

# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 46 • NUMBER 5 • SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007 • ISSN 0163-5506



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## Editor's Note

You'll probably want to dig right into this issue, packed as it is with lots of new ideas, tips, and public library research. In addition to two noteworthy articles on the Internet and public libraries (one is part two of an ongoing series examining youth's use of the public library and the Internet, while the other takes a look at provision of public access to computers and the Internet by public libraries), you'll find an overview of services to Spanish-speaking patrons and a new method for more accurately determining your collection development budget (Indexed Collection Budget Allocations). Before you dive in to all that heady stuff, check out News from PLA for a brief overview of PLA's upcoming national conference—registration is open now ([www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org)). Also, don't miss Lisa Guidarini's interview with Amy Cohen (*The Late Bloomer's Revolution*) for a humorous respite from all that erudition! As always, please send in your manuscripts, comments, criticisms. We look forward to hearing from you!

Kathleen M. Hughes  
Editor, Public Libraries  
khughes@ala.org

Kathleen is reading *The Poe Shadow* by Matthew Pearl and *Peterson Field Guides: The North American Prairie* by Stephen R. Jones and Ruth Carol Cushman.



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# News from PLA

## PLA 2008—A Celebration of Public Librarianship

Don't miss the excitement as thousands of public librarians gather in Minneapolis, March 25–29, 2008, to share innovative ideas and expertise, learn about best practices and procedures, socialize, network, and invigorate their libraries and their careers. As usual, the PLA conference will feature excellent speakers, provocative discussions on hot topics, and all the latest and best information on public library trends, ideas, products, and services.

### The Line Up

PLA 2008 offers up a diversity of excellent speakers. On Tuesday, March 25, preconference attendees and others can hear Meg Cabot (author of *The Princess Diaries*, among other books) at the Preconference Luncheon\* from noon–1:45 P.M. Nancy Pearl is scheduled to make a couple of appearances, starting with Book Buzz on the first day of the conference (Wednesday, March 26, 10:30 A.M.–noon). Book Buzz features Pearl and publisher representatives discussing the best of forthcoming books. Also on Wednesday, from 2:30–4 P.M. is the conference's opening general session featuring John Wood, founder and CEO of Room to Read. Wood left his executive track career at Microsoft to focus on helping children around the world break the cycle of poverty through education. Wood's recent memoir, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the*

*World*, details these experiences. On Thursday, March 27, the Children's Author luncheon\* will feature author Pat Mora and illustrator Raul Colon. Friday's roster includes Nancy Pearl keynoting the YA Author Luncheon\*, where the author of *Book Crush for Kids and Teens: Recommended Reading for Every Mood, Moment, and Interest* will discuss best books for the YAs. Also on Thursday evening, the Audio Publishers Dinner\* will feature best-selling author Jacqueline Winspear; actor, screenwriter, and audiobooks narrator Scott Brick; and Books on Tape executive producer Dan Musselman. The closing session, on Saturday, March 29, 2008 from 11:45 A.M.–1 P.M., will end the conference on a humorous note, with comedian and actor Kevin Nealon keynoting the event. Nealon is the author of the forthcoming book *Yes, You're Pregnant, But What About Me?*, a collection of humorous stories about becoming a first-time father at age fifty-three. Adult author luncheons\* also are planned for Thursday and Friday, with authors to be announced.

### Educational Programming

Packed with more than 150 educational sessions, the conference has no shortage of learning opportunities for attendees. Fifteen full- and half-day preconferences\* will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday on such subjects as "Beginners Guide to Serving Teens," "Guys Read: Make Noise with Boys Book Discussions," "Spanish Language Outreach," "HR for Results," "Winning Media Interviews," and many more. Visit



[www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for the complete list. In addition to these sessions, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday will feature full days of programming in the following subject areas: administration and leadership; collections and tech services; facilities; marketing; serving adults; serving youth; staffing; and technology. Complete program descriptions are available at [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org). Talk Tables also will be held during each program time slot.

### Exhibits

A busy exhibits hall awaits PLA attendees, with nearly five hundred exhibiting companies ready to show off the latest in new technologies and library products and services. Special exhibits events include coffee breaks on Thursday from 9:45–10:30 A.M. and 3:15–4 P.M., and on Friday 9:45–10:30 A.M., and a Closing Reception on Friday from 3:15–4 P.M.

### Special Events

**All Conference Reception (Friday, March 28, 2008 from 7–9 P.M.)**

All conference attendees are invited

to join PLA for an evening of networking and socializing with colleagues while enjoying a delicious repast. There is no charge for this reception, but badges are required.

#### A.R.T.

On Thursday, March 27, authors Avi, Pam Munoz Ryan, Sarah Weeks, and Brian Selznick reshape their writing into a theatrical performance at 8:30–9:45 A.M. and 4:–5:15 P.M.

### Virtual Conference

Can't make it to Minneapolis? You can still experience PLA 2008. This year, librarians who can't make the trip to Minneapolis will be able to participate virtually. The Virtual Conference will feature panel discussions, poster sessions, interactive workshops, and chats with colleagues—all available online. More information about the PLA Virtual Conference will be available shortly—check [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org).

The conference also will feature tours, author signings, and other special events. For more information and to register for PLA 2008, visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org).

*\*Requires an additional fee.*

### Thank You PLA!

I was thrilled to be selected as the Public Library Association representative for the first ALA Emerging Leaders (EL) class. I met a wonderful group of librarians and developed professional relationships as well as friendships among my group. Our group, Project L, consisted of six people: me (Candice Gwin), Cynthia Bischoff, Richard Kong, Holly Jin, April Roy, and Emily Weiss. I think we had a very positive experience as a whole and learned how to get through the challenges of working

via electronic means only. I believe our whole group appreciated that each of us was able to find our niche in the project when it came to assigning tasks. We also discovered that when you work with others who have as strong a work ethic as you do, it makes for successful results. Our group was assigned to work with the 2008 PLA National Conference Program Committee and select programs that would be of interest to new or young librarians. In order to highlight the right programs, we had to discover what Emerging Leaders really wanted. We surveyed the 2007 EL group and also discussed among our peers the challenges facing new or young librarians that we felt would meet the needs of future library leaders. Based on our conclusions and the survey results, we highlighted nine programs, which we presented at committee meetings at the 2007 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. I know this experience will benefit me in the future. I was honored to represent the Public Library Association and hope to continue to play a part in PLA in the future. I learned a lot about ALA and its purpose, and I was able to get more involved with an organization that I feel strongly about. Being a part of Leslie Burger's first Emerging Leaders group is an experience that I will never forget!—*Candice Y. Gwin, Director of Library Services, Kirkwood Public Library, Kirkwood, Missouri. [cgwin@real.more.net](mailto:cgwin@real.more.net).*

More information about the ALA Emerging Leaders program can be found at [wikis.ala.org/emergingleaders](http://wikis.ala.org/emergingleaders).

### Award Excellence!

PLA awards and honors are designed to highlight the best in public library

service. To apply for an award, visit PLA's Awards Online Application at [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org). All applications must be submitted online by December 3, 2007, 5 P.M. CST.

- **Advancement of Literacy Award** honors a publisher, bookseller, hardware or software dealer, foundation or similar group (that is, not an individual) that has made a significant contribution to the advancement of adult literacy. A plaque is awarded annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1984. Sponsored by *Library Journal*.
- **Allie Beth Martin Award** honors a librarian who, in a public library setting, has demonstrated extraordinary range and depth of knowledge about books or other library materials and has distinguished ability to share

## On the Agenda

### 2007

**PLA Boot Camp 3**  
Oct. 29–Nov. 2  
Salt Lake City

### 2008

**ALA Midwinter Meeting**  
Jan. 11–16  
Philadelphia

**PLA 12th National Conference**  
Mar. 25–29  
Minneapolis

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

that knowledge. A plaque and a \$3,000 honorarium are presented annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1977 in honor of Allie Beth Martin. Sponsored by Baker & Taylor.

- **Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product Award** is designed to provide a public library the opportunity to build or expand a collection of either or both formats in whatever proportion the library chooses. The grant consists of \$2,500 of audio music or video products. Sponsored by Baker & Taylor.
- **Charlie Robinson Award** honors a public library director who, over a period of seven years, has been a risk taker, an innovator, or a change agent in a public library. The recipient should have been active in national and other professional associations and be known for developing and implementing programs that are responsive to the needs of community residents. The award consists of \$1,000 and a gift. The public library director will be honored at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1997. Sponsored by the Baker & Taylor Company.
- **Demco New Leaders Travel Grant** is designed to enhance the professional development and improve the expertise of public librarians new to the field by making possible their attendance at major professional development activities. Plaques and travel grants of up to \$1,500 per applicant are presented annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1993. The name of this grant was changed in October 2004. This

grant is sponsored by DEMCO, Inc.

- **Ebsco Excellence in Small and/or Rural Public Library Service Award** honors a public library serving a population of 10,000 or fewer that demonstrates excellence of service to its community as exemplified by an overall service program or a special program of significant accomplishment. A plaque and a \$1,000 honorarium are presented annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1991. Sponsored by EBSCO Information Services.
- **Gordon M. Conable Award** honors a public library staff member, a library trustee, or a public library who has demonstrated a commitment to intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights. The award consists of \$1,500 and a plaque to be presented annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Sponsored by LSSI.
- **“Grow Your Own @ your library®” Institutional Scholarship** is a pilot program developed by the Public Library Association to address the education needs of public library staff working toward the ultimate goal of obtaining a master’s degree in library and information science.



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This program awards funds to the employing public library for reimbursement of employee course tuition costs at the undergraduate or graduate level.

- **Highsmith Library Innovation Award** recognizes a public library’s innovative and creative service program to the community. (As part of the evaluation process with the vendor, after three years the emphasis may change to reflect new trends and needs.) A plaque and a \$2,000 honorarium are presented annually at the ALA Annual Conference. Established in 1996. Sponsored by Highsmith Inc. [PL](#)





**JAN SANDERS** is Director of the Pasadena (Calif.) Public Library; jsanders@cityofpasadena.net.

Jan is reading *Hummingbird's Daughter* by Alberto Urrea and *Organizational Development: A Jossey-Bass Reader*. She is rereading *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand for a discussion group.

