythms, and melody lines started bouncing around in my head and I realized this would be easy to pull off."

Michael: "So, with most of the song in place, I arranged to spend a day with David (on the front end of a happily convenient trip to present to the Northeast Kansas Library System in Topeka) recording our song. No, it wasn't easy. But yes, we actually DID IT! And lo and behold, one day of recording later we had our song. And a few goofy video files! We were really on our way! With the song complete, it was time to make the video. And since David had done 85 percent of the musical work, it seemed only fair that *I* handle the video-making responsibilities.

So I dove in. And, well, it took almost a month. And it took contributions from librarians all across the planet. But we did it—we made a music video!

I Can Do That, Too!

Now, *think* for a second about what you just watched and read about. Me and Michael singing (and being goofy) on video. Michael learning video editing software. Video snippets from other busy librarians, some recording the video from their offices, with just a few precious minutes to spare. Video is becoming easy. Time consuming, yes. But easy. YouTube is just three years old—and in that short amount of time, video has become easy to make and easy to post.

Our video demonstrates how easy video is becoming. Easy to make, collaborate on, and share. Folks, these tools are easy to use. If Michael and I can do this while living in two different states, think about what *you* can do, at your library, with your talented staff! It could be amazing! Rock on, Libraryland! We hope you enjoy it! 



This happy little cartoon showed up on the Web the day after the video was posted online. Thanks Emily! (Image credit: Emily Lloyd, <http://selfcheck.blogspot.com>)

Hi-Fi Sci-Fi Librarians Featured in the Video

- Kathryn Greenhill, Murdoch University, Fremantle, Western Australia (librariansmatter.com)
- Steven Lawson, Tutt Library, Colorado College (stevewelawson.name/seealso)
- Michelle Boule and Gideon Smith, wanderingeyre.com (Michelle's site, not Gideon's)
- John Blyberg, Darien (Conn.) Library (blyberg.net)
- Jessamyn West (librarian.net)
- Nebraska Library Commission Staff: Michael Sauers (as himself *and* an alien and sock puppet), Allana Novotny, Susan Knisely, and Christa Burns
- Joanna Axelrod and Donna Feddern, Escondido (Calif.) Public Library
- Cindy Hickey, State Library of Kansas (webjunctionworks.org/ks/blog)
- WebJunction Staff: Chrystie Hill, Michael Shapiro, Allison Severinghaus, Laura Staley, Emily Inlow-Hood, Jennifer Peterson, Emily Warren, and Laura Zingg (webjunction.org)
- Chadwick Seagraves (InfoSciPhi.info)
- Steve Miller, Allen County (Ind.) Public Library (goateedlibrarian.blogspot.com)
- Jason and Eliza Griffey, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (jasongriffey.net)
- Katie Dunneback (younglibrarian.net)
- Blake Carver (lisnews.org)
- Christopher Parent
- Cindi Trainor, Eastern Kentucky University, and her two lovely and talented girls (citegeist.com)

The National Endowment for the Humanities presents

Picturing America

America's History Through Our Nation's Art



Free American art and history resources available for schools and public libraries—Apply by October 31st!

Picturing AmericaSM is a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), conducted in cooperation with the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office. The goal of **Picturing America** is to promote the teaching, study and understanding of American art and history.

Public, private, parochial, and charter schools and home school consortia (K-12), as well as public library systems and school districts, are invited to apply for **Picturing America**, an education initiative that provides a collection of large-scale laminated reproductions depicting works of American art, as well as other educational information on American art and history.

Online applications will be accepted August 4–October 31, 2008.

For more information about **Picturing America**, including the artwork featured and the online application, visit <http://picturingamerica.neh.gov>.

Past recipients of the **Picturing America** collection are not eligible for a second award. With questions, contact publicprograms@ala.org.

Grant Wood (1892-1942), detail, *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*, 1931.
Oil on Masonite, 50 x 40 inches. (76.2 x 101.6 cm).
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1950 (50.117).
Photograph © 1988 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Art © Estate of Grant Wood/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY.



Office of Head Start



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www.nps.gov



Contributing Editor **LEE PRICE** is the Director of Development at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia. In that position, and in his previous work as a fund-raising consultant, he has helped to raise millions of dollars for a wide variety of cultural organizations, including many libraries and archives. Please direct all correspondence about the column to him at leeaprice@comcast.net.

Lee is reading *The Parade's Gone By* by Kevin Brownlow and *Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex* by Mary Roach.

"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.

The First Place to Turn for Research

I first visited Philadelphia's Regional Foundation Center, located on the second floor of the Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia, in the early 1990s. A young woman named Gloria D. Hibbett helped me get oriented to the space, showing me where I could find books on the subject I was researching, and teaching me how to use the microfiche reader. I remember going buggy-eyed from that microfiche reader as I combed through the tax returns, noting all the glorious contributions made by local private foundations.

Hibbett is still there today, managing the Regional Foundation Center as the cooperating collections supervisor, but the microfiche reader has passed into obsolescence. Now the place is gleaming with a row of computers offering access to the best databases available in fund-raising. Philadelphia's Regional Foundation Center remains the best resource for fund-raising information in the area, just as it was—in a much less sophisticated form—back in 1991.

Philadelphia's Regional Foundation Center is one of more than 340 Foundation Center Cooperating Collections located throughout the United States. Since its establishment in 1956, the national Foundation Center has served the country's philanthropic community by offering access to vital information on grantmakers.

For most communities, the Cooperating Collections are the human face of the national Foundation Center. The Cooperating Collections program of the Foundation Center was launched in the early 1970s. Through this program, the Foundation Center sought to offer a core collection of Foundation Center publications, as well as supplementary materials and services, at convenient sites across the country. While a few of these Cooperating Collections are located at other nonprofit agencies (like the United Way or various community centers), the majority are found in public libraries. After all, that's where people usually turn for information, right?

How to Use a Cooperating Collection

Above all else, the Foundation Center specializes in providing up-to-date information on U.S. private foundations. Because most libraries are either nonprofit organizations or are served by a nonprofit organization (such as a Friends group), they are theoretically eligible for grants from the vast majority of these foundations. But each of these thousands and thousands of private foundations has its own individual quirks. A few love libraries; many love children and youth programs; some love history, science, or sports programs; and some have no interest whatsoever in anything libraries do. When you visit your nearest Cooperating Collection, your mission should be to identify and research the foundations that are most likely to support your library's needs.

At Philadelphia's Regional Foundation Center, Hibbett says that a newcomer to the collection should start by asking for help. That's what I did nearly two decades ago when I first ventured into this resource center, and it remains the best way to use the collection wisely. Many technologically savvy first-timers eye the computers greedily when they enter, eager to get their fingers on those keyboards. But Hibbett recommends a more nuanced and creative approach to fund-raising research. She thinks most people should start by looking at a few well-chosen books. "Electronic searches will always miss things," she says. "Books and journals can provide a more intuitive understanding of the grant-makers. I think this is where people should begin their education."

For most of its fifty-year existence, the Foundation Center has emphasized its self-published books, and the Cooperating Collections still offer print editions of their state-of-the-art fund-raising directories. Some of these are massive volumes like *The Foundation 1,000* and the *National Directory of Corporate Giving*, each offering detailed write-ups on the places that have conscientiously supported nonprofits in recent years. But I always preferred the Foundation Center's slimmer volumes: their subject-based grant guides. Yes, there is an entire book called *Grants for Libraries and Information Services*, with information on all the foundations that have recently given significant grants to libraries, archives, and other information centers. But the creative library researcher will swiftly catch on that the *Libraries* guide is discouragingly thin, while other guides—like *Grants for Children and Youth*—are much fatter. If your library is looking for funding for a children or youth program, perhaps that guide might offer more. After all, if the foundation is interested in serving children, it will probably be willing to consider serving children within a library setting. You'll just have to spin the grant request in the way that best appeals to the foundation's interests.

Finally, there are those computers and their astoundingly rich databases. The centerpiece of each Cooperating Collection is the main database, currently available as either *FC Search: The Foundation Center's Database on CD-ROM* or the *Foundation Directory Online*. Here you can instantly access up-to-date

records on private foundations. You can sort by their interests, location, size, or many other criteria. You can find out who has received a \$50 million windfall from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, or, more realistically, you can check out the foundation run by the Smith family who own the car dealership located a block from the library. Sitting in front of a Cooperating Collection's computer, dreaming about all the possibilities, it always feels like anything might be possible. The sky's the limit.

The Cooperating Collection Nearest You

The number of Cooperating Collections is truly staggering, and it keeps growing. One is probably within a two hours drive of your library, and there's a good chance that it's closer than that. Each of these Cooperating Collections is required to have staff available to assist the public in using the resources. Ask for help. For this one moment, you're not the librarian but a patron and this is your opportunity to let the librarian help you. For a complete list of the places that host Cooperating Collections in each of the fifty states, plus districts and territories visit <http://foundationcenter.org/collections>.

If none of these sites are convenient, perhaps your library should consider hosting its own Cooperating Collection. You can find the application material at the Foundation Center website page listed in the previous paragraph. 



Contributing Editor

MICHAEL GARRETT

FARRELLY is a Youth Services Librarian and graphic novelist living in Chicago; mgfarrelly@gmail.com.

Michael is reading *Incredible Cross Sections* by Stephen Biesty; *Watchmen* by Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons, and John Higgins; *Earth Abides* by George Stewart; and *The City, Not Long After* by Pat Murphy.

“Passing Notes” focuses on young adult service issues, including programming, collection development, and creating stronger connections with young adult patrons. The column will address these topics with a humorous bent and an awareness that the key to working with young adults is constant reinvention.

1984 Revisited

An Interview with Cory Doctorow

If you don't know the name Cory Doctorow you probably haven't been paying very close attention to the Web. Or the battle for fair copyright. Or Creative Commons (CC), which allows copyright holders to define which rights they wish to share. But no worries, Doctorow can be found on bookshelves. Like the Web itself, the man and his work are quickly becoming ubiquitous.

Doctorow is one of the editors of the culture blog Boing Boing (<http://boingboing.net>), a site that covers everything from the latest front in the battle over intellectual property to nifty ways to add steampunk touches to your wardrobe. He's worked for the Electronic Freedom Foundation, edited short story collections, taught at the University of Southern California, and authored several novels for adults. His Wikipedia page reads like a dream resume for anyone with an interest in literature and information science.

His latest novel is *Little Brother* (Tor Teen, 2008). The title is a play on George Orwell's “Big Brother” from his seminal work *1984* and the protagonist of Doctorow's book is a teen with the online handle “w1n5t0n,” also the name of Orwell's lead. But this is no literary parody. *Little Brother* follows w1n5t0n and his friends as they are treated to the tender mercies of government interrogators following a terrorist attack in their hometown of San Francisco. The indignities they suffer, and the subsequent crackdown on civil liberties after the attack, leads them to foment a rebellion.

Little Brother is a scathing assault on the culture of fear and paranoia that many teens live with every day. In a time when zero tolerance, random searches, and Draconian legal measures treat kids more like suspects than citizens, *Little Brother* is the right book at the right time for many young adults. The notion of a teenager-led rebellion may sound old hat, but Doctorow doesn't let his characters off the hook. Consequences abound and not all of them could have been foreseen at the outset.

But don't take my word for it. Read it for yourself—the book is downloadable for free and available online from Doctorow's site (<http://crapbound.com/littlebrother/download>).

Doctorow was kind enough to answer a few questions recently about his book, libraries, and why math is so darn important.



Cory Doctorow (Creative Commons Attribution licensed photo by Joi Ito)

Public Libraries: *Little Brother* has been released not only as a book, but as a free download under a Creative Commons license. What sort of remixes and responses have you seen from the CC release?

Cory Doctorow: It's only been three weeks, so not much as yet. There are some people who've written to say they're planning fan translations, and there've been a ton of format conversions as well.

PL: *Little Brother* is your first book aimed at a YA audience. Did you feel the need to change your style at all? What YA authors inspired you both as a young person and as an author?

CD: A bunch of my friends had written young adult novels and were having the best time. My friend Kathe Koja had been a famous horror writer who'd written very graphic horror, and she decided to write these very, very spare, almost Hemingway-esque young adult novels. And the experiences she described were just so cool, writing for kids who read not just for entertainment but to try to

figure out the way the world works. The feedback she got was so blunt and honest that she was really, really, really excited, and she let her horror novels go out of print. The other thing is that I was going to write a book where the technology really worked, where it was real tech-

nology. I thought young adult was a good genre for that. In young adult fiction, there's an honorable tradition of talking about how technology works—unashamed lectures—and I really like that mode. [Robert A.] Heinlein was a great proponent of that. When I was a kid, I found out a lot about how finance and politics and so on worked through books like [Heinlein's] *Have Space Suit, Will Travel*. My book is sort of a radical, political *Have Space Suit, Will Travel*. So young adult seemed like the right genre.

One thing was the kids I was meeting, who thought of technology increasingly as something that controlled them and not as something that empowered them. That was the complete opposite of how I'd grown up. People in my dad's generation grew up thinking of computers as these soulless machines that would regiment them and put them in lines, but in my generation—I got a computer in 1979 and a modem in 1980, and it was like the whole world opened to me. The amount of control and power I had over my world as a nine-year-old was unbelievable. I don't think there had ever

been a nine-year-old before that who could travel across the globe with these things and have conversations and meet interesting people. But now I meet kids today who tell me, "The computer is used to spy on me, the authorities know what I'm doing, and marketers know what I'm doing."

Another inspiration was thinking about how all these techno-thrillers I read depended on technology that was like magic—technology that did something technology really can't do. As a geek, I thought I'd be able to use technology in the story and not make it totally implausible. I thought, "Can I write a tight, well-paced techno-thriller where everything could actually happen?"

PL: In your work with the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Boing Boing and elsewhere you've documented the creep of surveillance culture and loss of privacy in modern culture. It's a theme at the core of *Little Brother* as well. When you were a young adult what drew you to these issues?

CD: The process of becoming an adult is largely about defining your boundaries, fortifying them, and then enforcing them against a society that, at best, sees you as someone in need of benevolent control for your own good; and at worst sees you as a hormone-addled threat to the well being. Neither of those boxes are particularly dignified ones to inhabit.

PL: You've shown the tools used in w1n5t0n's fight in pretty clear detail, including creating an instruction site on topics like "How to lie to authority figures" and "How to blend in with crowds." [Author's note: The site is www.instructables.com/member/

w1n5t0n] What sort of response have you gotten? Were you nervous about parental or media reaction?