# What Would You Change If You Could?

**W**elcome to autumn—my favorite time of the year! As a child, I loved fall, as it signaled the coming of three wonderful events: 1) the hot, dry days of summer on a dusty farm in Missouri were coming to a close; 2) school was about to start, so I'd see my friends and return to the environment I especially loved; and 3) my birthday was near! Admittedly, some of the excitement has dwindled—especially the birthday celebration part—but I still see this season as a time for new beginnings, and I am still excited by those possibilities.

I hope you have ordered your copy of the newest PLA publication, *Libraries Prosper with Passion, Purpose, and Persuasion! A PLA Toolkit for Success*, introduced at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., this past June. It's a terrific advocacy tool that enables you to use templates, suggestions, samples, and handouts to help library staff, trustees, Friends, and community members become more educated, enthusiastic advocates for libraries. One of the strongest sections gives suggestions on return on investment for libraries in a given community, suggesting how you can create similar values statements. You can use all of it, or part of it. In addition, the resources section gives a step-by-step guide to furthering your advocacy work. I hope you'll take a look.

Another particularly exciting consideration is the announcement of plans for PLA's 12th National Conference, PLA 2008, which will take place March 25–29, 2008, in Minneapolis. I visited this city just a few weeks ago, and am delighted with the possibilities. I know many of you will be making arrangements to join us for what is historically “the best conference for public libraries.” Visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for details. As always, there will be stellar programs, numerous opportunities to network and meet with colleagues, and top-notch general session speakers. The work in planning for national conference goes on, as you can probably imagine, for most of the time between the meetings. It takes more than a full year to receive and process all the program suggestions. A large, varied, and strong PLA committee works tirelessly to make sure that you receive as much for your registration dollar as is possible. If you or someone in your organization can only attend one conference this year, this is the one!

And this year, we're offering a special treat. Because we're in their home town, 3M (one of PLA's Partners) is stepping up with a wonderful opportunity. You will remember that the Leadership Development Task Force (LDTF), chaired by PLA past-president Luis Herrera, put forth recommendations on

how PLA should move forward in creating leadership training opportunities focused on developing change agents within the profession. So, we're presenting a one-day preconference program dealing with transformational change management. Participants will learn from private industry CEOs how to set a change strategy; what challenges are presented and how to handle them; and what innovations can be most productive in implementing, driving, and defining change. Speakers will be from 3M's top corporate management, a group that has worked with other CEOs, such as Ritz Carlton's leadership, for example.

How can you participate? There will be an online application process open to PLA members with at least

five years of experience in supervision and decision-making and who are most able to affect change. Entries are due by November 1; approximately one hundred slots are available. The most important segment of the application will be a 250-word essay answering the questions, "What change do you want to implement?" and "What is the difference that making that change will provide?" Applications will be evaluated by LDTF members, and participants will be notified by the end of November. Visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for more information.

The preconference is completely funded by 3M, including registration fees for the day as well as conference supplies, transportation from the convention center to 3M's

Innovation Center, lunch, snacks, and an evening reception to debrief the experience with other participants. We also plan to provide an opportunity for the class to come together again at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, to give progress reports on how their change implementation is working.

I sincerely hope you will think carefully about putting your name forward for this special opportunity. It's a wonderful chance to learn from trainers who work with strong presenters from outside our own library community. So start thinking now about what you would change if you could, how you would do it, and what difference that change would make! ☐

## New PLA Award Recognizes Innovation in Library Services

PLA now is accepting applications for the Polaris Innovation in Technology John Iliff award. Members of the association can nominate their colleagues and libraries for this new award through an online application available on the PLA Web site, [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org). The deadline for submitting an application is December 3, 2007.

The Polaris Innovation in Technology John Iliff Award honors the life and accomplishments of John Iliff, an early adopter and champion of technology in public libraries, and recognizes the contributions of a library worker, librarian, or library who has used technology and innovative thinking as a tool to improve services to public library users.

The award's purpose is to encourage innovative user-oriented thinking and practical solutions using old and new technologies. The award provides a \$1,000 honorarium, a plaque, and a bouquet of roses for the honoree's workplace. The cash award honors the recipient's efforts, while the roses recognize the environment that helped nurture the recipient's innovation.

An award jury appointed by the PLA president will review each nomination and select a recipient at the ALA 2008 Midwinter Meeting. Award winners will be announced in February 2008, and each award will be presented at the PLA President's Reception and Awards Presentation held during the ALA 2008 Annual Conference.

For more information, contact the PLA office by phone at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or by e-mail at [pla@ala.org](mailto:pla@ala.org). To apply or nominate a colleague for an award, visit PLA's Web site at [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org).



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**KAREN FAVREAU** received her MLS from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1998 and worked as a public library branch manager for nine years. She is currently working on a master's degree in counseling and educational development; rinny\_k@yahoo.com

Karen is reading *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia* by Elizabeth Gilbert.

# Standing Out

## Job Search Tips for New Librarians

**H**aving worked as a public library branch manager since 1998, I've interviewed hundreds of applicants for any number of professional and paraprofessional positions. I've also read numerous editorials and essays by frustrated library school students who can't find meaningful positions upon graduation. Therefore, based on my experience in hiring and supervising staff, I would like to pass on some hard-earned job search wisdom to library school students who are nervous about entering a competitive market. While some of this advice may seem like common sense, I've run into one-too-many poorly prepared library school grads to assume that everyone is savvy about the job search process.

For starters, I would be extremely reluctant to hire someone with an MLIS who has never actually worked at a library. If you do not currently have any paid library experience, consider doing a practicum or volunteering a few hours per week at a library for at least one semester. While the ability to articulate library theory and collection development philosophy is impressive, hands-on experience is what really captures a manager's attention.

If the job for which you apply requires you to fill out a standard application, be sure to attach a current résumé. Yes, managers and hiring officials really do read résumés carefully. Be sure that the objective statement on the résumé you submit is relevant to the specific position for which you are applying. For example, when interviewing for a children's specialist position, do not use a résumé that states your objective as "Obtaining a challenging position as a reference librarian." If you do, it would be fair to assume that you really want to work in reference and therefore might pack up and leave as soon as such a position opens up. While it was difficult to tailor résumés to specific jobs back in the typewriter days, there is no reason now why each résumé can't be tweaked to match each specific position.

In addition to reading résumés carefully, hiring officials also check references. Before you begin your job search, find out about your company or institution's policy regarding recommendations. Because of litigation fears, some companies and institutions do not allow supervisors to share any information beyond the dates during which the person was employed. Other human resources departments allow employees to sign a waiver that gives a supervisor permission to talk about a person's employment in more detail. Be sure to check into this before the day of an interview.

Speaking of the the interview . . . dressing professionally and being punctual are no-brainers, but there are a number of other suggestions I'd like to offer that will make you stand out from the pack:

- When asked why a particular position appeals to you, do not bring up such reasons as convenience (for example, "it would be a shorter commute"), or imply that you are taking the job to gain the skills needed to move on to a better position. Offer up altruistic explanations that

imply a commitment to the field of librarianship and a desire to share your skills and abilities with the organization, such as “I am attracted to this position because I have a great deal of volunteer experience facilitating children’s programs, and feel that my talents and enthusiasm would contribute to this library’s service to children and families.”

- Enthusiasm is important, but do not act so enthused during an interview that you come off as unprofessional.
- If you have any experience in programming, writing press releases, designing brochures, creating bibliographies, and so on, consider creating a portfolio that you can share with the hiring official during the interview. You may even want to create a laptop slideshow or PowerPoint presentation to highlight your unique skills and accomplishments. If you do, be sure to keep the presentation short and relevant, and avoid making it cutesy.
- Try to avoid negativity when answering interview questions. For example, if a hiring official asks you about a time you went

above and beyond your basic duties at work, be sure to phrase the response in a positive, proactive manner that implies you saw a particular need and took the steps necessary to implement a solution. Do not say things like, “Administration didn’t bother addressing the problem of the broken copier because they’re too busy to listen to staff concerns, so I fixed it myself,” as such a statement comes off as bitter and haughty.

- Do not simply reply “yes,” or “no” to a particular interview question. Always try to expound by sharing your particular philosophy regarding an issue, or by giving a concrete example that illustrates the concept being addressed.
- Do not talk about the library as a “nice, calm place,” or focus too much on the fact that you love to read. Most library supervisors will assume that a love of books is a given for those interested in careers in librarianship. And public libraries are anything *but* calm these days.
- Remember that the interview process works both ways. An interview is *your* chance to ask the hiring official about such

things as training opportunities, tuition reimbursement, and the organization’s commitment to lifelong learning and development. By inquiring about training and development, you are letting the interviewers know that you want to keep abreast of new trends in librarianship and are committed to improving your existing skills.

If you are currently working a part-time or paraprofessional position at a public library, there is no guarantee that a full-time or professional position will be waiting for you (or created for you) when you graduate. Therefore, be prepared to commute, or even move, for your first professional job. In the meantime, take the time to introduce yourself to directors and department heads at surrounding public library systems before you graduate so that they will recognize your name when job openings appear. And finally, don’t get discouraged if your first round of interviews doesn’t produce immediate results; you may not land your dream job right out of the starting gate, but there will always be challenging jobs available for qualified applicants. ☐

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Richard is reading *The  
Reagan Diaries* edited by  
Douglas Brinkley and *King  
of Ragtime: Scott Joplin and  
His Era* by Edward A. Berlin.

# Community Church Records

## A Local History Asset for Public Libraries

**D**id you ever start a project and have it grow into something you didn't quite anticipate? Such can be the nature of local history. What started out as a Way Public Library (WPL) (Perrysburg, Ohio) project to collect records from major churches in the community for genealogical purposes unexpectedly expanded into obtaining histories of the churches themselves.

Churches always have played a significant role in town life, thus making them one of the purest forms of local history. Through this church-record collecting quest, I was able to gain greater awareness and appreciation of the wealth of religious archives and their importance to our community. Over a period of two years, WPL was able to borrow and copy records from six of the community's local churches.

### Genealogy Is Our Business

Assisting patrons with their genealogy research is a principal activity of a public library's local history service. Genealogy can be gleaned from any number of resources that are traditionally found in local history departments. Our local history's genealogy resources include:

- electronic genealogy databases, Ancestry Library, and HeritageQuest;
- local newspaper on microfilm;
- city directories and telephone books;
- books on city history;
- local obituary index;
- city cemetery records;
- American Legion records;
- Ohio Military Rosters 1812–1918;
- Ohio Regimental histories for Civil War;
- self-published local family histories;
- various local photographs; and
- videotaped oral histories of local residents.

Church records also can serve as an additional source of genealogy for local history departments in public libraries. They can complement or

substitute as a source of such civil registrations as birth, marriage, or death certificates. Often, church records may provide more information than civil documents, which are, at least in our county, quite sparse prior to 1900. For example, Ohio, as with many other states, did not issue birth certificates in those days; civil records, if they do exist, are often a single line in a ledger containing the barest of facts. On the other hand, church records from these times can be rich with genealogical detail, thus creating a valuable asset for local history collections.

## Project Starts with First Family Membership

Two years ago, the Perrysburg Area Historic Museum (PAHM) sponsored a First Family of Perrysburg and Perrysburg Township project. Individuals who could document that a direct-line ancestor lived in Perrysburg or the township prior to 1870 would be honored at an awards ceremony, where they would be formally admitted to the First Families of Perrysburg or Perrysburg Township.

PAHM referred interested parties to the library for assistance. As local history librarian, I was greatly involved with their research. Documents such as census, church, court, military, or newspaper records were required, and copies had to be submitted to the PAHM committee judges for verification. Many local residents came to the library to work on the project. As church records can be a valuable source of linking generations, I found myself having to refer users to local churches to obtain needed documentation. This led me to wonder: Wouldn't it be convenient to have those church records

right here in the WPL local history department?

I knew other public libraries had church records on microfilm or reprinted in book form, but WPL had none. I realized I would have to persuade our local churches to loan me their records so I could copy them. Okay, so far so good. What was the best approach?

As a member of St. Rose Catholic Church, I was familiar with the church's pastor. St. Rose enjoys the largest church membership in the city, making it the logical place to start. If I were successful, other churches might follow. First, I decided to examine the physical features of the records. I made an appointment with the church secretary, telling her I wanted to work on some genealogy of my parish ancestors who had been members since the church was established.

Upon arrival at the parish office, I requested the earliest baptismal and burial records books. The staff directed me to the browsing room, which was located in the basement. The records were contained in old-fashioned, lined ledger books. These red leather-covered time capsules of church-member history were in surprisingly good condition considering the fact that they dated back to 1863. A few pages were loose here and there, and the ink entries a little faded, but they were legible and reproducible.

The browsing room was not well-lit. The old-fashioned looping script on the pages was difficult to decipher, and the entries were peppered with Latin and German terminology, including the register headings. Gathering and interpreting the information became a laborious process, and I was obligated to hand-copy what I needed as there was no copier.

In the ensuing days, I composed a low-key letter to the pastor, expressing my thoughts about copying the records and getting his opinion of the idea. Locking into the following strategies, I made a careful pitch.

- WPL is open evenings and weekends, allowing wider access to records.
- St. Rose could refer users to WPL when the church office is closed or personnel not available.
- WPL owns a professional book scanner. Pages can be copied face-up, averting stress on the spines of the books.

Summing up, I made a case that the library could copy the materials safely and provide wide and convenient access; for example, many people come from out of town on weekends to research genealogy. I also suggested that the library could save the parish some time and energy as well. Church staff could have the option of referring people to the library at any time to consult records. They were not mentioned in the letter, but in my mind, the user's benefits were even greater:

- appointments not necessary;
- pleasant physical environment conducive to research;
- personnel to assist in interpreting the records;
- related genealogy resources on-site; and
- copier access.

After several follow-ups, I received permission from the pastor to copy the records. I was able to borrow the record books and allowed to copy records from 1863 to 1920. This included baptismal, first communion, confirmation, marriage, and burial records.

Over a period of a week, I borrowed two books at a time until I had gone through the entire set. During this time, I noticed other historical-related items that were located in the parish archival collection. I will tell you about some of the things I found here and at the other churches I later visited, but first things first.

### Design for Browsing

Once I had the records copied, I had to determine how to organize them for browsing. The pages were 8.5 by 12 inches, slightly smaller than standard ledger paper, which is 8.5 by 14 inches. The odd size was the norm for the nineteenth century, but, of course, too large for today's standard binder. Larger binders would be a bad idea: most require three-hole punching and necessitate a wide left margin, which these copies didn't have. In addition, three ring holes are fragile and could easily tear loose after a few uses. Lastly, some of the records crawled horizontally across two pages. It would be hard to read a whole record if you had to constantly flip pages back and forth. I was sure the pages would be ripped to shreds in no time.

I was scanning the shelves at a local arts-and-crafts shop for a solution when I spied some old-fashioned scrapbooks. The pages were blank and oversized (11 by 14 inches) and tightly bound with metal screws. The binding screws were removable, and more pages could be added if needed. I bought one to test and was satisfied with the results. I was even able to enlarge the copies slightly, which enhanced readability. Using transparent mailing tape, I secured the records to the scrapbook pages, ensuring that the records would stay in order.

The scrapbooks also were conducive to customization. I could

create my own titles and insert my own tables of contents, description of records, and a glossary of church terms. This perhaps unorthodox method has since proven to deliver both ease of use and durability. Finally, the only technology necessary for utilization was good lighting.

### Announcing the Project to the Community

After completing the copy project, I made plans to announce it to the community. I composed a notice and submitted it to our local newspaper, the *Perrysburg Messenger-Journal*. In the piece, I devoted a few paragraphs to the history of St. Rose and gave some background on the first resident pastor, who came on the scene in 1863 and initiated the record-keeping system. A photo of this first pastor accompanied the article.

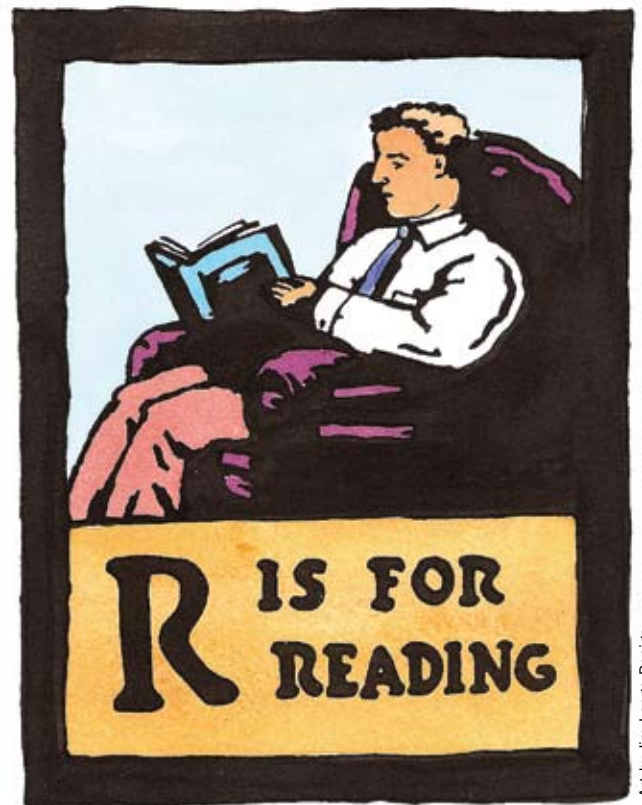
I also reported what records were available, the years covered, and some of the genealogical nuggets that could be found within the various entries. A quote from Father Leyland concluded the article.

Patrons began coming into the local history room to examine the records soon after the newspaper announcement. I was surprised, because I know those working on genealogies certainly are aware of

the value of church records and how to go about locating them. Serious researchers had probably already been to the church. Nonetheless, it generated interest among individuals with genealogies in progress, first-timers, and those just plain curious about their Catholic ancestors. Patron visits also may have been influenced by the library's neutral environment, civilizing uniformity, and the opportunity to browse in anonymity. No doubt, the time-convenience factor also played a role. At any rate, I had discovered one more reason for patrons to visit our library.

### Church-Record Collecting Expands

Zoar Lutheran Church, which boasts the second largest religious denomi-



Art by Jim Lange Design



nation in Perrysburg, was my next prospect. I wrote a letter to the pastor, outlining the same strategies used at St. Rose, and included the newspaper article announcing the library's acquisition of the St. Rose records.

The pastor was enthusiastic about participating in the project, and, after consulting with the church governing board, gave me permission to copy the records, which dated back to the 1850s. I was allowed to copy all records up to 1930.

I followed this same method with Perrysburg's remaining churches, and eighteen months later, WPL had copies of church registers from the community's six major churches—five of which dated back to the mid-1800s. Keep in mind that church records are private records; different churches have different policies regarding their records, and copying may only be permissible from certain time periods.

## Church Records: Some Noted Characteristics

What of the records themselves? What can they tell us? What makes them so important? I don't pretend to be an expert on church records, and there are good books and articles on this subject already (see the resources list at conclusion of article). But I can convey some major observations made during this project.

Church records vary with the denomination and era of the church. They also can differ from minister to minister or priest to priest within the same church. Record-keeping systems sometimes change with the personnel who are making entries into the record.

Similarities among records appear as well. Common records were bap-

tism, marriage, and burial records, although the information within these records may vary.

## Church Records: Some Types and Content

Catholic and Lutheran baptismal records list birthdates as well as baptismal date. Godparents or other sponsors also are named.

The Lutheran records I collected began in the 1850s and included a section called the Family Register. It not only contained basic census information, but documented prior information on family members. The oldest reference reached back to 1784. Information included baptismal dates, names of deceased family members, and occasionally the location of death—in some cases these locations were as far away as Germany or on the passage coming over. Cause of death was sometimes noted.

This Family Register also contained a comment column that described personal situations of church members. For example, duly noted are occasions when members were disciplined or when families broke up, moved, or voluntarily left the church. Sometimes it mentioned where the member(s) relocated.

Among the Methodist records was a section called Probationary Members. Initially, members were placed on probationary status while they studied for promotion to full members. Members often withdrew or transferred before advancing to full membership. Consequently, there is possible genealogy information of nonmembers.

The Methodists had an expanded remarks column that can offer valuable family history as well as some tantalizing glimpses into the past.

For example, I found a marriage record from 1866 that contained a note that the groom had been a sailor on the ironclad *Monitor* during the Civil War. It gave the name and address of the house where the marriage took place, and noted that the bride and groom made a very handsome-looking couple. It is rare to find information this extensive on a civil marriage record.

Lastly, there is one major component that is indicative of all church records. They fill gaps between censuses. How important can this be? Let me give you an example. In the 1800s, large families were commonplace. Just as prevalent were high incidences of infant mortality. Other than perhaps a name in the family Bible, a church baptismal record might be the only evidence of a child's existence.