CD: So far, all enthusiastic! People love to find out more about how to take control of—and evaluate and wisely consume—the “security” measures that increasingly control our lives. If I can figure out how to beat a no-fly list, then so can terrorists, so no-fly lists aren’t making us safer. The fastest way to prove that is to publish the methodology for beating the lists. I’m not really worried about the public response—I can predict who won’t like this, and I’m glad to be on the other side.

PL: In some ways *Little Brother*, like its titular inspiration *1984*, has the feel of a call to arms. If you were a young adult today what would you be doing to push back against the surveillance culture?

CD: The three critical tasks for taking back our freedom are:

1. Take control of our technology. If you can’t open it, you don’t own it. Hack everything, make it suit you and follow your orders. Break down censorware gateways and root out and destroy spyware. Confound snoops and net-nannies. The difference between a utopia and a dystopia is whether you control the technology or the technology controls you.
2. Learn math, specifically the statistics of rare events:

www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/may/20/rare.events. [*Author’s note:* This URL leads to an article by Doctorow on the rarity of events like terrorist attacks and unknown predators assaulting children and how panic on these subjects leads to the erosion of civil liberties.]

3. Participate in electoral politics. Every campaign has, at its core, an army of volunteers stuffing envelopes, knocking on doors, and making the difference. Young people have the moral authority even if they lack the vote—they will inherit the world that whomever takes the presidency will make.

PL: You’ve clearly demonstrated the power of Creative Commons as a force for reforming copyright. How would you like to see libraries embrace the principles of CC?

CD: I think that the most important thing is to get behind initiatives that open your collections—especially those not under copyright, such as public domain works—to the downloading public (e.g., the Open Content Alliance) in such a way that anyone can grab those collections, remix them, store them, mirror them, etc.

PL: So often the cry of “what about the children?” is used to bring in tighter controls on personal liberties. How do you see this protectionism hurting young adults?

CD: Kids can’t be made safe—they have to *be* safe. They have to learn the street smarts and public social literacy necessary to conduct themselves intelligently through the world. The only way to learn to gauge risk is practice, and we deny kids that practice when we swaddle them in bubblewrap.

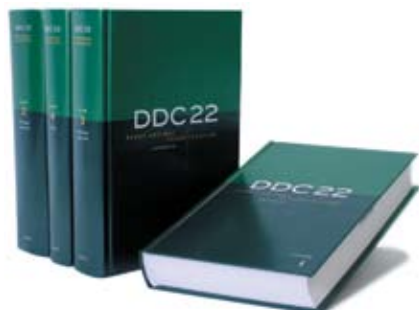
PL: What role do you, both as an activist and author, see libraries and librarians playing in protecting civil liberties? What are libraries getting right, and what are they getting wrong in your view?

CD: The ALA, EIFL [Electronic Information for Libraries], and IFLA [International Federation of Library Associations] are the staunchest comrades I’ve ever known in the fight for freedom. You folks are heroes of the information age, fearless and filled with the authority of those who keep the flame of knowledge alive. Check out what these three orgs—EIFL, IFLA, and ALA—are doing at WIPO [World Intellectual Property Organization] in Geneva and on [Capitol] Hill, volunteer with the committees that work on policy fronts, and make your first answer to any request for information on your patrons, “Have you got a warrant?” And always remember: information you don’t store (on your patrons’ reading habits, for example) is information you can’t be compelled to turn over! 

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BRANDING AND Marketing YOUR LIBRARY

JAMES A. KELLER is Director of Marketing and Communications for the Queens (N.Y.) Library System.

James is reading *From Awareness to Funding: A Study of Library Support in America* by OCLC.

The necessity of marketing a library is certainly not a new concept. The value of the Royal Library of Alexandria was probably spread by satisfied customers across the Mediterranean. No, marketing libraries is not new, but how it's done is changing dramatically, driven by shifting circumstances.

If you're unsure whether marketing your library really makes a difference, consider the success of Queens (N.Y.) Library's (QL) branding and marketing campaign. QL is now the highest-circulating public library in the country. With nearly twenty-three million in circulated materials, it was the first public library in the country to reach that record of circulation. In the most recent fiscal year (2007), QL issued more than 100,000 library cards, another record breaker. Nearly half a million people attended almost 22,000 programs over the last year. And the year that QL developed its strategic marketing plan, the library became the first public library system in the country to exceed twenty million items circulated in a single fiscal year. For QL, a targeted branding and marketing plan has been an unqualified success.

In order to develop a successful branding and marketing campaign for your library, you should ask this question: Are libraries, in fact, relevant in the twenty-first century? The answer, I submit, is most emphatically *yes*—now more than ever. Consider these statistics: Forty-four million adults cannot read well enough to fill out an application, read a food label, or read a story to a child (and we all know the importance of reading aloud to kids).¹ Here in Queens, many households speak a language other than English at home. The population of new Americans is continuing to increase, with growing disorientation and even alienation. And nearly 70 percent of recent college graduates perform merely at a basic or intermediate level of literacy, with just 31 percent demonstrating high-level skills such as reading lengthy, complex English texts.²

According to the 2003 New York State Assessment of Adult Literacy, the latest assessment available, an astonishing 50 percent of adults were either at or below a basic level of prose literacy, with about the same percentage at or below a basic level of document literacy.³ An even higher number (59 percent) were either at or below a basic level of quantitative literacy (able to balance a checkbook or understand a bank statement).⁴

Couple these dismal statistics with the following: The growth of Amazon and mega-booksellers, such as Borders and Barnes and Noble, has obviated the need to go to the library. The expansion of companies such as Netflix gives nearly instant access to popular films, concerts, and television series, and people never even have to leave their own homes for books or entertainment.

Even with this reality, people still long for community: witness the surge in online social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. Everyone, not just teenagers, is looking for stronger connections with other people all the time, and the library gives that sense of community. It attracts an incredible variety of users: individuals, couples, families, kids, teens, adults, and seniors. Perhaps the last and best true democracy, the library not only strives to alleviate the problems of illiteracy described previously, it also brings people of all religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and backgrounds together.

Promote the Library

If we want our libraries to be relevant, what actions do we need to take? Happily, in many cases, libraries have adapted to the changing times. They are providing more Internet connections, programs and services, and materials. They are involved in Web 2.0, and more and more library websites boast blogs and podcasts. Some libraries even have profiles on social networking sites. So why is it that libraries are generally forgotten? Why is it so difficult to get sufficient funding? Why is it a challenge to attract the next generation of librarians?

The answer is twofold. First, our target audiences have forgotten about libraries as they try to navigate increasingly complex lives. More important, though, is this: libraries have made the grave mistake of assuming everyone knows how important and relevant they are. Administrators and librarians have failed to realize that they truly need to *promote* what they have to offer. But how is that done? The first step, long before you develop a plan for branding and marketing your library, is to find out who your stakeholders are.

Identify Your Stakeholders

The primary stakeholder you need to consider is the group (or groups) that provide your library with its annual operating budget; often, a government agency. Once you identify your key stakeholder group, you need to know who makes the actual funding decisions. If you have merely filled out the appropriate forms and accepted the approved budget, you are not marketing to your stakeholders. You need to develop relationships with these funders so they know who you are. You also need to find out what your key stakeholders expect from the library. If they have no expectations, it is your responsibility to create those expectations in tandem with your branding and marketing efforts.

How do you develop that relationship? E-mail or snail mail your regular library mailing, if you have one, to your stakeholders. Whenever there is positive news about the library, send that along too. Share your calendar of events, brochures, or pamphlets with stakeholders, and invite them to the library to meet your customers. Think about quarterly meetings to build a stronger identity, awareness, and relationship. This will make the entire budget process more manageable and create the positive results you want.

After public entities, private donations are the largest source of funding for libraries—foundation/corporate grants, large individual donations, and individuals (who can be reached by direct mail, special events, and other vehicles). Donors are vital stakeholders, and marketing to them must be considered in any strategic branding effort.

Mail information about your library to these corporate and foundation contacts, as you do to your budgetary stakeholders. This lets your donors know that the library serves the community in a dynamic way. Another good way of getting your branding message out there is to plan invitation-only director's talks.

You need to know who the affluent donors in your library's area are. Your past and present significant donors should be among the first to be told about your library's branding and marketing initiatives, and may even provide additional support. The more you can engage donors in your branding and marketing campaign, the better the chances are that they will become financially involved.

Beyond these two main stakeholders, the population that makes up your remaining stakeholders includes educational and community organizations, media, staff and volunteers, and customers. Make sure that each one of these populations has a vested interest in your library, whether it's a senior center, public high school, or radio station. Also, your staff and volunteers represent your library to the public, and the success of any strategic marketing campaign largely depends on them.

Understand Your Target Audience

Before you begin any kind of marketing and branding campaign, you also need to have a thorough understanding of who your audience is. Whom are you trying to serve? There are straightforward methods for identifying your audience. Your library needs to focus on who it serves best and most often, and then address the needs of that population.

Y our staff and volunteers represent your library to the public, and the success of any strategic marketing campaign largely depends on them.

A terrific and free resource for gathering information of this type is the U.S. Census Bureau. You can go to www.factfinder.census.gov to look up the most recent information in the 2004 profile. From there, you can find a wealth of statistics on sex and age demographics, household relationships and types, and housing. There is also plenty of social information: school enrollment, educational degrees, marital status, and other categories. For economic questions, the Census Bureau yields statistics on employment status, occupations, classes of workers, income, and a variety of economic measures.

After you gather hard data about your library's population, you will need to review your materials, programs, and services and assess whether your library truly is serving the people who live nearby. Do you have many senior citizens? If so, does your collection reflect this? Does a significant portion of your service population speak a language other than English at home? Is there a large population of school-age children in your area? These factors have a major impact on how you might most appropriately position or brand your library for maximum effectiveness or success.

Ask Your Audience

An ideal way to learn more about your audience is by developing a customer survey, which can be as simple or complex as you wish. It can cover any one or all aspects of the library, such as staff, materials, programs, services, and hours. It can also include a request for demographic information about your user base, and can be passed along when a customer checks out materials or uses a computer.

Remember: These surveys are not representative of your total service population, only of your current user base. If you have a high percentage of cardholders or library users, one survey is sufficient. However, if you have low usage, a separate study may be necessary to find out why more people are not using the library. Hand these questionnaires out at high-traffic locations such as shopping malls or supermarkets. Often, retailers will be happy to set up a table and

space for your staff or volunteers. Be sure to ask! After you collect all the information you need, a thorough analysis of the data should help you develop your branding or positioning statement. It will also assist you in determining who your primary audience should be.

Most libraries do not have the budgets, staffing, or resources to be successful at serving everyone. For instance, it may not be wise to devote your library resources to research if there is a major public university in your area that has an excellent reference library. Alternatively, if there are many primary and secondary schools in your service area, but the school libraries are inadequate, focusing on school/homework assistance can be a positive use of the library. If there is a large new American or immigrant population, offering English-language and job-assistance programs may be the most helpful. To reiterate: Determining how your library can be most relevant to your service communities will streamline your efforts to brand and market your library.

Create a Strategic Positioning Statement

Once you have a firm grasp of who your target audience is and the best way to serve that audience, you should be ready to write your strategic positioning statement. The strategic positioning statement has two parts. The first is the statement itself, which should be no longer than one concise and clear sentence. The second is the supporting paragraph, also known as the "permission to believe." It provides the rationale, or support, for the positioning statement. The strategic positioning statement is something that every staff member, volunteer, and board member should know. It sets the tone for the library, guiding all marketing and communications for the institution. This is Queens Library's strategic positioning statement:

Queens Library is the best community resource for all of your informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs.

Permission to believe the above statement is based on Queens Library's extensive collection of materials, programs, and services, as well as open access to the Internet and friendly, supportive, and professional staff. Queens Library provides a free, comfortable, and welcoming place for the people of our diverse neighborhoods.

There are many ways to develop a positioning statement. You should always get as much input as you can from key staffers, volunteers, donors, trustees, and other players. However, keep in mind that the statement should not be an amalgam of different points of view. Send a survey to your constituents. It can be as simple as these two questions: (1) What word or phrase most aptly describes what the library currently is? and (2) What word or phrase most aptly describes what the library hopes to be?

Once you have collected these surveys, a picture will evolve of current perceptions of the library and how it might be improved, providing you with a basis for the positioning statement. After that, it is simply a matter of wordsmithing to get it right. Once you have a prototype statement, go back and check with key stakeholders to make sure they buy in to your statement. Remember, it needs to be single-minded and believable.

Develop a Marketing Plan

Now that you have your strategic positioning statement, you can develop your marketing plan. At its simplest (and best), a marketing plan is a road map to guide your library's branding and marketing efforts. It can also be the basis for setting future objectives for your library, helping with fund-raising and capital development, and serving as a form of communication for your board and funding authorities. If it is done well the first time, your marketing plan can be updated over time, evolving into a valuable document for your library in the future.

The methods for writing a marketing plan range from basic to complex. Your method should depend on your individual library's needs and wants. Below is a basic, seven-section outline for a good marketing plan. You can adapt the format to your own unique situation. Remember: Any marketing plan you write is better than no marketing plan at all!

I. Executive Summary—The Executive Summary is a brief overview of the marketing plan. It reviews the past fiscal year and highlights any important initiatives or events. It also prepares for the

coming fiscal year. The executive summary outlines key objectives for the next year, as well as strategies that have been developed and an explanation of how those strategies will be implemented. The summary should be no longer than three or four pages at most. As you write the summary, think about your audience. Anticipate their reactions, comments, and questions, and try to answer them within the document.

II. Statistical Review—Most libraries have some quantitative means for measuring their performance over the span of a year. This might be by circulation numbers, gate count of visitors, new card registrations, reference inquiries, number of programs or other services, or additions to the collection. Reviewing the past fiscal year quantitatively sets the baseline for future goals and achievements. If your library has multiple locations, these numbers can show where you have had the greatest successes or can highlight where there may be problems or concerns.

The statistical review is not a simple collection of numerical charts. You can put those in the appendix at the end of the plan document. Rather, it is a narrative that highlights what happened during the previous fiscal year and should show what you will try to achieve in the coming fiscal year. Making comparisons from year to year is important. If you have the time and resources to compare the most recent fiscal year to past years, that is helpful. Sometimes it's simply a matter of comparing computer printouts. You can also compare your results against similar library systems by using the *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report*, published annually by the Public Library Association.

III. Strategic Brand Positioning—As reviewed previously, the strategic positioning statement states what the library is (or would like to be) or how the library would like to be viewed. It is the *personality* of the library. It differs from the library's mission statement, which communicates what the library tries to do. Make sure the strategic brand positioning statement is embedded in the marketing plan, to keep the overarching document focused.

IV. Fiscal Year Objectives—The fiscal year objectives are a blueprint, or design, of everything you hope to accomplish in the coming year. They can be limited to marketing initiatives, or can reflect all areas of the library. Whichever the case, the

objectives must be quantifiable, not qualitative or anecdotal.

Here are some examples of good objectives: “The library will increase circulation of materials by 10 percent over the previous year.” “The library will increase the number of programs for children and young adults by 20 percent.” “The library will increase the percentage of school-age children owning library cards to 80 percent.” And here are some examples of bad ones: “The library will create a more pleasant environment for users.” “The library will increase the size of its collection.” “The library will increase the number of people with library cards.”

In the fiscal-year objective section of the marketing plan, provide a rationale and support for each objective. For example, look at this objective: “The library will increase the percentage of school-age children owning library cards to 80 percent.” The rationale and support for this objective might be that the key to future and sustained growth for the library is based on the constant development of new users, particularly the young.

- V. Fiscal Year Initiatives**—Once you outline past activity, objectives for the coming year, and a strategic positioning statement to guide efforts, the next step is to outline the strategies and specific tactics or initiatives that will be conducted to achieve or surpass objectives. The initiatives should be organized broadly, such as what you plan to achieve in the areas of promotional materials, advertising, website, and public relations. In developing initiatives, it is most important to be realistic. Do not try to do it all. It is better to succeed at five initiatives than only partially complete ten or fifteen. Try to determine which initiatives are the most important, or which will provide the greatest return on the time, cost, and staffing investments that you’ve made. And remember: Whatever initiatives you develop must be measurable.
- VI. Fiscal Year Initiatives Budget**—All good things come at a price. Once your stakeholders are excited and enthusiastic about your initiatives, you have to give them the bill for these initiatives, which should be placed in priority order. Assume that the cost for each initiative will be greater than you are estimating; it’s always better to finish a project under budget. If funding is limited, it is not always better to have many initiatives instead of one or two really important ones. Also, if projects can be funded from grants,

donations, or other underwriting, highlight that fact. It will keep the impact on your operating funds at a minimum.

- VII. Appendix**—These are not always necessary. An appendix is a good place for detailed quantitative charts, graphs, timetables, schedules, or research results. It is also a prime place for data or information you will refer to frequently.

Use Available Resources

It can be expensive to put your marketing plan into place and complete your initiatives, especially if your operating budget is slim. But there are many ways to develop and execute a marketing plan that can significantly reduce both manpower and resource costs.

For your marketing plan, a great place to start for help is your board of trustees. Your members should include a few local business people who have some knowledge of marketing and promotion. See if one of your trustees is willing to work with you to write a marketing plan or to chair a volunteer marketing committee to draft a plan.

If no board member is available or willing to help, contact a local college or university. A business professor or teacher might be willing to have his or her class execute a marketing plan as a semester homework assignment or project. The students can be divided into teams and make presentations to library staff “judges.”

Virtually every area of the country has a local advertising agency, marketing services company, or communications company. Often, such companies are willing to provide pro bono services in exchange for being perceived as good corporate citizens. If you have any large corporate headquarters in your area, you could approach them to see if they might be willing to donate a marketing staffer to provide some assistance.

For creative development and creative services, there are plenty of resources to tap: volunteer students from local colleges (particularly art or advertising majors), local artists, advertising agencies, marketing services companies, or communications companies that are willing to take on pro bono work. Also, media companies themselves may be willing to provide creative services—newspapers, billboard companies, local television and radio stations, weekly coupon mailers, and other resources.

It is also useful to find resources in media placement and promotion. Many library staff members think that media advertising is expensive, and it can be—but it doesn’t always need to be. All mainstream

media should have a rate card indicating what paid advertising might cost. The first thing to do when you look at the rate card is to throw it away. Often, media companies have special rates for nonprofit or community organizations. Again, once you receive that rate, disregard it.

Ask for a special library rate. At worst, the rate should be no more than 50 percent of the best rate the media company is offering. Once you negotiate a reasonable rate, see if you can get color added at no extra charge. This might seem like hard negotiating, especially if you don't think you have the leverage, but here's the reality: A newspaper is going to publish with or without advertising from the library, as will a television or radio station. Therefore, any media dollars that come in are found money. Don't be afraid to be bold.

Negotiations with billboard or transit companies are a little different, but you can still negotiate. How many times have you seen a billboard or bus or train advertisement that is out of date? That simply means there has been no paying advertiser to replace the previous one. If that is the case in your area, you can often pay just the printing or posting charge and get the media cost for free. Frequently, the company would rather run a current advertisement than have an out-of-date advertisement or worse, blank space.

If you absolutely have no money for advertising, you can always ask for some pro bono public service advertising. Virtually all media will provide free advertising as part of the licensing agreement. You might also have a local community cable television channel that can provide free media/air space and free production access. If you have a budding media star on your staff, you could produce a monthly or weekly television show about what's happening at the library. Other inexpensive media you can use to promote the library include coupon mailers and pensavers. Be creative.

Apart from paid mainstream media, you should develop a close and friendly relationship with all of the media in your area, particularly local media. That way, a regular press release about upcoming events, staff news, board of trustee meetings, and other library activities will invariably be published or mentioned on-air. If you do pay for media advertising, particularly print, you should be able to place feature stories about your library on a regular basis. As always, the press releases and stories should reflect the strategic marketing objectives of the library and support the library positioning.

Evaluate Your Efforts

As important as any marketing or branding program you may develop is, it is only successful if it has met or surpassed your goals. Therefore, evaluating your efforts is essential. As explained prior, fiscal-year objectives are key components of your marketing plan. Use the following criteria as a way to create objectives; most of these criteria consist of numbers, so you can keep your objectives quantifiable.

Circulation

This is certainly one of the easiest goals to set and evaluate, and an industry number that many professionals believe is the most important evaluation tool. Before you set any goals, you need to analyze past and current circulation trends for your particular library or libraries. You need to look for any event or seasonal factors that may skew a particular month or quarter.

If possible, it is best to evaluate several years of past data on a monthly or quarterly basis. Make note of any significant factors that may have happened: major storms or other events, important changes in days or hours of operation, or closings and openings of facilities. Create a three-year circulation chart by month, quarter, half, and full year with appropriate notations. Now, look at the branding and marketing program you have planned and determine appropriate goals. How long will the branding and marketing program last? Are immediate changes expected? For how long? What is a reasonable expectation of success? What about collection, staffing, operating hours, or loan policies? Do they help or detract from your objectives?

Visitors

Many people who come to the library have no intention of borrowing materials. They may want to do research for any variety of needs: employment, school, or vacation. They may want to use the library's computer and Internet services. They may be attending a program or viewing an exhibit. Do you have a means of counting all your visitors? Using the same caveats as have been suggested for circulation, do you have a historical base to compare intended effects?

Reference/Information Inquiries

One of the primary benefits of a library is that there is a professional who is experienced in helping people answer or find answers for their questions. Tracking this can be as simple as keeping a log at the reference desk. And again, once you know these numbers, you can set a percentage for increasing them.

Awareness

Many industry professionals assume that constituents are aware of their libraries' locations, hours, services, and materials. This is simply not the case. Research surveys can be very surprising. Awareness can vary by age group, ethnicity, location, or any number of different factors. Unfortunately, evaluating this area requires some investment in money, staff, and time. However, the information that's uncovered can help set the future of your library. Using available resources, as outlined earlier in this article, can help minimize your investment cost. A survey should be done on a regular basis—certainly at least once every few years and definitely before and after a major branding and marketing effort.

Satisfaction

Akin to awareness research is constituent satisfaction or "needs" research. Early in this article, I wrote about the importance of understanding your target audiences. If your library has a customer service focus, it is important to be able to evaluate how you are doing. New service initiatives, staffing, and other key topics need to be evaluated to ensure they are meeting the desired objectives.

Conclusion

Developing a branding and marketing plan is a key component of promoting your library, which is more

necessary than ever in today's competitive marketplace. And the best place to start developing your library's brand is with your key stakeholders. Reach out to them first in an effort to develop strong relationships. Next, after you identify your target audience and the best ways to serve them, you will be ready to write a strategic positioning statement and strong marketing plan. Outline your objectives and quantifiable initiatives. Use easily identifiable methods (circulation counts, for example) to keep track of your initiatives. Finally, when it comes to paying for your branding, marketing plan, and advertising, use all the free resources you can. Now go and promote your library! 

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American Library Association Launches Redesigned Website

Here is what site users can expect at the new ALA website (www.ala.org):

- A homepage banner, with dropdown shortcuts to frequently requested areas of the site.
- A highlights section featuring images and timely information "above the fold."
- A news section with a three-tab structure that guides users to information about the ALA, library-related legislation and advocacy, and news affecting libraries (updated frequently using RSS feeds).
- Eye-catching highlights in the right column area of many pages provide "see" and "see also" references to on- and off site resources.
- A new information architecture that doesn't require users to be familiar with internal ALA structure in order to browse successfully.

"Accessibility and usability are our new watchwords, and although we have a long way to go, our progress should be more and more noticeable during the course of the year," said ALA's Senior Usability Officer Louise Gruenberg (lgruenberg@ala.org). 

COMPUTER TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR Older Adults AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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The number of older adults in the United States is increasing rapidly and will continue to increase as the baby boom generation ages.¹ While contemporary society is becoming increasingly reliant on computers (for convenience, “computers” as used in this article includes the Internet and related applications such as e-mail and e-government), older adults’ adoption of this technology lags significantly behind that of younger people.² To narrow the generational digital divide, computer training programs have been developed that aim at helping older adults—roughly age fifty-five and older—overcome difficulties in computer learning and use.³ One of the primary sources of computer training for older adults is the public library, which has become a social leader in providing such training.⁴

Public libraries are an ideal site for providing computer access and training for older adults with both formal (i.e., skills acquisition) and informal (i.e., improved sense of well-being) benefits. First, the explicit mission of public libraries is to meet the information and learning needs of patrons. Second, public libraries have

the necessary infrastructure in place, as virtually every public library in the United States has computers and Internet access available for patrons to use.⁵ Third, public libraries are located in a large number of communities, with locations often accessible by public transportation. Fourth, public libraries are one of the few publicly available spaces where older adults with disabilities can reach accessible technologies.⁶ Finally, public libraries have a long tradition of meeting information needs of older adults. In short, it makes sense that public libraries employ their existing strengths and resources to help older adults acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to connect to twenty-first-century sources of information that will support and enrich their daily lives.

According to public libraries, training to use computers and the Internet is one of the largest impacts of libraries on their communities.⁷ In nearly 40 percent of public libraries, training is available whenever patrons request it, while many libraries schedule weekly or monthly training classes.⁸ Among libraries that offer computer training for patrons, the most common types of training include providing information literacy and general technology skills, helping students with school assignments, and offering technology training opportunities to those who would not otherwise have any.⁹ Other types of computer training focus primarily on the use of e-mail, health databases, and genealogy databases, as well as special types of training targeted primarily at older adults.¹⁰ Older adults are the most frequent target audience for computer training in public libraries, with 57.3 percent of libraries that offer training targeting this age group.¹¹

In 2004, 31 percent of library systems reported they were unable to provide information technology (IT) training to patrons; by 2006, that number had dropped to 21 percent, suggesting that the amount of training in IT had increased significantly during this time period.¹² While nearly 80 percent of American public libraries provide some amount of Internet-related training for patrons, many of these programs do not offer classes or content specifically designed to meet the needs of older adults, particularly ongoing training courses.¹³ The lack of financial resources, sufficient space, or an adequate number of staff to provide training are leading concerns in these libraries.¹⁴ In fact, not offering patron training may be strongly linked to lacking the economic resources to do so.¹⁵ Public libraries that do not offer computer training are frequently libraries that rely on the federal E-rate funding program for Internet access.¹⁶ Further, usage of e-government websites for activi-

ties like enrolling in Medicare or filing taxes, while extremely important to older adults, is not often emphasized in computer training, in spite of the fact that many citizens rely on public libraries as their access point to e-government.¹⁷

Efforts have been made to develop guidelines that may help improve the effectiveness of computer training programs for older adults, including such programs in public libraries.¹⁸ Existing guidelines, however, are typically based on untested assumptions that computer training for older adults is a limited process that mainly focuses on the technical and online aspects of computer use (e.g., communicating with children and grandchildren via e-mail or seeking information on the Web). Although these aspects have obvious advantages, especially for homebound older adults, focusing on them alone ignores the fact that computer learning for older adults is typically a continuing process that takes place in an offline and social environment.¹⁹ Furthermore, existing guidelines often predominantly focus on evaluating the direct effects of computer training (i.e., skill acquisition) while underemphasizing the more indirect—but by no means less important—effects of computer training on older adults (i.e., personal well-being).²⁰

This article argues that, in addition to the formal, technical, and online aspects, computer training programs for older adults should also pay attention to—and make use of—the informal, continuing, offline, and social aspects of computer learning and use. Public libraries, many of which already offer face-to-face computer training, are ideally situated to be an environment that fosters both the formal and informal aspects of computer training for older adults. By taking into consideration all of these relevant and important aspects, this more balanced approach may help achieve not only the direct goal—to improve the effectiveness of computer training programs for older adults—but also the indirect goal—to improve well-being in later life.

Learning to Use Computers through a Continuing Process

Currently, there is no empirical research on how long a computer training program for older adults should last in order to maximize both the short- and long-term effects of training. Existing training programs (including those in public libraries) can be as short as a few hours or as long as fifteen months.²¹ By design, older computer learners are usually left on their own after the training programs are completed. This conventional approach implies—and some

programs even have an explicit, built-in goal—that after a relatively short period of training, older adults should be able to use computers independently. One reason for providing computer training programs of limited duration might be that it is difficult to get unlimited financial and human resources to facilitate older adults' learning and use of computers. As noted above, financial, staffing, and special constraints are the primary limitations on the availability and the length of computer training programs in many public libraries.²² Another possible reason, however, is that there is a relative lack of recognition that short-term training programs cannot provide (much-needed) long-term technical assistance for older adults.