## Other Church History

While on this record-collecting safari, I came across other, equally intriguing, historical materials dormant in Perrysburg's community churches. At each church I would politely inquire if there were other history-related articles that I could borrow to copy for the library's local history collection. Every church I worked with generously allowed me to browse their archives. I went up into attics, down into basements, and explored dusty storage rooms. I burrowed through file cabinets and sorted through boxes of church memorabilia. I temporarily commandeered pictures hanging on walls, and even reproduced materials from one church's historical display case. All the churches were pleased and excited by this community project, and were extremely generous with their time and the loan of their property.

I passed over meeting minutes and financial and other business-related documents. Every church seemed to have boxes and boxes of these. If I started that chore, I would still be standing in front of a copy machine. The items that piqued my interest were photographs, church anniversary programs, church history booklets, brochures, or newsletters.

There's nothing like information specific to the community to excite a local history librarian—and as I poked around the archives of the various churches, I found plenty to be excited about:

- photographs of clergy, past and present;
- photographs of church members, past and present;
- images of the churches and parsonages, interiors and exteriors, from different eras;
- images of church-affiliated school buildings, interiors and exteriors, from different eras;
- historical church-published member directories;
- modern-day, church-published pictorial member directories;
- first communion, confirmation, and Sunday school group photographs;
- student class photographs from various years;
- church festival photographs;
- church anniversary programs;
- church groundbreaking and dedication program; and
- church history booklets.

One of the more sensational finds, and one which bears mention, was made at the First United Methodist Church of Perrysburg. Buried in the bottom of a box, I found an envelope containing twenty-seven black-and-white photographic film negatives. I immediately recognized that they were taken with a four- by five-inch, large-format camera and were the work of a professional photographer. Looking at them through the light, I could see that they contained various images of the congregation and

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the church building—and some very old cars.

I had the negatives printed, and discovered that the photographs had been taken on Palm Sunday, 1945, to document the church's 125th anniversary. Although no names accompanied these exposures, I located some longtime church members who were able to identify many of the individuals in the sixty-year-old pictures. And did they have fun doing that! "That's me in my Sunday School class," one member said. "I was about twelve years old. Where on earth did you find these?"

This involvement of church members generated notable good will and more. History dies with people. In a few more years, putting these names to faces may not have been possible. These photographs and the names of the church members who posed for them are now preserved for future generations. Additionally, our local newspaper published several of the photos with names, which was a treat for the community. To the library's local history collection it was like finding a Rembrandt in your attic.

Hard-copy reproductions of the photographs and other materials were placed in clear, acid-free archival photo album pages. These pages were then organized into a separate, three-ringed archival album for each church and added to the library's photograph and pamphlet collection. All material was also digitally scanned and stored on the library's file server, readying it for the day

it would be accessible through the library's online catalog.

### Was It Worth It?

Most of the church leaders and their staffs were strangers to me, but they know me now. This project has established ongoing relationships between the library and the community churches. It also has provided public access and ease of use—church records and associated historical materials now are housed in one central location. In addition, library copies ensure backup against fire, loss, disposal, or other calamity.

This project was an economical method for building the library's local history collection. Outside expenses to purchase the record-browsing books, other storage instruments, and to print photographic negatives was approximately three hundred dollars.


Reporting the acquisition of the records in our town's newspaper as well as local word-of-mouth has advanced the library's reputation as a source of genealogy and a storehouse for the town's religious history.

The library has gained curriculum enrichment for its ongoing genealogy workshops. Examination and interpretation of church records now is an objective of the class.

Lastly, I think the churches (as well as the library) have gained another aspect of community through the participation of this city-wide project. Bill Bauman, pastor of Perrysburg's Grace United Methodist Church, eloquently conveyed this insight best:

As our city continues to grow and change, it is great to be able to keep track of the rich and wonderful history that our church community offers. From generation to generation we not only pass our faith along, but also tell stories through Perrysburg people who serve, work, and live in our various congregations. This commitment by the Way Library will help keep our history alive, accessible, and secure.

### Local History for the Taking

Churches in every public library's jurisdiction have accumulated records that are valuable to local history. I have discovered that church leaders are friendly, proud of their histories, and more than willing to share the riches of their collections. Your public library can help make it available to all. 

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Jennifer is reading *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick, and *The Conjurer's Bird* by Martin Davies.

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

### Library Offers Busy Bee Services to Childcare Providers

Due to a generous gift from the Farmington Friends of the Library, the Farmington (Mich.) Community Library now offers expanded services to all state-licensed childcare providers in their community. In addition to traditional story hour visits, the library provides boxes of new children’s books and bags containing materials (music, rhymes, and craft ideas) to help providers with lesson plans. Each Busy Bee box contains twenty-five librarian-selected books appropriate for children from birth to six years. Bags are available for nineteen topics, such as animals, bugs, circus, food, spring, and Halloween.

Childcare providers can pick up the boxes and bags at the library and later exchange them for a new selection. These services are described in a Busy Bee newsletter mailed to childcare providers three times a year. Each issue contains a calendar of training opportunities, special library programs, recommended books, crafts, activities, and story ideas.

Recent studies have confirmed that the experiences in a child’s first years have a decisive impact on their future literacy skills. The library provides this service because of the increasing numbers of single parents and families with both parents working outside the home. Library materials available at the childcare

centers will supplement family visits to the library.

For more information, please contact Tina Theeke, director, Farmington Community Library, at 248-848-4301 or [theeket@farmlib.org](mailto:theeket@farmlib.org).

### The Ultimate Feel-Good Library Event

Would you like to host the ultimate feel-good experience at your library? Consider an event similar to the Paws Fur Spring that took place at the Glendale (Ariz.) Main Library. This free, four-hour event drew approximately 3,000 two- and-four legged creatures for a see-and-be-seen outing.

This was the second year of working with Banner Thunderbird Medical Center’s Dog Therapy Program. They use the occasion to support their mission of cheering up hospital patients.

The animal rescue umbrella organization, PAC-911, also was involved in this dog exposition. About thirty different rescue groups were on hand, with a wide variety of dogs to adopt. Twenty-two fortunate creatures found a new home that day. One group even had some pet rats that could be adopted.

An assortment of vendors with services and products for dogs were sprinkled around the front lawn. The public connected with dog sitters, pet photographers, pet party supplies, pet clothing, dog-motif hand-



**Great Dane Marching Drill Team**

bags, veterinarians, dog authors, specialty dog treats, and a host of other items.

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control had their mobile surgical unit, the "Neuter Scooter," on site to spay or neuter twenty "lucky" canines. A microchipping service also was available, with sixty pets getting the near-foolproof method of identification. The public also brought 150 pounds of pet food to share with needy dogs.

Entertainment included the Great Dane Marching Drill Team (performing to music); Arizona Search, Track, and Rescue; and Krista Cantrell, a cognitive animal behaviorist.

All in all, it was a love affair that went to the dogs!

For more information contact Diane Nevill, public information officer, at 623-930-3554, or e-mail [dnevill@glendaleaz.com](mailto:dnevill@glendaleaz.com).

## **Commemorate a Beloved Pet**

Pets play an important role in our lives, and the death of an animal companion can be one of our most difficult experiences. Making a tax-deductible gift to the Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library Foundation in the name of the departed is a loving way to remember your special dog,

cat, bird, or other beloved family friend. Donations will help the foundation fund enhancements to the library's programs, books, and other materials for children and adults.

Animal lovers wishing to make a memorial gift may give via check, VISA, or MasterCard. A downloadable gift form is available on the foundation's Web site. Be sure to note the name of the pet on the form. At your request, an acknowledgement will be sent to the pet's guardian.

For more details, call 703-324-8300 or write [info@FCPLfoundation.org](mailto:info@FCPLfoundation.org).

## **Gail Borden Public Library Customers Use YouTube to Tout Good, Old-fashioned Books**

The Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, Illinois, started using YouTube in 2006 to give their customers twenty-four-hour access to their appearance on the local community cable.

In the process, they discovered the ease of using the YouTube service. In no time, library staff members started filming short book recommendations. That blossomed into a community video storytelling extravaganza. With still a week to left to join, thirty community members have already entered videos for the library's "Storypalooza," and most of the contestants want to talk about their favorite book.

One young participant recommends the book *Ribbons* because it is about dancing. She then proceeds to demonstrate the dance that she created. Another young girl recommends *My Big Sister Is So Bossy*, especially to girls with sisters, saying that this story is about how the

girls come to understand that they will always be there for each other. Another very young book connoisseur recommends *Big Book of Trucks* for its multitude of pictures.

To make things even more interesting, there will be voting at the library Web site, and First Community Bank, a local institution, is sponsoring prizes. Library officials are still finalizing their judging committee, but Elgin mayor Ed Schock and Illinois State Representative Ruth Munson have already signed on.

Library officials anticipate that the contest will promote both reading and visual storytelling. As people also can enter Storypalooza with a video about a community favorite, library staff hope that the contest will increase the level of understanding about everything that the diverse community has to offer. For more information, visit [www.gailborden.info/storypalooza.html](http://www.gailborden.info/storypalooza.html).

## **Davenport PL Collecting Campbell's Labels**

Patrons often ask the Davenport (Iowa) Public Library youth services department, "What are you going to do with all those donated soup labels?" Amazingly, a lot!

Youth services supervisor Sue Ring just purchased a SONY Cybershot digital camera, a parachute/canopy for children's programs, four Kid Alerts (safety barricades for use when having outside programs), a Leap Pad learning system for use in the library, and a 1-2-3 wooden puzzle.

By collecting and redeeming Campbell's product labels via the Campbell's Labels for Education drive, the Davenport Public Library earns points for educational equipment.

Campbell's Labels for Education program has provided schools and libraries across the country with more than \$85 million dollars worth of equipment. Campbell's products eligible for redemption in the program include Campbell's soups, Franco-American SpaghettiO's, Prego sauces, Swanson broths and poultry, Pace salsa and picante sauces, V8 tomato juices, V8 Splash juice, Pepperidge Farm bread and cookies, and Goldfish and food service products.

If it weren't for patrons donating these labels, the library would have been unable to acquire any of the items mentioned above. Davenport Public Library is still collecting labels, so if you have a few to spare, the library will put them to good use.


If you have any questions, call 563-326-7900.

For more than thirty years, Labels for Education has been awarding free educational equipment to schools and organizations in exchange for proofs of purchase from the Campbell family of brands. It's a fun, easy program where students, families, and community members work together for a common goal.

Today, 75,000 schools and organizations are registered with Labels for Education, benefiting more than 42 million students. Over the years, more than \$100 million in merchandise has been distributed.