Providing limited computer training and assistance for older adults, however, is inconsistent with existing research findings. Human-factors research has generated rich evidence that, due to age-related changes in visual, perceptual, psychomotor, and cognitive abilities, older computer learners usually make more errors than their younger counterparts when performing computer tasks and require more time, practice, and technical assistance to acquire computer skills.²³ Lack of prior experience/knowledge and age-appropriate computer training and support have consistently been reported as some of the biggest obstacles to older adults' learning and use of computers.²⁴

A major criterion for the success of a computer training program for older adults is the extent to which the benefits of the training can be maintained after the training is completed.²⁵ Research indicates that it is crucial to provide continuing technical support to older adults to improve the effectiveness of training in both the short and long run. To do so, one possible strategy is to provide long-term computer training and support for older adults at facilities they frequently visit or communities in which they live.²⁶ This idea could be applied to public library computer training by creating continuing computer learning opportunities. In consideration of the limited financial and staff resources public libraries often face, library administrators could encourage and facilitate older adults to organize their own computer interest groups or computer clubs—which may last for years—so that these older adults could learn from one another during a prolonged period of time.

Prolonged and active participation in peer-led computer clubs is key to these older adults' effective computer learning and use.²⁷ Older adults are enthusiastic about organizing and participating in computer clubs on a regular basis and prefer to learn about computers from age peers instead of young

people.²⁸ In fact, while taking a computer class at one public library, older adults voluntarily started helping each other learn about computers.²⁹

Learning from age peers may also help empower, rather than disempower, older computer learners. If computer training programs can have a built-in mechanism that allows and encourages older adults to learn from each other, then older computer learners may be better able to develop a sense of empowerment, which is essential to well-being.³⁰ As Van Fleet and Antell suggest to public librarians providing computer training to older adults, “the instructor's role should be that of coach, facilitator, or mentor.”³¹

By promoting continuing learning and informal technical support, the intent is not to devalue the more formal training provided by instructors, as the formal training has been shown to be beneficial to older computer learners. In particular, research shows that initial senior-friendly computer training has a positive impact on older adults' attitudes toward computers and that success at initial training (measured by the number of successfully completed tasks) strongly predicts older adults' continued use of computer systems.³² The argument here is that to optimize the effectiveness of computer training for older adults (and to improve older learners' well-being in the long run), it is important to take a more balanced approach that combines the two components: while the relatively short cycle of initial formal computer training (e.g., computer classes) can be the beginning of older adults' learning and use of computers, the long-lasting, informal setting (e.g., computer clubs) can provide continuous practice and support that go beyond the initial formal training.

Computers, Social Environments, and Personal Well-Being

There is a general consensus in the literature that computers have the potential to improve individuals' communication and access to information. However, this view predominantly, if not exclusively, focuses on how computers can facilitate older adults' communication and interaction in the *online* world.³³ Influenced by this general view, existing computer training programs usually focus on if and how older learners can use the computer to communicate and seek information online while ignoring the offline aspect of such training. In other words, the potential benefits of the online world are so powerful that they often overshadow other benefits, including the learning activity itself as well as personal interactions with

others during the learning process that may result in individual well-being.

For older adults, the continuing process of learning to use computers typically takes place in the physical world. As a natural result of the face-to-face computer training and learning process, older learners have opportunities to interact and socialize with other older learners and the trainer(s) in the offline world. In fact, the Internet can help create and maintain meaningful online and offline social relationships.³⁴ There is empirical evidence that social interactions that occur during the computer training and learning process may have at least partly contributed to the reported positive association between computer use and well-being.³⁵ These findings suggest that, when considering the impact of computer learning and use on older adults' well-being, it is important to look beyond the online and technical aspects and pay serious attention to the offline and social aspects of technology learning and use.

If improving older adults' well-being is the indirect (but essential) goal of teaching them computer skills, then it is crucial to make good use of the face-to-face social aspects involved in the continuous process of such training. In other words, it is important for researchers and trainers to realize that a result of computer training and continuous support for older adults will be social interactions and friendship formation. A more balanced approach that pays equal attention to the technical and social and online and offline aspects of computer learning and use can improve not only the effectiveness of the training but also the well-being of older adults.

Public libraries are ideally positioned to provide a computer training environment that fosters both formal and informal education. As a result of their historical promotion of information access for all, public libraries are a socially trusted source of information as well as a forum for the exchange of ideas.³⁶ Trust of public libraries is strongly tied to the help that librarians provide to patrons as they seek information.³⁷ In specific terms of computers and the Internet, the public library "is a trusted community-based entity to which individuals turn for help in their online activities—even if they have computers and Internet access at home or elsewhere."³⁸ Ultimately, "public libraries seem almost immune to the distrust that is associated with so many other institutions."³⁹ As a result of this social trust, older adults will likely be comfortable in the public library as a place to engage in both the formal and informal, educational and social aspects of learning to use computers.

Along with being a socially trusted environment for learning, public libraries also have the advantage of being staffed by information professionals to provide the training. As public librarians are educated to teach others how to use information—and many are already teaching patrons how to use computers—they would be very well suited to serving as facilitators of an ongoing process of formal and informal computer training for older adults. Additional resources would be needed for public libraries to serve in these roles, but they certainly already have the human and technological capacities to do so.

The trusted nature of public libraries will also help to promote a sense of well-being in the computer training. Although a causal relationship between existing computer training/use and older adults' well-being has not yet been definitely established, there is evidence that computer training/use is positively associated with older adults' well-being.⁴⁰ Of particular importance to research on older adults' computer training/use and well-being is the psychological well-being (PWB) concept as developed by Ryff, which argues that PWB includes six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.⁴¹ This concept has a unique emphasis on human potential in that it "entails perception of engagement with existential challenges of life."⁴² Learning to use computers in a social setting such as a public library offers important opportunities to reinforce a sense of well-being in older adults. For example, participants in one study of older adults and computer training organized a computer interest group and started publishing a newsletter for the community by using the computer skills they learned from the training program, suggesting an increased level of social connectedness and community engagement.⁴³ In fact, learning to use computers—in a social and supportive environment—is positively associated with all six dimensions of PWB.⁴⁴

Facilitating Computer Training for Older Adults in Public Libraries

Building on several related but distinct literatures, including older adults' computer training/learning and use, social interactions and friendship in later life, and well-being, we argue that—in order to better accommodate age-related changes that prohibit older adults' effective learning and use—computer education for older adults should be a continuous process rather than one that lasts for only a limited period of time. In consideration of both the limited

resources available to provide continuous training and support for older adults and empowering older computer learners, this continuous educational process may include both formal and informal training. While formal training (e.g., computer classes or training programs designed and provided by researchers and trainers) can serve as the beginning of older adults' computer learning and use, informal training (e.g., computer interest groups or computer clubs in which older adults can help and learn from one another) can provide older computer learners with much needed long-term technical assistance.

Computer training programs for older adults should aim not only at the direct goal of skill acquisition but also the indirect but essential goal of improved well-being. This requires a fuller understanding and measuring of the well-being concept, which includes multiple aspects that go beyond a focus on depression or loneliness. In light of this more balanced approach, when evaluating the success (or failure) of a computer training program, it is important to measure the direct and indirect, technical and social, and online and offline effects of computer training on all aspects of well-being, especially previously understudied or ignored aspects such as personal growth and empowerment.

Based on these key ideas, specific issues that public libraries should consider in working toward providing more comprehensive computer training for older adults include:

- **Restructuring computer training**—Often computer training in public libraries is designed as a single course or only available sporadically. Older adults will most benefit from courses that meet on a regular basis and provide continual education and social interaction to improve overall well-being.
- **Stressing informal aspects**—Computer training not only has to emphasize the formal how-to elements of computers and the Web, but also the informal, social aspects that will serve to empower older adults. These informal aspects can be fostered by many of the social activities that public libraries already provide to add face-to-face dimensions to the computer training programs and foster a sense of community among the participants.
- **Focusing on more than online communication (such as e-mail)**—As more government services move online, and then exclusively online, the ability to use computers and the Internet will become a vital and unavoidable link between

citizens and the government. Along with highlighting social aspects of computers, to truly empower older adults as citizens, training must also place greater emphasis on using e-government services, such as Medicare sign-up and tax filing.

- **Attaining external support**—While the vast majority of public libraries already have the technological infrastructure and knowledgeable staff, providing more computer training to older adults will require more resources devoted to such training in terms of staff time, technology expenses, and perhaps even space within the building. Searching for external support from government agencies and private foundations for these types of activities will be extremely important. Building relationships with other community organizations that serve older adults (e.g., senior centers, local AARP chapters, and Administration on Aging) may also provide support.
- **Identifying and sharing best practices**—As public libraries consider implementing these types of computer training programs, it will be important for them to share best practices and innovative approaches with one another.⁴⁵ State library agencies and library consortia may be able to facilitate this.
- **Increasing awareness of training availability and potential benefits**—Developing these kinds of training programs would be of little value if older adults did not become involved in them. Raising awareness of these programs and the potential benefits they could convey to older adults in terms of information seeking and personal well-being will be essential. It will be necessary to find ways of reaching both users and non-users of the public library. Teaming with other community organizations that work with older adults may prove a fruitful approach.

As these types of programs are implemented, public libraries might also want to consider encouraging library and information science (LIS) programs to make the information needs of older adults and computer training larger elements of LIS degrees for future public librarians. At the College of Information Studies of the University of Maryland, for example, there is a new sub-concentration on lifelong access to and use of information, which is a built-in component of the LIS master's program. Courses are offered that directly address the intersection of older adults, information, and technology.

Conclusions and Considerations for Further Research

Public libraries, in their role as providers of equal information access for all citizens, must work to ensure that the computer training they provide meets the formal and informal needs of older adults. The trust that patrons have for public libraries, the ability of librarians to provide assistance, and the atmosphere of information access and exchange fostered within libraries combine to make them an ideal environment in which to provide computer training programs that focus on both the educational and social aspects of computer training for older adults. The interactive nature of public libraries might also encourage computer-savvy older adults to take leadership roles in helping others in the training programs.

To fully understand the most appropriate types of computer training programs for older adults in public libraries, future research is needed to provide

- a clearer picture of types of such programs currently conducted by public libraries,
- the best practices in computer training for older adults,
- means for fostering both formal and informal computer education, and
- the best methods to encourage the participation of older adults in these training programs.

The related studies and findings from gerontology, human-factors research, and other streams of research have much to offer public library research into computer training for older adults. Ultimately, the confluence of the growing number of older adults, the expanding importance of the Web in information and communication, and the social expectations that public libraries will meet the information needs of patrons demonstrates that computer training of older adults will become a major issue for public libraries and public library researchers. Research and training should bring greater focus to this area to ensure that libraries can meet these information needs and social expectations. ■

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New National Poll Shows Library Card Registration Reaches Historic High

As Americans deal with a slumping economy, U.S. libraries are experiencing a dramatic increase in library card registration. According to a new Harris Poll from Harris Interactive, released September 22 during Library Card Sign-Up Month, 68 percent of Americans have a library card, up 5 percent since 2006. Survey results indicate that this is the greatest number of Americans with library cards since the American Library Association (ALA) started to measure library card usage in 1990.

In-person visits also are up 10 percent compared with a 2006 ALA household survey. Seventy-six percent of Americans visited their local public library in the past year, compared with 65.7 percent two years ago. Online visits to libraries are up even more substantially—with 41 percent of library card holders visiting their library websites in the past year, compared with 23.6 percent in 2006. The poll also found that 39 percent of cardholders visit the library to borrow books from the library; 12 percent take out CDs, videos, or computer software; 10 percent use a computer to see what the library has available; 9 percent use reference materials; and 8 percent go to the library for Internet access.

The Harris Poll is a non-commissioned survey that was conducted online within the United States between August 11–17, 2008, among 2,710 adults (age 18 and over). The full research method is available at www.harrisinteractive.com. 

ARE Reference Books

BECOMING AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?

RESULTS OF A YEARLONG STUDY OF REFERENCE BOOK USAGE AT THE WINTER PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

NICOLE HEINTZELMAN (nheintzelman@wppl.org) and **COURTNEY MOORE** (cmoore@wppl.org) are Reference Librarians, and **JOYCE WARD** (jward@wppl.org) is Head of Reference at the Winter Park (Fla.) Public Library.

Nicole is reading *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman, Courtney is reading *One Drop: My Father's Hidden Life* by Bliss Broyard, and Joyce is reading *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

It was August 2006 and the fiscal year was coming to a close. Collection development budgets were under evaluation for the next year. Due to budget constraints, the costly standing order list for adult reference books came under scrutiny by reference staff. In examining the list, the reference librarians at Winter Park (Fla.) Public Library (WPPL) wondered whether anyone uses reference books anymore. How could we tell? Furthermore, how could we use the results? Although some immediate decisions about the standing order list were made at that time, we recognized an opportunity to do a yearlong study to find the answers to our questions.

Background

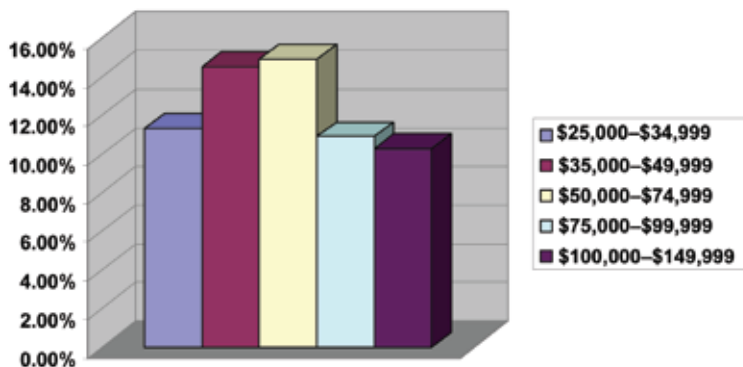
WPPL in Central Florida contains more than 111,000 volumes, including more than eight thousand in reference. A suburb of Orlando with a population of 28,620, Winter Park is home to Rollins College and a thriving business community; it also boasts a rich history. According to the most recent U.S. Census, a majority of residents earn an average of \$50,000–\$74,999 (see figure 1) and have at least a four-year college degree (see figure 2).¹ WPPL is a single-building municipal library. It has a reciprocal lending agreement with the larger county library system and with a smaller municipal library. Due to its smaller concentration of patrons, WPPL is able to tailor its collection to the populace and also maintain an historical archive of Winter Park.

Literature

Locating timely literature about reference book use proved to be challenging. The most recent research uncovered was a four-month study undertaken during the 2003–04 academic year at Stetson University.² It attempted to measure the “extent to which librarians and patrons use the print reference collection” and “what print sources are being used and to what extent.”³ The study revealed that only 8.5 percent of the 25,626 total volumes in the reference collection were used during that period. It noted a correlation between class assignments/faculty presentations and heavily used subject areas. The study also indicated that the collection was used “by call number roughly in proportion to the size of the collection in that call number,” underscoring that Stetson’s librarians were appropriately developing the collection based on the most consulted subjects.⁴ The consensus, however, was that reference books were not being utilized in proportion to the size of the collection. The librarians described the reference collection as “too big and underused.”⁵ Nevertheless, they agreed the study was a springboard for reassessment of the collection’s size, weeding procedures, and budget allocations for the future.

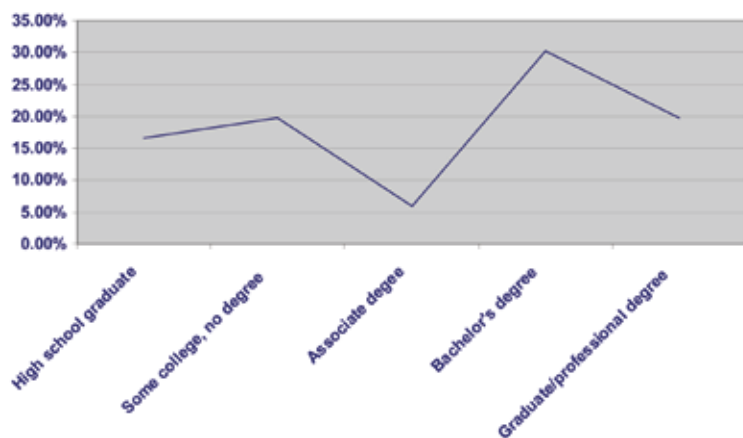
In “Rethinking Library Statistics in a Changing Environment,” Richard W.

Boss discussed the importance of gathering various data to develop a snapshot of library activity.⁶ Among the minimum required pieces of data should be the “number of in-library uses of print materials.”⁷ He noted that “a major change in data gathering that most libraries need to make is to measure the amount of in-house use that library materials receive. To obtain this number, staff must scan all materials left on reading tables and used to answer reference questions before reshelving.”⁸ Boss recommended the use of the library’s automation system for a more efficient and tailored summary of activity and the maintenance of that summary in a database or spreadsheet for easy manipulation.



Source: 2000 United States Census Bureau

Figure 1. Winter Park Resident Income in 1999



Source: 2000 United States Census Bureau

Figure 2. Winter Park Resident Education Levels in 1999

Research Method

Armed with this knowledge and a healthy dose of curiosity, we formulated a data collection plan in August 2006 that went through a trial stage before its final incarnation. Our goal was to note every adult reference book that was used by the public and by the librarians to answer reference questions from September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007 (periodicals were excluded due to their ephemeral nature). Because different volumes of the reference collection are used at different times of the year, we established a data gathering period of twelve months. Data were collected by the following methods:

- reference librarians offering print resources to patrons when appropriate and then writing down the title after concluding the transaction;
- circulation staff returning materials to the department as instructed; and
- librarians walking through the reference stacks every morning to find misplaced or stray books.

Books returned to the desk near closing time were set aside for notation the next morning and returned to the shelf. Every couple of days, one librarian would enter the titles into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. For any title used more than once, a hash mark was added next to it in the spreadsheet. The *Value Line Investment Survey* family quickly distinguished itself as the most popular title; hash marks grew into columns. (As it would obviously continue to be the frontrunner for most popular title, we stopped noting its usage. This is noted in table 1.)

Table 1. Top Ten Reference Book Titles

1. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*
2. *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*
3. *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment*
4. *Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide*
5. *Writer's Market*
6. *How to Start a Business in Florida*
7. *Mayo Clinic Family Health Book*
8. *The Film Encyclopedia*
9. *Performers' Television Credits, 1948–2000*
10. *The Merck Manual of Medical Information*

* *Value Line Investment Survey* was the most popular

That method continued for four weeks before we began questioning its accuracy. Were we writing down every title? If we were unable to write down the title immediately following the reference transaction, did we remember to write it down later? Clearly we needed to investigate other methods of collecting data. We discussed our needs with WPPL's head of technical services, Anne Tofalo, and assistant director of support service, Craig Stillings. Tofalo recommended using the circulation module of our Horizon system to tally in-house uses for better accuracy and efficiency. Stillings offered to print a report of the results in a spreadsheet format that could be generated weekly, monthly, or at any intervals we wished. For our purpose, we opted to wait eleven months for a final report. This new option, although more efficient, introduced a small problem: although the reference collection had been bar-coded since 1995, there were still some older titles that remained without bar codes. If those untagged items were used, they would be sent to technical services for bar coding; the department offered to check in the item once it was bar coded. Shortly after staff implemented this time-saving technique, a librarian manually entered titles used during the first four weeks of the study into the scanning system.

While we believed that scanning materials is a more reliable method, it was not without its drawbacks. We acknowledge that there were some titles missed due to patrons not returning books to the reference desk after their use. We chose not to display any signs instructing the return of reference books to the desk because patrons have ignored signs in the past. Also, the ability to observe patrons browsing reference books was impossible due to an obscured view of the stacks and the need to tend to the reference desk. We believe the twelve-month period compensates for any resulting margin of error. It should also be noted that librarians did not conscientiously promote or use print resources more than usual during the study.

Results

Like other current studies of reference book usage, ours indicated a small percentage of books used per total volumes in the collection. WPPL's reference department has a total of 8,211 volumes. Because each item in a set has a unique bar code, each item was scanned and counted separately. Our total reference book usage for the year was 1,037, representing only about 13 percent of the total volume collection. It must be noted, however, that our current refer-

ence collection contains several large sets of books with many volumes, such as Contemporary Authors, which is duplicated in the online Literature Resource Center that we offer. In fact, one current justification for the purchase of many of our databases includes the termination of the print equivalent. Nonetheless, we have chosen to keep the electronically duplicated editions on the shelf as part of our current reference print collection. Of the 4,403 unique titles, 850 were used, which represents about 19 percent of the entire title collection. Evidently only a very small portion of the collection is being used—a fact that must be examined for possible weeding and future development.

More intriguing than the tally, perhaps, was the breakdown of the top ten books used and the ten most popular subject areas. After *Value Line*, the three most popular titles were, respectively: *The Occupational Outlook Handbook*; *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*; and *Current Medical Diagnosis and Treatment*. Another interesting result is that of the top ten books, only one of them was a ready reference item, *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (those titles sit directly behind the reference desk for easy access). That surprised us because traditionally, ready reference is the collection that librarians rely on most for quick, on-the-spot information. Its proximate location further enhances its utility. We concurred that the ready reference collection would need to be overhauled. The plethora of subjects in that list of titles demonstrates that although WPPL serves a smaller population, the interests and needs of that population are still varied.

Despite such a diverse group in the top ten titles, some subjects attracted more use than others (see table 2). The three most-consulted subject areas were medicine, law, and history, respectively. We recognized that the size of those three subject areas was comparable to the usage. Like the Stetson librarians, we too interpreted those results as confirmation of smart collection development.

While examining the most popular subjects, we did not attempt to identify any possible correlation between school assignments and subject use. Because WPPL does not have an official relationship with local schools, during the study we chose not to acknowledge any increase in questions from students during any given period in order to arrive at a more general picture. A further detailed breakdown of the results is available in figure 3. (We would be happy to supply data to anyone interested in our study.)

Implications

In terms of weeding, our study provides added insight into what patrons use because reference books are not regularly scanned for usage. In early 2007, the reference department evaluated its standing orders and cut \$7,000 from the annual budget. This was not an easy procedure. After much hand wringing, deliberating, and careful analysis of the electronic counterparts and other weeding criteria, we made cuts. One objection to withdrawing familiar print aides was a concern that non-library card holders (who are prohibited from logging onto computers) would be cut off from information. Another librarian feared the decrease would add weight to the argument that print resources are becoming an endangered species. The results from our study, however, revealed that a substantial number of reference books are not used. One might even conclude that they are not as integral to a functioning reference collection as one would like to believe. Such a conclusion raises an important question for librarians: Can a 1.0 collection survive in a 2.0 world?

We think it can survive—and even thrive—with some alterations. A reference collection should evolve into a smaller and more efficient tool that continually adapts to the new era, merging into a symbiotic relationship with electronic resources. Based on this theory, weeding will become less painful. We will feel justified in deleting or sending to circulation those volumes that are not being used. Likewise, we will know which books our patrons are utilizing for their reference inquiries. Our study did not compare print resources to electronic ones—it covered reference staff and patron usage only. So it

Table 2. Most Popular Subjects

1. Medicine
2. Law
3. History
4. Literature and Literary Criticism
5. Education
6. Geography and Travel
7. Dictionaries
8. Art
9. Religion
10. Almanacs and Statistics

may be entirely justified to have a reference resource in more than one format if usage justifies it. However, because we are a medium-sized library, space is a premium that must be utilized efficiently while still meeting the needs of our patrons.

Currently our budget for reference books is a modest \$13,624, but our standing order budget is about \$26,625. Together these figures for print sources represent about 12 percent of the library's total materials budget. The database funds of \$37,137 are nearly equal to the print reference allotment, but databases garner heavy usage, which is monitored monthly. In terms of collection development, we plan to focus on the Dewey areas most often used to ensure that they contain current and viable information. Next, we plan to target the lowest-used areas to determine if better selection is needed. A closer inspection of the study revealed that usage was proportionate to the size of the particular Dewey area, suggesting that low-use areas could stand more development. We are already including these facts in our new fiscal-year collection development for print reference books. Finally, we plan once again to assess our standing orders for possible weeding based on the findings from our study and other weeding criteria previously used.

We make no assumptions about which format better serves our reference needs. That would be another study. However, we recognize that our reference print collection deserves the same promotion and attention given to our databases in terms of staff and patron awareness. We plan to emphasize book resources in staff meetings and display useful reference books at the reference desk. (We have displayed books at the desk before quite successfully.) Additionally, we will introduce and discuss print resources used to answer reference inquiries at future reference staff meeting. (Again, we have done this before and it proved to be an excellent staff training experience.) We have added newly acquired reference books to WPPL's "New Items" list online. On the one hand, it appears that low usage should not warrant an increase in our reference budget; on the other hand, perhaps the usage would increase with more strategic development.

From the onset of this experiment, we identified current studies on print reference collections before beginning our own, studies confirming that print

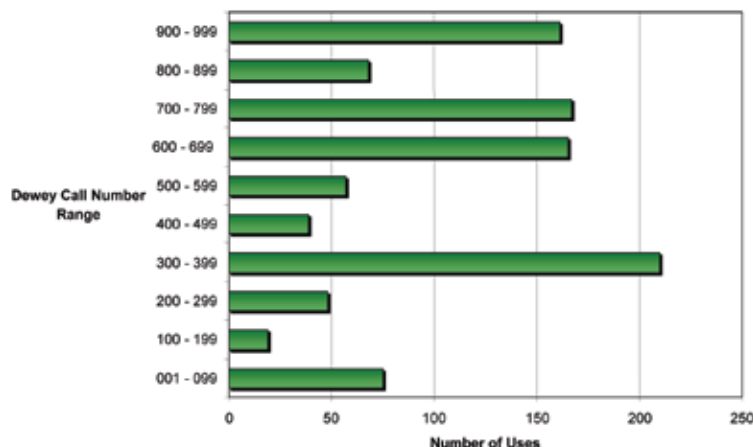


Figure 3. Call Number Use

usage is lower than it used to be. Nevertheless, we believe our study was a worthwhile endeavor that helped us understand our patrons and their needs while inspiring a sharper focus on our collection. It is a study we intend to repeat in several years after revamping our collection. It promises to help us consistently manage and grow our print collection into a new breed poised to meet the needs of the twenty-first century where information appears in a variety of formats. We would definitely encourage others to do comparable studies for a glimpse into the inner recesses of the reference aisles. You may be surprised. Not everyone googles. ☐

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USE OF Geographic Information Systems

IN MARKETING AND FACILITY SITE LOCATION

A CASE STUDY OF DOUGLAS COUNTY (COLO.) LIBRARIES

BRADLEY WADE BISHOP (bradleywadebishop@gmail.com)

is a Graduate Research Associate at the Information Use
Management and Policy Institute, Florida State University.

Bradley is reading *The Rise of the Centennial State, Colorado
Territory, 1861-76* by Eugene H. Berwanger.

The research tool geographic information systems (GIS) offers public librarians the ability to spatially analyze and display their current and potential facility locations. In conjunction with existing user locations, GIS is a powerful marketing and planning tool.¹ In fall 2007, Douglas County (Colo.) Libraries (DCL) utilized GIS to determine the locations of their existing users and current and proposed library locations for marketing purposes. Douglas County, the county directly south of Denver, has experienced tremendous growth with new families moving into the area and, as a result, library services have struggled to keep pace.

From 2000 to 2006, the county experienced a 50 percent increase in population. In 2006, 28 percent of the county's population was under eighteen, and 79 percent of its households were families.² The rapid growth of the entire population significantly outpaced any increase in library services. As a result, a single neighbor-

hood branch library of twenty thousand square feet (Parker Library) was serving twice as large a population as it was designed to. Luckily, the county plans to build a new, larger branch for that area.³ Smaller libraries taxed with serving larger populations and many new neighborhoods without nearby libraries were growing problems for library administration and potential library leaders.

To combat these problems, a mill levy on the 2007 general election ballot was proposed to pay for the construction of three new libraries. To market for the election, DCL wanted to know where the most densely concentrated neighborhoods of library users and registered voters were in the county. DCL also wanted to know in what other ways they could use their spatial data with GIS to improve library services.

Douglas County's GIS Options

DCL had several options for GIS assistance without training their own personnel to use it. Since 2003, the Network and Resource Sharing Unit of the State Library of Colorado has offered its counties the ability to illustrate the distribution of users and library locations.⁴ The service removes personal identifiers from user information and allows libraries to display the relation between library locations and their users, as well as providing layers of census data to analyze service area demographics. Although the option of viewing locations and demographic data is available free on the national level through GeoLib, the state library service offers the valuable added option of displaying users.⁵ The state library model allows librarians without GIS expertise beyond simple Internet mapping—e.g., Google Maps—to utilize spatial data; however, it must recoup its costs for performing such tasks. For example, the library can have their census data appear for their county for one charge but displaying their user locations results in an additional fee. The state services are annual fees and price scaling varies.