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
Label for Education Program and submit proofs of purchase and bonus certificates for redemption. Eligible schools and organizations are public and private schools (K-12), accredited homeschool associations (K-12), licensed childcare centers, public libraries, religious educational centers, and Head Start centers having any of the grades K-12 and preschools located in the fifty United States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, and any schools located on any United States military installation regardless of location.

For more information about **Labels for Education**, visit [www.labelsforeducation.com/default.aspx](http://www.labelsforeducation.com/default.aspx). 



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Nann is reading *The  
Custodian of Paradise*  
by Wayne Johnston and  
*The Almost Moon* by  
Alice Sebold.

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

# Dealing with Problem Behavior in the Library

Intellectually, we who work in and with public libraries embrace the concept that our libraries must be open and accessible to everyone, regardless of creed, origin, age, economic, or educational status. Yet we owe it to the communities that we serve and the staff whom we employ to ensure that visiting the library will be pleasant and safe. That means defining acceptable behavior and enforcing it. It also means thinking about the ways that people use the library and adapting buildings and programs in a way that minimizes misbehavior.

This column’s essayists describe how they’ve come to view the variety of patrons they encounter and the programs they have implemented to bring out the best in everyone.

## Listening to the Problem Patrons

**HILLARY THEYER**, PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN, PUBLIC SERVICES, TORRANCE (CALIF.) PUBLIC LIBRARY; HTHEYER@TORRNET.COM; LIBRARYLADY16@YAHOO.COM

My husband attended a business workshop many years ago and brought back a method of thinking about customers that I have used ever since. Customers can be classified into four categories—praisers, patrons, talkers, and walkers. The *praisers* actively tell you what a good job you do—they say the book you found was perfect, your storytime is magnificent, and you are the best librarian ever. We love the praisers! Letters go into files, comments get passed on to officials, and we get a glow just thinking about them.

*Patrons* don't actively tell us what we do is good, but they keep coming back. We must be doing something right for the man who reads the paper every day, the woman who walks out with a stack of mysteries each week, or the many faces we see but don't interact with. If we weren't pleasing them somehow, they wouldn't be there.

The *walkers* don't like what they get, and they leave. They don't tell anyone what went wrong, what we didn't have, or how they were mistreated, and they don't come back. I still wonder what happened to a family that was a regular for story-time each week until they vanished. Did they move away, or did I somehow upset or offend? I will never know. We don't have to actively cope with the walkers until enough of them walk—then we wonder where everybody went.

This leaves the *talkers*. They don't like something about your service, and they tell you about it. They are offended, and they complain. You don't have what they need, and they request that you get it. They dislike a policy, a person, an aspect of your facility, and they want it changed. Many of these talkers are classified as our problem patrons. The guy who wants silence in his area of the library and children banned from the study carrels. The lady who insists the hold system should maintain a list of authors she wants all books from. The DVD fan who wants more titles at a time than policy allows. The photography buff who insists on more technical titles in the collection. All of these folks are dissatisfied with an aspect of the library, but instead of going elsewhere, they are giving you a chance to change. Talkers are a library's best asset.

When I moved from branch management to administration,

my interaction with the talkers changed. In a library branch, when a person wants to see "whoever is in charge," they would get me. I was right there, easily accessible, and in a location friendly to them. Often a talker already had seen me helping people at the desk, conducting a book group, or assisting others before they get to me with a complaint. That doesn't necessarily make it better, and often a branch manager is at a level where policy change cannot be implemented. I found myself in the explain mode many times, justifying exactly why a policy was well-thought out, well-reasoned, and thoroughly approved, and still could not accommodate what they wanted. The end result for many of these was to pass the complaint on, and the business card of my boss got handed out quite often.

Now I'm in the office where complaints get passed: library administration. The people I see now have taken the trouble to find the next step. They haven't been satisfied with the division managers. They have had policy explained, now they want it changed. They want new procedures, new training, and new attitudes from the staff. They take the trouble to drive, write letters, and make appointments.

These are the ultimate talkers, many of whom have already talked to someone by the time they get to me. A half-hour conversation with a man who thinks the library is too noisy provides valuable insight into his view of what a library should be in relation to our entrenched view of what it is (though we still can't ban children from the magazine section). The hour spent with a woman who wants more time on the computers reveals the needs of a population who want to use e-mail but takes a lot of time to figure out how on

their own. The father upset that his six-month-old cannot attend toddler time leads to the creation of babytime. A divorced mother who wants her daughter to have two library cards so she doesn't have to mix assets with her ex can change policy, when she easily could have just ignored the library and bought her books at the store. The complain-ers are a unique lens on the library, and I suspect that every talker I see represents more than a few walkers we have already lost.

Talkers change the world, punching holes in one policy, procedure, or outdated form at a time. They ask "why" and "why not" and "why can't you do that?" They aren't always right, and often there isn't any change that would make them perfectly happy, but if you listen, you learn something about the library from every conversation. The talkers are not our problem patrons. They are still a library's best asset. I expect I have a lot of listening ahead of me.

### From Chaos to Chillax: One Library's Experience with Teens

**JUDY BROWN**, MANAGER, EAST REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY, FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.;  
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In February 1999, the East Regional Branch Library opened across the street from Cape Fear High School and Mac Williams Middle School. East Regional is a regional branch of the Cumberland County Public Library and Information Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina, which has a headquarters library, three regional branches, and three community branches. Immediately, the library became a destination place for students to hang out after school because it was the closest



## A half-hour conversation with a man who thinks the library is too noisy provides valuable insight into his view of what a library should be, in relation to our entrenched view of what it is.

safe place for them to go in this rural area of the county. Then, as now, there were no recreational facilities nearby. Adult residents in this part of Fayetteville also welcomed the 21,000-square-foot branch because it replaced a much smaller branch that had been located several miles away.

It quickly became apparent to the staff that there were two major groups of library customers. One group—adult library customers—checked out materials for recreational reading and information. Many of them brought their children to story-times. They also used the computer lab to search for and apply for jobs online, write résumés, use e-mail, search the Internet, and complete college homework assignments. For the most part, this group followed the behavioral expectations of the rules governing the use of the library.

The other group, the teen library customers, primarily used the library as a place to visit with their friends after being in school all day. They congregated at the tables, in the lobby, at the entrance to the library, and outside on the lawn, always in groups. They wandered into the library. They wandered out of the library. Even though they enjoyed being with their friends, they were often bored. For the teens who just wanted to socialize, there were often infractions of the behavioral expectations, sometimes resulting in a teen being banned from the library for six months.

A security officer was hired to work from 4–8 P.M. Some teens did

come to the library to check out books and complete homework assignments, but these teens were the exception. With the advent of MySpace and other social networking Web sites and gaming sites, teens increased their use of the computer lab in the afternoons. The noise level rose dramatically.

Caught in the middle between these two groups was the staff. What could staff do so that the adult and teen customers could co-exist, and so that staff could keep their sanity and give excellent customer service to both groups?

When East Regional opened, there were limited special services for teens systemwide, but that soon changed. Providing services to teens became a high priority. Each branch began devoting a special section for teen books and magazines. One staff member at each branch was designated as the teen contact. East Regional was very fortunate to hire Jamaal Fisher (library associate II), who divides his time between information services and teen services. His passionate advocacy for teens was instrumental in making service to teens a high priority at East Regional. As a result of his efforts, there is now a very attractive teen space with books, magazines, comfortable seating, and a bulletin board to promote teen programs. The teen space has been a wonderful success, and it is heavily used.

Fisher has worked with all of the staff to develop attractive program options for teens. There are two

weekly programs and a minimum of two special programs planned each month on a variety of topics. Successful programs have included Dance Dance Revolution and Fear Factor. Recently, East Regional received the Outstanding Young Adult Programming Award from the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association. Fisher also has organized a teen advisory group and a teen book club that usually meets bimonthly. Recently, the teens requested that the book club meet monthly.

Even with a more proactive approach with teens, the noise level in the computer lab and in the library continued to rise dramatically after school, especially between 3:45–6 P.M. Staff were assigned to rove throughout the library in thirty-minute shifts asking the teens to be quiet. This kind of interaction with the teens was very negative. Staff felt like hall monitors. Some staff asked to be reassigned to other branches.

In May 2006, the staff decided to try a more positive approach in the afternoons. We opened the activity room for the teens and renamed it the “Chillax Room.” The name comes from the teen slang for “chill” and “relax.” A large, colorful poster welcomes the teens to the Chillax Room. Fisher and Michaela Penix (library associate II/youth services) are the primary staff members who supervise the room and interact with the teens. The teens play board games, listen to music, and talk with friends in person or on their cell phones.

In fall 2006, teens began asking if they could bring in a Playstation 2 and some games to the Chillax Room. The staff said yes. Staff also noticed that more teens were playing games in the computer lab. Library literature was reporting success stories about libraries that had incorporated gaming programs into their services to teens. Articles also were being written recognizing the educational benefits of gaming.

In November 2006, the staff worked with the Friends of the Library in submitting an application to the Junior League of Fayetteville for a Partnership Grant in the amount of \$24,682.88 for computer gaming equipment and games, fourteen laptops and a storage unit on wheels, and some teen-friendly furniture for the Chillax Room. The grant also emphasized that the games, equipment, and laptops, although housed at East Regional and used primarily by the East Regional teens, could be used at the other library locations for teen gaming programs and tournaments. Because the laptops in the Chillax Room would have access to NC LIVE and other library databases and Internet sites, teens could even use the laptops to complete homework assignments. Staff could sneak in some bibliographic instruction!

Teens wrote letters of support for the grant. One student wrote:

I think getting this grant will help a lot of kids/teenagers in their after school work and meeting with friends and doing something productive rather than walking around and hanging out in the library. Please help us become more chillaxed and calmer. Help us get more computers for kids to do homework on, and entertain bored children.

Another student wrote:

A few things that the library can do to make things better is purchase a game system. The Playstation 2 could improve things a lot as well as bring more teens into the library. Having some computers would also be cool so that we could have online gaming tournaments and could be a little louder than we would be allowed when using the adult computer lab.

I am happy to report that the teens, staff, and the Friends of the Library will get our wish. On April 23, 2007, the Friends of the Library learned that the Junior League of Fayetteville had approved our Partnership Grant application in full! The grant is a true partnership with the Junior League and the library because, in addition to providing funding, Junior League members also will volunteer to help with the gaming programs. Teens, staff, and volunteers will chillax together.

### People, Not Problems: Solutions for Sharing Library Space with All Age Groups

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The world provides a variety of problems, and every public building opens its doors to receiving those problems. Public libraries are no exception. The Rapid City (S. Dak.) Public Library (RCPL) deals with members of youth and adult communities who disrupt other

patrons on a daily basis. It is our job to guide patrons and provide examples of acceptable library behavior while building community and eliminating stereotypes.

Given their high energy levels and the frequent lack of parental influence that contribute to positive behavior, the after-school youth crowd brings challenges. RCPL's approach is to find constructive activities to engage youth. A partnership effort with the local YMCA facilitated by a U.S. Department of Education Out of School Grant allows us to offer an after-school program in one of our meeting rooms every weekday for youth.

We also offer a series of Discovery Day programs for school holidays, during which youth participate in hands-on activities. One of the most successful programs is something we call Get Real Loud @ the Library, a youth rock concert with a Lollapalooza feel that provides a venue for our local, undiscovered youth talent.

Our youth services area is located on the second floor of the library, which is both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is that the location of the youth services area provides space for each of the age groups that frequent the library. The overlapping of children and youth space is great for families, but a curse when adults, teens, and children want separation. In addition, while the open second level provides flexibility in use, some find it entertaining to spit in the elevator, run up and down the stairs, and drop items off the second floor balcony into the first floor lobby.

We have taken steps in the youth services department to discourage misbehavior and encourage participation in library activities. We moved the furniture in youth services to improve the sightline. We created

## Who among us has not nodded off when reading? Is it acceptable to snooze while wearing a suit, but not when clothes are rumpled or hair is uncombed?

small-group seating where there was formerly space for large groups. The computers in the youth areas were designated for types of use as well: those for gaming, and those for homework. The distribution is stated as a guideline and not regulated. Our policy philosophy is built upon trusting people first and using uncomplicated language while maximizing access with ongoing evaluation of resources, use, safety, and customer experience. The staff policy committee meets regularly to discuss issues that may need to be addressed by policy changes.

Most recently, we put a second service desk in the youth area. It faces the stair landing and the elevator door. Thus young people see a staff member immediately on entering the area. These strategies have created a more positive interaction between staff, youth, and adults in using library space.

In addition to offering programming and repositioning furniture, we are reaching out to our youth and adult patrons by using 2.0 technologies in our library. The library's MySpace page is set as the homepage on all of the computers in youth services, and all RCPL staff members are participating in an online course about 2.0 technologies to develop their skills and implement exciting new ways of serving the public.

Our adult patron population includes those who are intoxicated, those with inadequate housing, and those who live with altered realities. In our city, there is currently no law

against public intoxication. RCPL does not have a policy prohibiting sleeping in the library, which is a choice we made. All of these factors in combination have created scenarios that staff members must deal with.

The sleeping policy has legal and staff resource implications that we decided were best left alone. A no-sleeping policy would have required legal interpretation and equal application: we would have to wake up everyone, not just those in dirty clothes. We consider that nap control duty does not build staff morale or use their time well. Some of the public have indicated their disagreement with the sleeping policy. More often than not, that concern is based upon the appearance of the sleeper and the person's opinion of how people are to use the library—not the best motives for building a community's use of services. Who among us has not nodded off when reading? Is it acceptable to snooze while wearing a suit, but not when clothes are rumpled or hair is uncombed?

There is the need, however, for staff to use common sense on the occasion when a snoring patron becomes a distraction, or when the sleeping bag or picnic blanket appears. That behavior intrudes on other people's access, which is how we explain it. Such situations are not always black-and-white, but sharing space by allowing beverages, food, and napping in the library makes for less patrol and more service.

We did address furniture alterations to deter sleeping in the library by removing sofas and installing more chairs. You can sit in the chairs comfortably, but slouching and sleeping are not as comfortable.

Ultimately, the best way RCPL deals with behavior issues at the library is to have a solidly written and vigorously tested behavior policy that is responsive to all users, including the public and library staff. When specific patrons are unwilling to follow the policy, their library use is suspended. With support from the community, our board, and the city legal office, we are able to apply our behavior policies and procedures consistently and solidly. We believe that is the key to dealing successfully with those few who do cause problems.

We routinely engage in conversations with both youth and adult patrons in order to establish rapport and build community. We try to converse in benign ways so that when we do enforce a rule it is not the only time we have spoken with a patron. We offer a warning upon conversing with youth so that we are sure they are aware of our behavior policy and how they are violating it. If we observe them violating the policy again, we escort them out of the building for the day.

The same behavior policy applies to our adult patrons. Repeat offenders who refuse to abide by the policy are suspended. Our policy provides for successively greater periods of suspension, as long as one year, after

each subsequent event. Members of our staff are made aware of the suspensions, and should a suspended patron return to the library during his suspension, he is arrested and charged with criminal trespass.

We choose not to view patrons as problems, but rather as people who occasionally cause problems. We set policy based on the majority, and we address problems based upon progressive strategies that continually build trust amongst the staff and public. We also welcome all of those suspended patrons back into the library if they had to take a timeout, because what really matters to us—and indeed to all libraries—is that the library is here to be shared and enjoyed by everyone in the community.

### Thievery Leads to 25 Percent Increase in Circ Stats!

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I thought my summer reading program was wildly successful but, in fact, our books were being stolen.

I am the librarian at the Cybrary, a branch of Orange County Public Libraries in Carrboro, North Carolina. Established in August 2004, the Cybrary extends computer access to an adult population during the day. It offers five PCs and wireless access, and also functions as an access point for county library services. Operating within a small, 1,060-square-foot space, we provide our patrons with current periodicals and best-selling books and audiobooks. The majority of our holdings are leased. For a broader reading selection, we offer our patrons free intralibrary and interlibrary loan services.

The Cybrary's use statistics prove that nearly everyone who walks through our doors signs up to use a computer. In fiscal year 2006, our door count was 19,957, and our computer use count was 14,645. As librarians, we do want to promote reading to our patrons. One method of promotion is our summer reading programs for adults. Typically, we merchandise our collection and encourage patrons to enter a contest to win a gift basket at the end of the summer. In my first stint as a branch librarian, I was pleased to see the books flying off of the shelves in 2006 . . . until the books didn't come back.

The Cybrary collections are small due to our limited space. During that summer, our holdings were approximately three hundred books. By September, I became concerned about the empty shelves. I requested a shelf list report from our systems administrator. I put my desk staff to work checking the shelves. We found that sixty books were missing.

Immediately I sent an e-mail to all of my staff to notify them of the problem. There were a number of contributing factors. The layout of the room created a lack of visual access to our shelving. We are not outfitted with a security system and, because most of our collection is leased, the books are not stamped with identifying information. Most significantly, we operate with a single staff person juggling many tasks. After brainstorming, we did move the shelving to a more visible location. I encouraged staff to occasionally get up from behind the desk to tidy the room.

We also thought about the motives of the thief. All of the books were mysteries, so we considered that this person was creating a personal collection at home. We also considered that someone was mak-

ing a few bucks from our books. I called the local used book dealers. They all assured me that they rarely bought hardcover fiction. I asked them to please be aware that someone might try to sell them stolen library books. We hoped that our awareness of the situation would discourage the thief. We were wrong.

In November, I took a week off. When I returned to work, I noticed that the least visible shelving was nearly empty of books. I called for another shelf list. An additional fifty books were missing. So much for our mystery lover! These books were all general fiction and nonfiction. The key factor seemed to be the ability to steal beyond the viewing of the staff person.

We moved the shelving again—to an arm's length away from the service desk. From necessity, we decreased the available shelf space to 150 books. My staff felt terrible about the loss. I was fired up. I walked to the nearest used bookstore to investigate their offerings. Within minutes I found a dozen of our missing books. I approached the book dealer, informing her of the stolen items on her shelves. All of the books I held were hardcover, recent releases with dust jackets. I showed her the sticky places where the pockets had been torn out. I was polite, but I was in no mood to be questioned as to the veracity of my claims.

The next day, I visited three used book dealers with a printout of my missing books and a copy of the North Carolina statute stating that it is a felony to receive or sell stolen library materials valued at more than \$25. I had reported the theft to the police (who informed me that it was unlikely that we would ever catch the person responsible). Altogether, I recovered fifty of the missing 110

## In my first stint as a branch librarian, I was pleased to see the books flying off of the shelves in 2006 . . . until the books didn't come back.

books from two of the three area used bookstores. The book dealers were highly cooperative.

The books were unsuitable to put back on the shelves, so I returned them to the leasing agency. I was able to claim twenty-two books as lost, and I purchased the balance of the missing books at \$3 per book. Slowly, we began building up the collection again. That's when we discovered the most surprising aspect to our story.

Our circ stats went up!

To get the collection down to 150, we needed to ruthlessly weed. This prompted an in-depth look at our collection development strategy. We found that our patrons were partial to the latest releases. We removed anything that hadn't circulated for an average of once per month since its arrival. Most books had lost their appeal within two years of publication. Our shelves began to fill with our monthly allowances from the leasing agency. Amazingly, our circ statistics took a jump up.

Recently, I took a more thorough look at these statistics, comparing stats from October 2005–March 2006 to those of October 2006–March 2007. Our counts average 25 percent higher despite the fact our collection is half the size. The value of new releases is very evident. Now I embrace our lean, mean collection development strategy. I'm not ready to say that the theft was a good thing, but it did force us to evaluate our collection. In the end, our patrons benefit from our attention to their reading patterns.

### Embracing the Problem Customer

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It's hard to believe that almost ten years ago, this journal published "When Bad Things Happen in Good Libraries," a feature on the Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library's multi-pronged approach to dealing with problem behavior in our library system (*Public Libraries*, May/June 1998).

At the time, our library system's Problem Behavior Task Force had recently revised a new problem behavior manual and designed a series of training modules for both managers and staff. Today, we are in the process of revising the manual because problems, procedures, laws, and society change. But one thing has remained the same—our responsibility to the public.

The major focus in all the tools and training we develop is to help public library staff members accept and embrace their responsibilities and roles in dealing with challenging behavior. We want them to feel empowered, with maximum confidence and minimum stress.

Handling problem behavior is much more than enforcing rules of conduct. It involves all staff, from pages to branch managers, accepting that they are the true custodians of the buildings and services we provide to taxpayers.