Despite the obvious advantages of this option, a piecemeal pricing approach limits the ability of public librarians to experiment with the possibilities of GIS in their marketing and planning. Without expertise in GIS, the librarians lack the knowledge of what other analysis tools might be useful beyond the suggested options from the state library. The necessary registered voter information was only available on the local level, and DCL purchased those data because they were essential to answer their questions. The state library service then geocoded those data, but analysis beyond the points was not done.

I learned about Douglas County's efforts at the 2007 ALA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. Because I had an interest in showing the potentials of GIS in public libraries, I thought offering my GIS expertise would help answer their marketing questions for the upcoming election. While displaying the data through the state library service provides some insight for planning, the interpolation techniques used in GIS allowed DCL to exploit their spatial data more advantageously for the election. Although the state library service did allow DCL to share their findings and analysis with potential voters through maps, cartography is a skill; different GIS software allows for maps that are more customizable.

My DCL contact was Rochelle Logan, associate director of research and collections. Logan worked with the GIS Division of Douglas County and the state library service to accumulate spatial data on registered voters as well as up-to-date local county data, such as the location of roads, county boundaries, and other relevant data sets. I used my expertise to add the proposed library locations to GIS and perform some spatial analysis to assist with their marketing questions for the election. With these data, I was able to produce several maps to assist in election efforts and demonstrate other uses of GIS in public libraries.

Maps and Analysis Results

Because the planned locations were contingent on the success of the mill levy, their exact addresses did not exist. Based on Logan's knowledge of their suggested locations, I placed the proposed locations. She provided valuable local knowledge regarding square footage of the proposed libraries and defined unpopulated areas of the county such as national forest and farmlands. I created a simple map displaying the county's current and proposed libraries.

The map in figure 1 shows the proposed library locations in red as well as current libraries. The sizes of the points correspond to each library's square footage.

This preliminary map included some data such as major roads and county boundaries to help those familiar with the area view the placement of new locations. Each library had a unique color that would correspond in later maps to each user's regular library. Each user's data included several other variables—e.g., circulation, age—in addition to their regular library. Other potential uses for the user data were evident, but in this analysis, the focus was on answering Douglas County's main marketing question.

To answer that question, I joined registered voters' locations with library user locations. Since the address given in both instances was the same, the result of joining the two data sets was those users that were both registered voters and library users. To display concentrations in neighborhoods that contained large numbers of residents that were both library users and registered voters, I simply converted the points into raster data or pixels. This meant converting the users into pixels. Each pixel would represent the most popular regular branch for points in the area of the pixel. In this instance, pixels were easier to display at a county level and concentrations of users appeared more easily than thousands of points. This allowed the librarians to view the dispersion of library users that were also registered voters, as well as to identify users by regular branch.

The map in figure 2 depicts registered voters who are also library users. The users were color-coded to match their regular branch.

The higher-density areas of registered voters and users provided a focus for the marketing efforts of DCL's campaign for the mill levy. Maps displaying individual neighborhoods were created for the project to target densely populated areas with registered voters that were also library users. Fortunately—for the libraries—91.58 percent of registered voters were also library users. Although this technique would be more helpful in library systems that did not have such a high percentage of registered voters that were also library users, DCL learned that marketing in nearly any residential area would reach their target market. The map still provides DCL with the concentrations of registered voters who are library users who have insufficient access to nearby library service.

Other Uses of GIS in Public Libraries

The map with current and proposed libraries and registered voters who are also library users provides a display of each library's market. This method shows the possible differences between a library's

legal service areas and its market areas, as well as areas without users or areas that have users without a nearby library. More maps were created to display suggested market areas for each library.

The suggested market areas were created using the Euclidian allocation tool in ArcMap. A value was assigned to each pixel in the county based on the closest library to that pixel. The resulting polygons for suggested market areas are called Thiessen polygons and resemble shattered glass. Without actual spatial analysis it is hard to tell what percentage of users in each suggested market area identify their closest library by distance as their regular branch. This method also does not take into account the driving time to libraries. The polygons created for Douglas County, however, visually match the actual dispersion of patron points fairly well. For example, Highlands Ranch Library has a considerable number of its users living within the suggested Thiessen polygon for the library's market area.

The map in figure 3 shows the suggested market areas color-coded for each library, along with registered voters who are also library users and current libraries.

Although defining market areas in this way has advantages for marketing library services to the nearest potential users for each branch, this map also

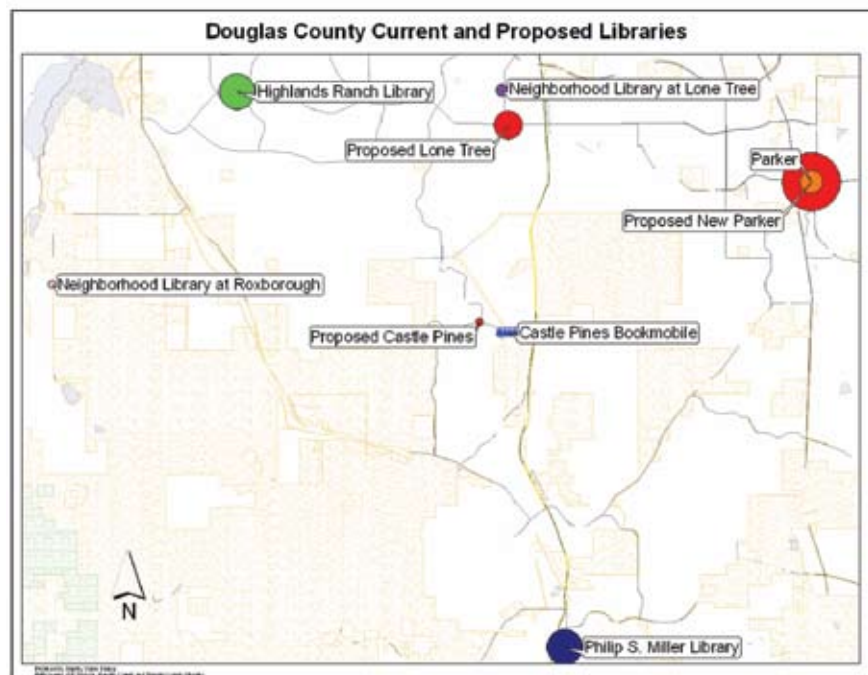


Figure 1. Map of Douglas County Current and Proposed Libraries

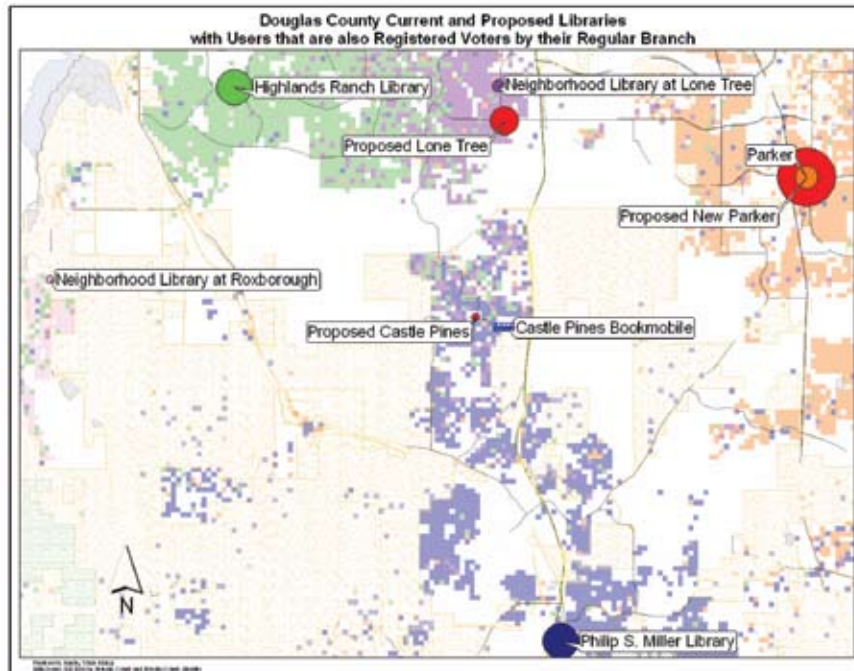


Figure 2. Map of Douglas County Current and Proposed Libraries with Users that Are Also Registered Voters by Their Regular Branch

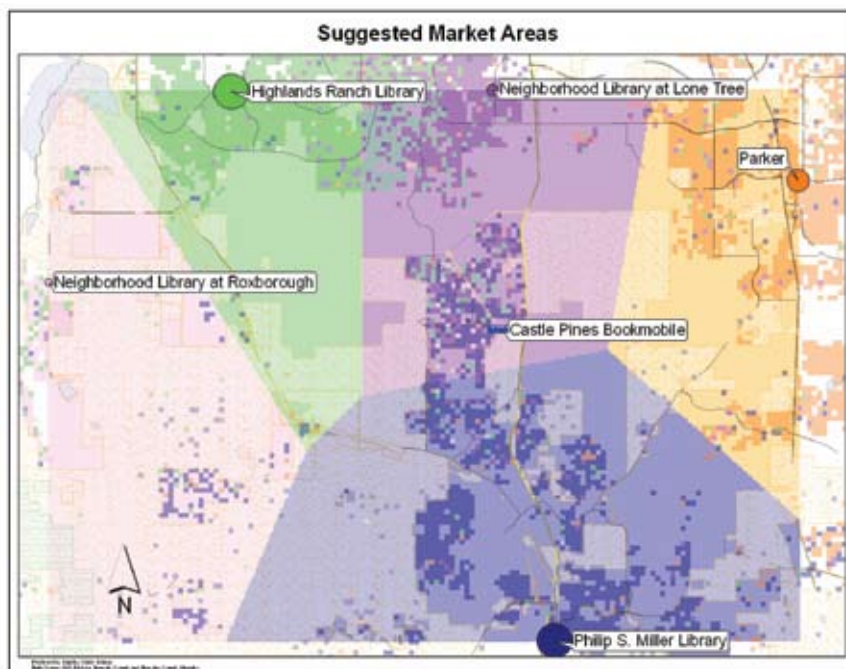


Figure 3. Suggested Market Areas

provides at a glance where future library locations would be most beneficial. Users living in the central part of Douglas County must travel much farther than other residents to reach library services. A bookmobile serves the central county users, but a bookmobile cannot offer the same services and programs as a brick-and-mortar library. Therefore, the proposed library near the bookmobile's location was a good site choice to fill the service gap. The second proposed library would replace the Neighborhood Library at Lone Tree, which, based on the map, serves a user population almost as large as other current larger branches. The new Parker Library, near the current location, would have thirty thousand more square feet and more parking that would better serve the nearly 100,000 persons in that portion of the county. The library administration came to these conclusions with local knowledge, but the maps provide a visual display that illustrates the current need for increased library services in particular areas of Douglas County. The three new libraries would significantly reduce the current distance burden for central county users and provide better service to the large Lone Tree and current Parker Library user populations. Additional libraries would limit strain on other libraries and reduce all libraries' market areas considerably.

Election Results

The potential uses of GIS in public libraries went beyond the focus of DCL, but offered

some ideas for the future. For the election, DCL used promotional materials developed by a public finance firm that did not include any maps. The public finance firm advised against using the maps because the maps would not only show where the proposed libraries would be, but where they would not be. DCL decided that registered voters would be more likely to vote to support two new libraries if they did not know the proposed location of those new libraries.

According to the Douglas County Clerk and Recorder, the vote was close, but the proposition failed by 209 votes.⁶ It is indeterminable whether maps would have helped or hurt the libraries' public relations. DCL has some considerations to make before the proposition appears on another ballot, but for now, unfortunately, the population of Douglas County will continue to grow without increased library services.

Conclusions

Although DCL lost the election and did not use maps beyond those produced by the state library service, the administration gained knowledge of other ways GIS can be used in the future for marketing and planning. Perhaps the knowledge gained from this project will assist DCL and other public libraries with future marketing and planning activities. I understand that not all states have a service similar to the state library of Colorado and that GeoLib does not offer the ability to display user locations. Each municipality's local government, however, does have GIS professionals that work with other spatial issues, such as transportation, school redistricting, and so on. I encourage all public libraries to make connections with local GIS professionals for assistance. I hope that they are as pro-library as the GIS professionals in Douglas County are. The maps that result from displaying

libraries' spatial data can be a powerful marketing and planning tool. ■

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank DCL and his primary contact, Rochelle Logan, associate director of research and collections. Without her local knowledge and the spatial data she obtained, this project would not have been possible. The GIS Division of Douglas County and the state library service were also instrumental in creating the original spatial data of registered voters and library users used in this study to produce these maps.

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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., P.O. Box 7111, South Bend, IN 46634-7111; jmfelli@iusb.edu.

Julie is reading *What Was Lost* by Catherine O'Flynn.

"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 Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture

Edited by John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 260p. \$50 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-382-9; ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-382-0) LC 2006033743.

This collection of essays explores the role that libraries, as cultural and social institutions, have played throughout history and within the human imagination. The editors note that "libraries . . . are ubiquitous to almost every society during almost every time period. However, as places of cultural, symbolic, and intellectual meaning, libraries have varied greatly" (3) and individual papers cover this variety of libraries well. Several contributions examine libraries as gathering places and work spaces while others look at the library as a cultural touchstone or as manifestation of community hopes, dreams, and ideals. Others cover library architecture, reading as a social activity, libraries in historically black communities, and even fictional libraries.

The book is divided into four distinct sections that provide a loose theme for the individual chapters in each section. Beginning with "The Library's Place in the Past" and

continuing on through "Libraries, Place, and Culture," the book covers not only libraries in a historical and contemporary context but also includes more philosophical musings on the meaning of libraries, reading, and culture and the intersection of the three. Standout essays include "Beneficial Spaces: The Rise of Military Libraries in the British Empire," "Stimulating Space, Serendipitous Space: Library as Place in the Life of the Scholar," and "Managing Pleasure: Library Architecture and the Erotics of Reading." Public librarians will also be interested in "A Grand Old Sandstone Lady: Vancouver's Carnegie Library," which illustrates a number of similarities between that library and the public libraries of today, including policies on how to deal with unruly teen patrons!