A branch manager at one of our largest branches once asked a customer to remove his shoes from a newly upholstered chair. The customer replied, "I own this chair." The manager responded, "Yes—and you pay me to take care of it." As true custodians, this is our role—to create a safe, welcoming, nonthreatening environment where publicly owned materials are accessible and publicly owned equipment and furniture are respected and protected for the use of all library users.

We acknowledge this is easier said than done. New laws as well as new technology constantly confront public library staff with unexpected challenges. In Virginia, where we are located, it is currently legal to carry a weapon in a public place. As we all know, cell phone use is now ubiquitous—even in libraries. We need to adapt to these new situations, and we suspect the need for such adaptation won't change in the foreseeable future.

The most valuable tool we attempt to give our staff is the ability to determine when a problem is really a problem. As defined here at the Fairfax County Public Library, problem behavior is "behavior requiring an immediate response because it threatens the rights or safety of other customers or staff." We developed that definition after surveying staff on their perceptions of problem behavior. Often they cited examples that simply represented the downside of customer service—customers who argue about fines, who treat staff like servants, or who allow kids to run around the

library. Customers, unfortunately, have a right to be rude, angry, or careless.

We want this definition to help staff step back in any given situation and ask, “What is really going on, here? Does this pose a threat?” Certainly, defining such behavior can be a challenge. For example, while people have a right to be rude or angry, they cannot be abusive. They might call library policies stupid or ask to speak to a supervisor, but if they suddenly say, “You’re a lying cow and you’ll be sorry,” they’ve stepped over a line.

Our approach to dealing with problem behavior can’t be separated from our entire customer service philosophy. We want staff to understand that every customer and every problem is different, and management’s good judgment is always the critical ingredient in a successful outcome.

Good judgment derives from a healthy sense of empowerment. Our Problem Behavior Task Force deliberately chose the term “empowerment” when defining our approach to problem behavior. We believe empowerment flows from several sources:

- An acceptance of the reality that problem behaviors will occur in any public place and acceptance of a role in dealing with it.
- Resources, such as the library system’s *Problem Behavior Manual*; community expertise, such as police, social service agencies, and the legal expertise in your jurisdiction; and, most importantly, each other. Over time, library staff learn what works and what doesn’t in handling challenging behavior.
- Knowledge that the library system has a consistent, realistic,

and fair philosophy toward customer service.

Our library director, Sam Clay, once approached the Problem Behavior Task Force and asked us to summarize our philosophy in approaching problem behavior. We responded that we didn’t have a problem behavior philosophy; we have a *customer service* philosophy. Here it is:

1. Every customer who uses our libraries should feel welcomed, valued, and respected.
2. All our rules are applied humanely, courteously, and fairly to all.
3. Every day is a new beginning. Except in extreme cases, we should not presume that a problem will occur because of past experience.
4. Every customer is entitled to their individual style of use of the library as long as it does not interfere with the rights of others.
5. Not all behaviors are problem behaviors.
6. Actions should be taken in a calm, reasonable fashion only after obtaining sufficient evidence that a problem really exists.

Does this philosophy work? We believe it does. Our Problem Behavior Task Force has presented fifteen workshops throughout Virginia and along the east coast. Our *Problem Behavior Manual* was available through the Public Library Association for many years, and hundreds of copies have been ordered by library systems across the United States. The Fairfax County attorney has complimented our efforts. But most importantly, we

measure our success by the comfort level of our staff and the consistency of their responses throughout our twenty-one branches.

As we said, behaviors may change, and circumstances, and even policies, may alter, but as long as we are dealing with the endlessly creative and diverse general public, we will always need to accept our responsibility and feel empowered to be the custodians of our public libraries.

## Problem Patrons, or How I Learned to Quit Worrying and Love the Ban

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I will be the first to say we have a challenging situation in our library.

Ours is a community college library that also is open to the general public. The library is relatively small, and staffed by only one staff member. On a busy day, the staff person on duty will be simultaneously juggling many responsibilities.

We are located in a part of town where the majority is on the lower end of the socio-economic ladder. The downside is the behaviors and activities of addicts, gang members, and those just killing time. The upside is that we provide a valuable service to customers from the community who may not have transportation to the nearest public library branch, which is some miles away. Our area of North Carolina has been hit hard by the decline in the textile and furniture industry, and I know many of our customers are people dealing with the social service system via computer, looking for work or for help on such things as résumés and cover letters.

## I had an angry male customer threaten me with physical violence, to the point of following me into my office and trying to prevent me from using the phone to call the campus police.

The majority of the students using our library come from our adult education program, which is housed in the same building as the library. Adult education is an inclusive term for such programs as Adult High School (AHS), the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), English As a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Basic Education (ABE). Many adult education students are those looking to turn their lives around—they've been laid off (see above comment about the textile and furniture industries); are looking to equip themselves to go to college, but never finished high school; persons new to the United States learning the lingua franca; or those who perhaps made less-than-wise choices earlier in life. For example, we have several adolescent single mothers in the above programs.

We also have a small but significant number of students who, to put it bluntly, are there because they have to be, not because they want to be. Many of these are people taking classes as a condition of their parole. Sad but true, and their misadventures in use of the library are a constant challenge.

I'm taking the time to distinguish between these various groups of customers to make an important point: it is usually not possible in our situation to distinguish between these groups of customers when dealing with them on a daily basis during normal transactions, whether it is library staff-to-customer or customer-to-customer. I can usu-

ally distinguish regulars among both student users and public users, but the large and ever-shifting nature of these populations, especially among the adult education students, makes knowing who has a legitimate reason for being in the library hard at best, and impossible at worst.

And yes, I did use the "L" word there. I am well aware it is not common practice to question the "legitimacy" of how the library is used. Intellectual freedom, personal freedom of information use, and a right to privacy are core principles of librarianship that anyone reading this article, I am sure, knows and values.

These are all principles I, too, value. But sometimes these can not withstand the brutal reality test of inappropriate customer behavior.

Looking at pornography is a constant issue with some of our users. Library and college policy is clearly stated and posted—look-

ing at pornography on library computers is not permitted.

Listening to music on the computers (or for that matter, any type of electronic music device) is a constant issue with some of our users. Library policy about this is clearly stated and posted—listening to music in the library is not permitted. For some users, these policies may as well have been written in water for all the attention they pay.

Disruptive behavior is a constant issue with some of our users: loud talking, horseplay, dancing, wrestling

### **RUNOFF** by Mark Coggins

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on the floor (no, I'm not making that last one up). In one extreme example, I had an angry male customer threaten me with physical violence, to the point of following me into my office and trying to prevent me from using the phone to call the campus police. Library and college policy about this kind of behavior is clearly stated and posted. For some users, this may as well have been written . . . well, you get the picture.

Hence the ultimate weapon in our disciplinary arsenal—the ban. The ban usually takes on two forms:

1. **Ban from use of the computers.**

This is what I think of as the lesser disciplinary action, and is usually used with customers violating computer use policies but whose activities are not disrupting the library as a whole. This is usually a repeat pornography offender, but I have used this on patrons who frequently violate our rules regarding use of chat lines, IMing, online games, and the other recreational uses to which computers can be put.

2. **Ban from the library.** This is the big one, and is reserved for persons who disrupt the library and its customers or whose behavior threatens the safety and security of library customers and staff. The fellow threatening me above was one such incident; another was an individual who ignored repeated warnings about playing music loudly on the computer. I should add it was this incident that led to the total ban on listening to music in the library.

I try to use common sense and good judgment in these situations. One of the bans from computer

usage was a young man with chat sessions open on three different computers. The amazing thing was that he was keeping all three online conversations going at one time! To me this is different from the student doing legitimate work (for the most part) who pops open the IM for a moment, thinking he can slip it past the bald guy sitting at the library desk. And persons banned from using the computers and the library have received several, documented warnings about their behavior. Sadly, sometimes all that seems to get through is the heavy-handed approach.

Make of this what you will. Again, I think ours is a somewhat unusual situation—academic library with a significant community user base in an economically hurting part of the community and a significant portion of academic users who use the library as part of an academic program they participate in under duress rather than by choice. As a library staff, we have had to make some very hard decisions that are at odds with usual library practice and theory regarding library values of personal freedom of information, right to privacy, and intellectual freedom. I do not always like these choices, but to maintain a safe, secure, and learning-centered environment, we are compelled to make and enforce them.

### Turning the After-school Library Crowd Around

**KATHY MIDDLETON** (KMIDDLET@CCCLIB.ORG), ADULT AND TEEN LIBRARIAN, AND **GRETA GALINDO** (GGALINDO@CCCLIB.ORG), BRANCH LIBRARIAN, ANTIOCH (CALIF.) PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Antioch Public Library is located in an east bay neighborhood in northern California. It was built in

1968 for a population of 25,000, but now serves a growing community of 100,000. With more than 3,750 students enrolled in the high school and middle school across the street, the Antioch Public Library fills up every day after school with teens. Many wear a “Hey, look at me, I’m ‘bad’” attitude, but library staff members have already anticipated their arrival and have an after-school plan in place.

Two years ago there was no plan. Disruptive behavior, handled by various staff on an as-needed basis, was reactionary rather than anticipatory. Prior to adopting new rules for behavior in our library, the after-school crowd negatively dominated the space. Tension between students and staff rose to an all-time high as anxiety escalated on a daily basis. Staff never knew what type of behavior to expect from students, or what sort of situations to expect each day. Calm days were counted as those when students left the library without making a scene. Common behaviors included running through the library, yelling to get attention, shouting obscenities, and harassing teens or other patrons outside who tried to enter the library. In addition, teens would often fight, bully, and try to sell drugs. It wasn't a safe environment; police were called regularly but often arrived too late to help. When staff asked students to leave the library for the day, they were faced with threats of bodily harm, severe name-calling, and in-your-face shouting.

Creative after-school programs and the preparation of a separate teen space did not solve the problem. Before implementation of the present after-school plan, the library had received a grant for a separate teen room held in the library meeting room, where students could relax and hang out. Their space included



## Adopting an after-school plan creates a secure and safe environment, one that is conducive to learning yet allows for some socializing.

beanbag chairs and computers; it was managed by one staff member and one volunteer. Soon, all the beanbags were stolen, and student behavior grew increasingly out of control. Although library programs were held in the teen room—contests, movies, games, and homework clubs—students rejected planned programs in favor of unstructured space. When structured programs were presented, students often joined friends in the adjacent library, thus leaving the teen room empty. Unstructured hangout space became impossible to monitor because students would not follow the most basic of rules—in particular, not to hurt each other. The teen room ultimately failed, as it became an unsafe area where gang members dropped in regularly to harass and recruit. In addition to the teen room workers, two additional staff members were still needed to monitor the students who remained in the library.