Though this collection tends toward the academic, there is something here for most readers. Those with an interest in historic libraries, library architecture and furnishings, libraries as community centers, and libraries as an idea will find something both enjoyable and enlightening in this collection.—*Julie Biando Edwards, Ethnic Studies Librarian and Multicultural Coordinator, University of Montana, Missoula*

The New Inquisition: Understanding and Managing Intellectual Freedom Challenges

By James LaRue. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 157p. \$40 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-285-7; ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-285-4) LC 2006102885.

Every year, public libraries address challenges posed by customers. Perhaps a patron wants a book removed from a library's collection because they find the subject matter offensive or the language inappropriate. Whatever the reason for challenges, library staff must be prepared to address them with confidence. Thus, the fundamental goal of *The New Inquisition* is to provide "practical advice—primarily for public library administrators, governing boards, and line staff—on how to respond to public challenges" (xiii).

During his tenure as a library administrator, James LaRue has responded to hundreds of intellectual freedom challenges. He outlines eight rules for responding to complaints from public library customers. These include apologizing to patrons initiating challenges, avoiding defensive behavior, restating and clarifying patrons' problems, and offering service. LaRue also recommends addressing complaints in a timely manner and writing a detailed letter to all customers who make formal challenges. In addition, he underscores the importance of respecting customers throughout the challenge process, regardless of the library's decision. *The New Inquisition* includes an appendix of letters LaRue has written in response to challenges on behalf of his library. Librarians that address formal patron complaints will find this section a considerable benefit.

It is difficult to discern what motivates patrons to challenge library materials. However, La Rue believes the New Inquisition is a driving force behind the complaints that public libraries receive. He defines the New Inquisition as "the legacy of the mid-life Baby Boomers, the belief that it is an urgent ethical mission to challenge, resist, even torture any public institution that crosses you" (59). In this era of the New Inquisition, public libraries must prepare for intellectual freedom challenges by instituting policies outlining their organizational procedure for reconsideration requests. With established policies and procedures in place, library staff can approach customer challenges with confidence and composure, while remembering to treat them with the respect and dignity they deserve.

The New Inquisition is recommended for all frontline library staff and highly recommended for library administrators and managers who respond to formal intellectual freedom challenges.—Adrienne Leonardelli, Former Reference Librarian, Forsyth County (N.C.) Public Library

100 Most Popular African American Authors: Biographical Sketches and Bibliographies

By Bernard A. Drew. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 361p. \$55 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-322-5 ; ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-322-6) LC 2006030669.

In this useful reference text Bernard A. Drew compiles a list of popular African American authors across a variety of genres. The authors featured in this book include poets, science fiction writers, dramatists, children's authors, mainstream

fiction writers, and even writers of erotica. Drew notes that "this reference book stresses 'popular' authors" (ix), therefore the authors included in the book are not merely contemporary writers. Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Alex Haley are featured alongside Walter Mosley, Terry McMillan, and Jamaica Kincaid.

Authors are listed alphabetically and each entry includes a short essay, a detailed bibliography, and suggestions for further reading. Essays focus on the biographical and literary details of an author's life and very often include the author's reflections on his or her own writing and writing process. This book will be very useful for book groups looking for more information about a particular author. Although the range of genres is wide, many of the authors featured here have similar backgrounds and have come to writing as a second career. Many also have the same goal in writing—to create three-dimensional characters that reflect the black experience. Others write with a social or political agenda in mind while still others write simply for the joy of creating. The bibliographies are detailed and will be useful for librarians and for readers who want to be sure they have read all of a beloved writer's works. The suggestions for further research also provide good resources for learning more about a particular writer's life and work. The book contains an author/title index as well as a genre index, which should prove to be extremely useful for readers' advisory purposes.

This book should appeal to a variety of readers. Included along with such standard figures as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, and Alice Waters are newer or lesser-known authors. A useful tool for librarians and readers alike, this book is rec-

ommended for all collections.

—Julie Biando Edwards, *Ethnic Studies Librarian and Multicultural Coordinator, University of Montana–Missoula*

Something Musical Happened at The Library: Adding Song and Dance to Children's Story Programs

By Rob Reid. Chicago, ALA, 2007. 176p. \$35 (ISBN-10: 0-83890-942-6; ISBN-13: 978-0-83890-942-3) LC 2007008586.

Rob Reid, a guru in the creative realm of children's librarians, school media specialists, teachers, and other professionals who work closely with small children, incorporates dance, music, and literature into a delightful, handy resource guide.

Reid uses his experience as an author, humorist, and university instructor to reach a wide audience, from the children's librarian's first story hour to the seasoned school media specialist.

The philosophy behind Reid's book, as well as his first compilation entitled *Children's Jukebox*, is to break the stereotypical quiet classes and stoic story hours, add movement and sound to learning and literature, and to make the experience enjoyable for all. Lesson plans are incorporated into the book to make musical programming available and seamless.

Early chapters of the book contain musical story lesson plans, fun pairings (matching children's songs with children's books), more musical ideas, call-and-response songs, cumulative songs, and songs sung in rounds. The latter part contains annotations for picture books based on song lyrics, picture books featuring music and musicians, and

picture books featuring dance and dancers.

Reid also includes a useful chapter on electronic resources for finding musical recordings and individual artist websites. An extensive index is included with song titles listed in quotations, book titles in italics, and names of artists and authors in parentheses.

Overall, an excellent book to add to a children's professional's library collection. This would also be a great book for professors to add to a children's programming course.

—Lori Sigety, *Branch Manager, LaSalle Branch Library, St. Joseph County (Ind.) Public Library*

Bringing Classes into the Public Library: A Handbook for Librarians

By Martha Seif Simpson and Lucretia I. Duwel. Jefferson, N.C., and London: McFarland & Co., 2007. 175p. \$45 (ISBN-10: 0-78642-806-6; ISBN-13: 978-0-78642-806-9) LC 2006037527.

This book explores what seems to be an obviously routine activity, class visits in public libraries, and shows the incredible related workload, from planning to evaluation. It covers outreach to schools, staff time, various library departments affected by class visits, library instruction, and more.

The book also contains sample forms: summary sheets for teachers, assignment alert forms, class visit requests and permission forms, schedules, letters, evaluation forms, activity sheets (matching, crosswords and search puzzles), bookmarks, resources finder, or scavenger hunt worksheets. They can be adapted to train support staff or volunteers.

Finally, a couple of cons and a couple of pros. Cons: first, the

authors pursue being exhaustive and precise, at the risk of being repetitive on a few occasions; second, an explanation of the U.S. education grading system (perhaps a comparative table) would be helpful to international librarians. Pros: the amusing illustrations by Mark A. Hatfield, and, especially, the supportive spirit of the two authors: when they exhort to "start small" (54) their words go far beyond the topic of the book and should guide librarians in small libraries and media centres.—Corrado Di Tillo, *Head Librarian, Biblioteca Raffaello, Rome, Italy*

Books Kids Will Sit Still For 3: A Read-Aloud Guide

By Judy Freeman. Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 936p. \$55 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-164-8; ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-164-2) LC 2006007469.

Judy Freeman, a former elementary school librarian, has put together an updated guide to her *More Books Kids Will Sit Still For* that includes 1,705 of her favorite works for children.

This book is broken into three sections, About Children's Books and How to Use Them, Annotated Read-Aloud Lists, and a final section that includes the professional bibliography and indexes.

The first section, consisting of six chapters, includes advice for becoming a good school librarian, methods for including books across grades and curriculums, reading books aloud and alone, and storytelling techniques. Section 2 includes six annotated read-aloud lists. Most of the books in this section were written between 1995 and 2005. Entries for each booklist are listed alphabetically by author and include

appropriate age group, plot summary, ideas to apply to these books for follow-up activities, similar titles, and related subjects.

Section 3 starts out with a professional bibliography broken down into different categories to aid any school librarian's career and professional development. Also, included are very detailed indexes for author/illustrator, subject, and title.

This is a very thorough guide that provides practical and down-to-earth advice for any school librarian or children's librarian. Freeman's guide shows a genuine love of books as well as a very detailed knowledge of children's literature. Every children's librarian needs this book in their collection.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Fla.*

Using XML: A How-To-Do-It Manual and CD-ROM for Librarians

Kwong Bor Ng. New York: Neal Schuman, 2007. 176pp. \$75 (ISBN-10: 1-55570-567-7; ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-567-1) LC 20078089.

Using XML bills itself as a practical manual that will teach librarians how to use XML, a website markup language, in a library setting. The author writes that XML has become a widespread tool today, especially in libraries, making knowledge of it important to library professionals—particularly technical services librarians. The book features many concrete examples and an accompanying CD-ROM, which all help to illustrate the author's points.

Author Kwong Bor Ng provides a wealth of examples in this book, along with preset XML exercises and answer files on the CD-ROM.

This practical approach is an excellent strategy for material this complicated; it reinforces the text and engages the reader interactively. The exercises on the CD provide an opportunity for readers to process and apply new knowledge before moving on. The author is careful to move slowly from topic to topic, gradually building a scaffold to underpin and support the reader's knowledge.

Unfortunately, the book does not entirely succeed in making XML seem like a usable tool. I was able to follow the first eight chapters without too much difficulty, but when I reached a chapter that covered material with which I was not previously familiar, my comprehension dropped dramatically. The book also suffers from the common problem of using too much inside jargon and not explaining the terms well enough. I suspect that anyone completely new to this topic would benefit from reading another, more general introduction to XML before tackling this volume.

Overall, *Using XML* would best serve as a reference to be consulted during an XML project, rather than as a basic introduction to the topic. It is recommended as a professional development tool for technical services and digital librarians in academic libraries and larger public libraries.—*Libby Feil, Manager and Librarian, Local and Family History Services, St. Joseph County (Ind.) Public Library*

Read On . . . Horror Fiction

Read On series. By June Michelle Pulliam and Anthony J. Fonseca. Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 204p. \$30 (ISBN-10: 1-59158-176-1; ISBN-13: 978-1-59158-176-5) LC 2006012719.

June Michelle Pulliam and Anthony J. Fonseca, no strangers to horror fiction being readers, writers, and reviewers of the genre, have put together an updated guide to their previous work, *Hooked on Horror*. Demographics have shown that horror fiction has become increasingly popular with readers starting with last few decades of the twentieth century and that this is not likely to change anytime soon. (xiii) The authors mention that different readers have different tastes in books even though it might fall into the same genre. For example, some readers might relate to the characters, some might like the settings, the way a story unfolds, or the language of the story (xv). In writing this guide, they wanted to apply categories to the genre to include classic horror novels, benchmark titles and novels published within the last decade.

To break the subcategories down for the genre to appeal to different readers, there are five chapters to this guide to include such topics as story, setting, character, language, and mood. Each chapter begins with the appeal for each reader and what type of books might be included. There are subcategories included within each chapter to break down the genre with a bibliographic list of works each with a short summary. For example, Chapter 1 "Story" includes such subcategories as "The Plot Thickens: Complex Plots" and "Let's Twist Again: Plot Twists, Turnabouts, and Inversions." A book that has won an award such as International Literary Guild Award, Pulitzer Prize, International Horror Guild Award, or Bram Stoker Award will have a medal icon with the first letter of the award. Young-adult novels also have an icon.

In the appendices are even more listings to entice horror readers.

Appendix A includes those novels made into films with listings of classic films, modern classics, and others. Appendix B includes series titles that are included in this guide. Appendix C entitled “Genreblends” are for those works that have an element of horror but may be included

in another genre. Also included is a thorough index.

The authors have put together a great detailed guide that is definitely lighthearted and does not take itself too seriously. It will be a great addition to any public library reader’s advisory collection and sure to help

a harried librarian trying to help an avid horror reader looking for the next read.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Fla.* 

Readers Respond

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We mark a blue slip, approximately the size of a standard bookmark, with the first two letters of the patron’s last name and the last four digits of the patron’s phone number. The slip is attached to the text block and held with a rubber band to the item and then the item is placed with the spine in toward the shelf. In this way, we have preserved the privacy of the individual and hidden the item’s spine from other patrons.—*Mimi Satterthwaite, Head of Reference, Abington Township (Penn.) Public Libraries*

It’s a Balancing Act

Library customers are more demanding and expectations are higher than ever. They want their visits to be fast and convenient—place the hold online, pick it up at the self-serve hold shelf, use the self-checkout machine, and be out the door in minutes. Or, they place the hold online, read their e-mail, pull up to the drive-up window, and they are on their way. Or they just download material. Convenience is what our customers want.

The first time I saw a self-service hold shelf my reaction was “What about patron privacy?” That was a few years ago. Since then, we have seen this model of customer service used successfully in countless libraries across the country. The Gail Borden Public Library (GBPL) adopted self-service holds for books in December 2006 and moved our AV holds to self-service shelves in March 2008.

Both times we certainly had concerns of all the things that could go wrong. And honestly, some did. Even when I monitored the shelves to make sure that customers understood it was not a browsing area, I had to intervene

with one woman several times. I asked her if she needed help finding her hold. She told me, “No, I’m just looking.” I explained that these were personal requests and that the items were being held for that person only. She seemed to understand and walked away. A few minutes later, she was back again. I approached her a second time and again asked if she needed help. She told me that she just wanted to see what her friend was reading. And yes, I did have to explain that is a violation of the state’s law on patron confidentiality.

At the GBPL, I believe that we do provide a reasonable level of privacy for our customers. Each book is shelved with the spine down, so only the page edges are exposed. All holds are wrapped with a hold slip that is standard letter-size which is printed as the hold is triggered. The wrappers are held with a rubber band around each item. We make a concerted effort to cover all of the title and author information on all material.

The wrappers are printed with the customer’s last name vertically and the first four letters of the first name printed horizontally. Our library’s ILS is Innovative and we first saw these hold slips at an Innovative Users Group Conference in San Francisco. With between eight hundred to more than one thousand holds on the shelf at one time, the time savings of printed hold slips have been tremendous. Recently, an enhancement was added that allows customers to select an alias to print on the hold slip for additional privacy, although we have not had any customers request that feature at this point in time.

The self-service holds signage is clear and consistent with other areas of the collection. Smaller shelf labels read, “Thank you for not browsing our personal holds shelf.”

The hold shelves are in direct line of sight for staff to monitor. Since we are frequently on the floor shelving holds as they are processed, it gives us the added opportunity to assist customers in finding their holds and demonstrating how to use the self-checkout machine. Even if a customer tries to use the self-checkout machine on someone else's hold, the computer system recognizes that customer is not linked to that item and it is refused.

Our customers have the added convenience of selecting the drive-up window as a pickup location. When one high school teacher was concerned that her students might try to see what she was reading, we were able to satisfy her desire for privacy by having her select the drive-up window for pickup. We assured her that those holds are not visible to the public and we would retrieve them for her, if she preferred to use the inside checkout desk. Offering

as many options as possible adds to customer satisfaction.

At the circulation checkout desk we discuss transactions with our customers face-to-face. Disputes about overdue fines and material that customers claim they returned may be overheard by the next customer in line. We print out a receipt with the titles of items, so that information can be viewed without discussing titles aloud, but some part of conversations can be overheard. The information desk or reference desk is another service point where the patron is requesting material or asking a reference question that may be overheard by someone nearby. I am reminded by the countless cell phone conversations I have been exposed to in the library, that were obvious examples of a customer's lack of interest in their own privacy, and much less concern about wasting staff members' time by making them wait to serve the cell phone

user. Finally, users of our Internet stations are not assured of complete privacy of sites they are viewing. In many situations our customers cannot be guaranteed complete privacy in such a public space.

I think customers expect libraries to provide privacy to the degree that their personal information is not shared openly with others. As long as the holds are securely wrapped and the shelves are monitored diligently, there should be no reasonable rationale for eliminating self-service hold areas. Libraries are a public place with ever increasing demands on staff, services, and space. The self-service hold shelves eliminates staff time to retrieve each hold for customers and the amount of time that customers stand in line waiting. It is a balancing act of providing patron confidentiality and strong customer service.—*Kate Burlette, Director of Circulation Services, Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin, Illinois* 

October is National Reading Group Month: Events and Activities Update

The Women's National Book Association (WNBA) launches its second National Reading Group Month in October 2008 to promote reading groups and to celebrate the joy of shared reading. The organization is collaborating with readers, publishers, trade organizations, bookstores, and libraries in annual National Reading Group Month events. Events featuring favorite authors are planned nationwide in the association's chapters, including Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles, Nashville, New York City, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and the newly formed Seattle chapter. Get more information at www.wnba-books.org. 

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REGISTRATION IS OPEN AT WWW.PLA.ORG!

Join the Public Library Association (PLA) AT THIS UNIQUE EVENT, APRIL 2-4, 2009 IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE SPRING SYMPOSIUM COMBINES PLA'S HIGHLY-REGARDED **educational programming** WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO **meet and mingle** WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES IN A MORE INTIMATE SETTING THAN THE PLA NATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE 2009 SPRING SYMPOSIUM WILL FEATURE **seven day-and-a-half-long workshops**, AN OPENING GENERAL SESSION, AN AUTHOR LUNCHEON, LOCAL LIBRARY TOURS, AND MORE!



In-depth workshops allow you to focus on one topic pertinent to public libraries and public librarians today:

- Workshop 1: **Everyday Library Ethics: How the Right Thing is the Better Thing for Your Library and Community**
- Workshop 2: **Service Responses: Selecting and Implementing the Right Mix for Your Library**
- Workshop 3: **Silk Purses and Sow's Ears? Assessing the Quality of Public Library Statistics and Making the Most of Them**
- Workshop 4: **Today's Library: From the Inside Out**
- Workshop 5: **Libraries Connect in the 21st Century**
- Workshop 6: **Current Issues: A PLA/CPLA Workshop**
- Bonus Workshop exclusively for PLA members: **Turning the Page: Building Your Library Community**

The 2009 Spring Symposium will be held at the Nashville Convention Center. Housing is available at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel.

Early Bird Discounted Registration (closes October 31)

PLA members \$250

Remember: You can join PLA and save! Visit www.pla.org to join and register.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION

PLA members (after October 31) \$275

ALA members \$350

Non-members \$425

S E E Y O U I N
NASHVILLE

Visit www.pla.org for more information and to register.



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

Vicki is reading *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett, *Sympathy Between Humans* by Jodi Compton, and *Mistress of the Art of Death* by Ariana Franklin.

The following are extracted from press releases and vendor announcements and are intended for reader information only. The appearance of such notices herein does not constitute an evaluation or an endorsement of the products or services by the Public Library Association or the editors of this magazine.

Gale Databases to Feature Text-to-Speech Option via ReadSpeaker

www.gale.com

Gale, part of Cengage Learning, announced an exclusive agreement with VoiceCorp to implement ReadSpeaker, a service for speech-enabled Web, to provide text-to-speech capability to Gale online databases. This text-to-speech feature appearing on each document page will allow users to listen to the text as it is read aloud.

Convenient for users and easy to implement, the ReadSpeaker function converts text and streams the corresponding audio content without any software downloads or special plug-ins needed. Users can select any portion of text, or an entire article to be streamed as audio. With a click of a button, any Gale database text can be read aloud via the user's computer, thus making Gale content accessible in a new way. These audio segments can also be saved as MP3 files for use on MP3 players for listening at a later time.

Free to database subscribers and the end-user, ReadSpeaker functionality has been added to Gale databases including Student Resource Centers, Discover, Junior Reference Collection, Kids Infobits, Opposing Viewpoints Reference Center, and Science Resource Center.

Burgeon Group: Starring the Nine-Foot-Tall, Kid-Powered ABC Whirligig

www.burgeongroup.com

The Burgeon Group, dedicated to creating interactive learning spaces in public libraries, recently designed a nine-foot-tall whirligig that kids can turn to watch the A-B-Cs go by.

We all know that kids learn through play, and that reading every day prepares kids for school. The Burgeon team creates interactive learning spaces exclusively for public libraries, to help develop pre-literacy skills. They offer a wide range of products and sizes, from small fifteen-inch-square interactives, to nine-foot-tall ABC whirligigs, to huge installations that can fill a few thousand square feet.

To see one of their installations, check out the June 2008 issue of *Architectural Record*, which features the unique Early Literacy Spaces custom designed and fabricated for the Arabian Branch library in Scottsdale, Arizona. The award-winning library is a reflection of the natural desert environment. Burgeon's sandstone canyon response creates an organic birth-to-five-year-old area with cozy reading areas, board book shelving, alphabet hunt, magnet board, puppet play, and more than one hundred activities designed to meet the PLA "Ready to Read Pre-Literacy Activities" service response.

National Endowment for the Arts Announces New Books for the Big Read

www.NEABigRead.org

Communities looking to rekindle their love of reading by joining the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) reading initiative The Big Read will now have even more great books from which to choose. The NEA recently announced the addition of four new selections to The Big Read library: *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* and *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, and a special collection of poetry and short fiction by Edgar Allan Poe. These titles will be available for Big Read projects taking place from September 2009 to June 2010.

The Big Read library currently features twenty-two novels. The NEA chooses new books for The Big Read in consultation with the Readers Circle, a distinguished group of twenty-two writers, scholars, librarians, critics, artists, and publishing professionals.

Application guidelines for the next grant cycle, September 2009 to June 2010, will be available on The Big Read website.

Maggots in My Sweet Potatoes: Women Doing Time

www.HumaneExposures.com

Maggots in My Sweet Potatoes: Women Doing Time is an in-depth, illuminating, and often heartbreaking look at the lives of incarcerated women. Photojournalist Susan Madden Lankford's dramatic portrait photography, coupled with frank and

graphic voices of both the jailed and the jailers, as well as rehabilitation counselors, attorneys, judges, medical professionals and psychiatrists, raise questions about the powerful role of childhood experiences in shaping the people we become.

This book, the product of more than two years of photographing and interviewing, reveals an overcrowded, strained incarceration system increasingly unable to deal with the mental, emotional, and addiction problems women bring with them behind bars.

The book will be available in both hardcover and paperback editions in September 2008 from Humane Exposures Publishing and may be purchased through most distributors.

The Truth about Cancer

www.pbs.org/takeonestep/cancer

The third installment in PBS's four-part "Take One Step" health campaign, *The Truth about Cancer* is a two-hour program that takes an inside look at the cancer field. Told in the first person by award-winning filmmaker Linda Garmon, the film shares the personal story of her own husband's battle with cancer. Garmon returns to the hospitals and institutions where her husband was treated as she chronicles the lives of patients, doctors, researchers, and patient advocates who are united in the quest to cure cancer.

The DVD includes Linda Ellerbee's half-hour discussion with a panel of experts and celebrities. The program showcases the far-reaching impact cancer has on individuals and their families, friends, and caregivers, and will offer guidance on how to manage the realities that come with a cancer diagnosis.

The Truth about Cancer DVD may be purchased through PBS or WGBH.

Polaris Gives Library Patrons a Voice

www.polarislibrary.com

Polaris Library Systems announced a partnership agreement with ChiliFresh.com. The partnership enables Polaris customers to integrate the ChiliFresh Review Engine with Polaris PowerPAC.

The ChiliFresh Review Engine provides an interactive forum for patrons to write and post book reviews and read reviews from library patrons around the world. Starred ratings and reviews, and the ability to write reviews, appear directly in Polaris PowerPAC, making it easy for patrons to view and post reviews.

"ChiliFresh gives library patrons exactly what they want: a voice," said Scott Johnson, vice president of business development for ChiliFresh Enterprises. "Having the ability to read and write book reviews from inside Polaris PowerPAC encourages interaction among library patrons and enables patrons to help one another decide what to read."

SirsiDynix Unveils Its New Faceted Search Product

www.sirsidynix.com

SirsiDynix announced Enterprise, a new faceted search product that is the foundation for a range of user experience solutions. Enterprise features fuzzy search technology, highly efficient search index updating, intuitive user interfaces, powerful finding aids, consortia support,

deep integration with SirsiDynix integrated library systems and next-generation OPAC functionality.

It also provides the groundwork to support community/social networking capabilities such as user reviews, rankings, and tagging in future releases. Because the new product is an easy add-on to current SirsiDynix OPACs, Enterprise offers libraries a simple, cost-effective way to build on existing user experiences to deliver next-generation ones.

Cobá—A New Patron Record Cleanup and Validation Tool

<http://coba.quipugroup.com>

The partners of Quipu Group recently launched Cobá, a complete patron address verification solution. Keeping patron address data formatted correctly and up to date is now as simple as uploading a file and selecting menu options. With accurate patron address data, libraries can take advantage of population mapping applications for review of service levels or when considering expansion, as well as maximize return-on-investment for mailings and other library communications. Cobá can help your library maintain compliance with online database contracts by verifying that patron addresses are within the library's service area.

Cobá checks patron data against a database of addresses approved by the United States Postal Service. All addresses that can be corrected

automatically will be added to an output file in MARC or tab-delimited format, or as an Excel spreadsheet. Cobá also creates a separate output file that contains all patron addresses that could not be matched in the USPS data, allowing libraries to review and correct those addresses manually. Cobá can also be used to convert all patron address zip codes to Zip+4 format, or to flip reassigned zip codes.

The Cobá address verification solution allows libraries to maintain their patron data on a schedule that works best for them, using a hosted solution that is available 24/7. No additional processing or interface with ILS vendors or local data resources is necessary.

Technology "Cookbooks" Available from MaintainIT Project

www.maintainitproject.org

The MaintainIT Project is a three-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Project staff gathers stories from public libraries on how they support public computers, and publishes their tips and techniques in "cookbooks" and articles, available free on the project website. Cookbooks that are currently available include "A Cookbook for Small and Rural Libraries" and "Recipes for a 5-Star Library."

MaintainIT is a project of TechSoup (www.techsoup.org), a

nonprofit with extensive experience helping other nonprofits use technology effectively.

Gale's New Lives and Perspectives Collection

www.gale.com

Gale's new Lives & Perspectives Collection is an add-on module to the Biography Resource Center that expands and enhances the database with new content. The Lives & Perspectives Collection module includes nearly 160,000 concise and in-depth biographies drawn from reference sources such as *American Men & Women of Science* as well as nearly forty titles recently published under the highly respected Macmillan, Scribner, and Gale imprints, including the Dartmouth Medal-winning *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *Governments of the World*, and *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*.

More than a standard recounting of a person's life, the in-depth biographies in this collection offer unique viewpoints and provide overviews of some of the most notable and influential figures in history, world culture, science, religion, health, government, and more. The substantial number of biographies made available in the Lives & Perspectives Collection brings coverage of many new individuals to Biography Resource Center. 

What do you want to talk about today?

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International Relations

Join the conversation at www.plaspace.org.

Visit www.plaspace.org today to join or create a group that addresses your area of interest.

What is PLAspace?

The Public Library Association created PLAspace to better serve members by giving them an opportunity to share ideas, network, and explore their professional interests with their peers online. All PLA members can join or create Communities of Practice (CoPs), which represent groups that have come together for the purpose of discussing one topic pertaining to public libraries and public librarianship.

PLAspace features:

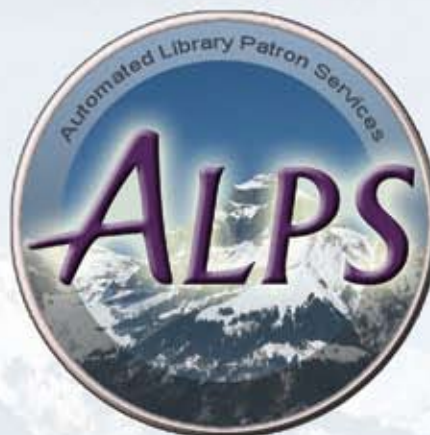
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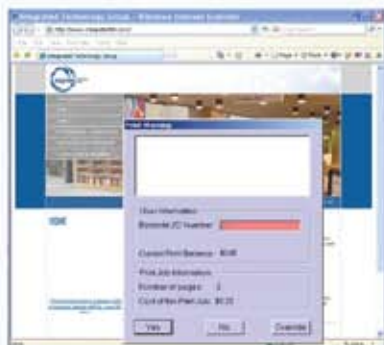
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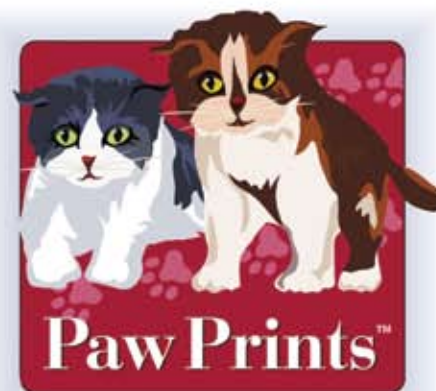


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