Here is an after-school library plan that works. For those reading who may feel defeated both personally and professionally by students who unleash foul language or other negative and destructive behavior in the library, we offer hope. It is time to for all of us in the library profession to recognize that managing the after-school crowd involves just as much effort, planning, and staff commitment as all of our other library programs and activities. Even with the best after-school programs and activities in place, library staff still may face daily stressful confrontations from students. Adopting an after-school plan creates a secure

and safe environment, one that is conducive to learning yet allows for some socializing.

Since we implemented this plan, we have had fewer incidences of disruption and destruction. In the past, teens harassed staff and patrons of all ages every day, never letting up on tagging, graffiti, and destruction both inside and outside the library. We still have incidences of vandalism and minor annoyances from time to time, but nothing that compares with the previous years' incidents.

Our mission statement in the Contra Costa County Library system states: "Bringing People and Ideas Together." To that end, we look for ways to encourage all library visitors to read, grow, and access information. Boundaries, rules, and expectations by staff set the tone for a safe and consistent environment every day. Destructive after-school behavior forced us to take a look at our past practices and find a workable and effective solution for everyone. We learned that the after-school groups demanding negative attention directly affected our ability to carry out the library's mission for all library users. Students now understand that the library has rules, and that the rules will not change.

Some practical guidelines for positive after school behavior include:

### **1. Schedule staff to monitor library interior and exterior.**

Library monitors may consist of librarians, library assistants, or clerks. Each has been trained to handle disruptive behavior with simple phrases and actions. No staff member is expected to moni-

tor longer than one hour per day. In our library, two or three monitors are assigned to rove in one-hour intervals between 3–5 P.M., Monday through Friday.

Monitors rove all areas of the library. Students may not play tag, run, lie across tables, talk loudly, group around a computer, or simply do nothing. Backup staff is always close by if help is needed. The monitoring schedule is stepped up at the beginning of the school year, right before school breaks, and at the end of the school year just before students are dismissed for the summer.

### **2. Enforce one simple statement and do not waiver from it: "You need to be doing something library-related."**

If, after instructing students to follow the one simple rule, they continue to act in a disruptive manner, ask them to leave. Second chances encourage arguments or pleading from the student. Your request may be followed by any number of responses, but the most common are wanting to argue or engage you in conversation; protesting unfairness all the way to the door (which may be accompanied by foul language and personal insults); slamming backpacks; kicking chairs, tables, and doors on the way out; and, finally, the attention-getting scream just before the final exit. Most often it is groups and not the individual student causing a ruckus. Accompany groups, after giving them time to gather their things, all the way out the door to minimize outbursts or destructive behavior. Remain calm and do not get angry.

You are only the deliverer of the message. It's nothing personal. If you need backup or to remove yourself from the situation, let another staff member know. Make sure the group leaves the premises completely. No loitering allowed in lobby areas, in the parking lot, or anywhere on the premises. The outside monitor will follow up. A no loitering sign is posted at our library. If efforts to dismiss students for negative behavior are met with a refusal to leave the library, phone the police.

**3. Don't expect respect, but eventually it may be given.**

You may be personally insulted or cursed. Stay calm and expressionless; get another staff member to assist with the exit if needed. Many of the same students who created a scene one day may return again in the future only to observe the rules and enjoy their library visit.

**4. Limit the number of after-schoolers at a study table or a computer station.**

Allow only one person at the one-hour computer stations, and no more than two people at the online catalogs or Internet computers. Allow no more than four people to sit around a table designed for four. No exceptions. When a table of disruptive students is asked to leave, the atmosphere in the library may suddenly become peaceful. At other times, several more groups may act out and need to leave for the day. When viewed in light of providing an environment conducive for information access and safety, the enforcement of positive behavior becomes easier for staff to carry out as part of the library's mission.

**5. Be consistent.**

Don't give up. It may take some time, and your rules will continue to be challenged, but most students will eventually learn that the library

staff has expectations for positive behavior. Students will enjoy their stay at the library when rules are enforced, even though they may outwardly protest. We've developed a good relationship with many of our teens, some of whom began the school year causing trouble.

**6. Learn students' names.**

Students want to be recognized as individuals.

**7. Take time to reflect on the mission of the public library.**

A teenage girl sits at a one-hour computer, flags me down, and asks, "I'm looking for books on gangs." I return, "Is the information for a paper you're writing?" "No," she answers, "I want to find out how to *get out* of a gang. My dad's in a gang and I don't want to see him die."

When asked if he wants to sign up on the teen mailing list, James is unable to complete a simple line of his address. The thirteen-year-old confides, "I can't read." Perhaps after noticing my look of disbelief, James' friend adds, "Yeah, he's not lying. He can't read."

"I hated you when you first came to work here. You changed things. But you're cool now."

A student who had once called me "white bitch" in front of his friends told me when he was away from his friends, "Thanks for letting me to do my work in here."

"You're the first librarian I ever liked."

"I come to the library because it's a safe place to read and see my friends."

"It's a lot easier to get my work done when it's you keeping my friends in line."

Students have thanked us for keeping the library environment positive. If negative behavior requires consequences, such as asking a student to leave, this too must

remain consistent in order for the simple plan to work. Students find in our library a safe place to do homework, use computers, read, or attend after-school programs. For student safety and staff sanity, carrying out of the plan must remain unaltered from day to day. This requires daily effort and staff resources. Every member of our staff is trained to respond consistently and fairly when addressing students. Students in return know what to expect from staff. Is our library atmosphere harmonious and peaceful every day? Emphatically, no! However, students understand that the library rules will not change from day to day, or from staff to staff; they can feel safe in an environment that embraces a few simple rules.

## There's a Naked Man in the Law Library!

ANONYMOUS

We had a very low-key, quiet guy who would come into the library, play around on the Internet, then disappear into the bowels of the building. Okay, we don't really have bowels, we have nooks. Anyway, he would disappear. We never really thought much about it, until one night an evening staff person found him in the law library at closing with his shirt half-way off (or half-way on, if you want to think positive!). She thought it a bit odd, but chalked it up to, "maybe he was just scratching his chest."

A couple days later, the patron was again seen with his shirt pulled up and coming from the law library. The odds were against "he was just scratching" twice in a row. So, this particular patron went from a nice, quiet, young man to someone we needed to watch a bit more closely.

Unfortunately for him, he had a very distinctive face, and it made its way into the local Sunday paper because he had beat a relative to death (though the relative didn't die until two weeks later) during a domestic dispute.

A few days after the incident in the newspaper, he came to the library, got on the Internet, and did his disappearing act. At the time, I was training a branch librarian on how to use our new PC reservation software. I didn't notice the young man disappear, nor did anyone else.

About thirty minutes after he vanished, a staff member I'll call Tonya went to shelve in the back corner of the law library. She was wearing very quiet shoes (the better to sneak with, my dear), and as she walked to the back corner, she saw a backpack and a pile of clothes. Her first thought was, "how odd."

Then, she looked up, and standing before her in all its glory was the body in which the clothes belonged. Unable to think, she asked, "Can I help you, sir?"

Then, the realization that she was standing in the public library talking to a completely naked man sunk in. She ran. Fast.

She ran up to me and, out of breath, said, "There's a naked man in the law library."

To which I replied, "There's a what where?"

After I recovered from the initial shock, I called 911 and told the dispatcher that there was "a naked man in the law library," to which she replied, "a what where?"

The police got to the library in record time, but the naked man had already dressed and made his escape.

Unfortunately for him I could show the police the picture from the paper. I was almost certain that he would never come back, but the following Monday night he came sauntering through the front door and got on the Internet.


I called the police, and when they arrived, he was escorted from the library and issued a criminal trespass warrant barring him from the property. He told the police officers who responded to the 911 call that he was not "totally" naked—he did leave his socks on. The staff member who caught him did not remember whether he had socks on or not.

So what did the library learn from this experience? We learned

that we must check our nooks more frequently for problems—it seems most misbehavior in the library takes place in them. Currently, we are in the process of designing a new library, and while architects may like lots of little design-pleasing corners, these spaces frequently invite trouble for librarians and innocent patrons alike.

Another staff member suggested that the librarian who caught him "in the act" should have grabbed the clothes and run so that the patron could not have made his escape. However, as I'm not sure this would be legal, or smart, given the patron's volatility, I didn't recommend this action for future encounters with an unclothed patron.

## Conclusion

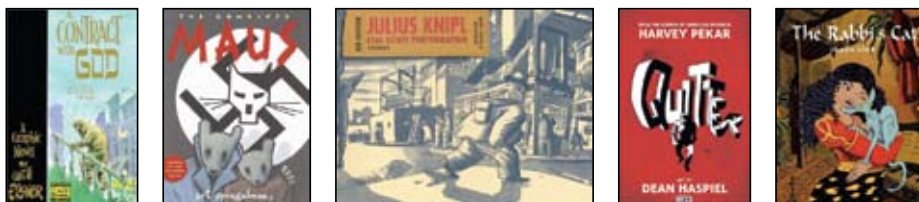
"If it weren't for the patrons, my library would be a wonderful place," my colleague sighed as we enjoyed a nightcap after a long day at the ALA Annual Conference. Of course, he knew that patrons are the "public" in public libraries, and without them our institutions wouldn't be the inclusive, exciting, lively, and event-filled places that they are! 

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**LISA GUIDARINI** is the Adult Program Coordinator for the Algonquin (Ill.) Area Public Library District and a member of the National Book Critics Circle. She blogs on behalf of the Northwest Suburban Library System at <http://blogs.nsls.info/thebook>. Lisa interviewed Amy Cohen via e-mail in July 2007.

“Book Talk” provides authors’ perspectives on libraries, books, technology, and information. If you have any suggestions of authors you would like to see featured in Book Talk, or if you are interested in volunteering to be an author-interviewer, contact Kathleen Hughes, Editor of *Public Libraries*, at the Public Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; [khughes@ala.org](mailto:khughes@ala.org).

# The Late Bloomer

## An Interview with Amy Cohen

Amy Cohen’s engaging, wryly humorous, and occasionally heartrending memoir *The Late Bloomer’s Revolution* starts with a story about taking a trip to Prague with her mother, a woman whose beauty and elegance catches the eye of none other than her daughter’s own current potential boyfriend. Within just a few pages the reader learns her mother is dying from a brain tumor. Suddenly, Cohen’s world is turned on its head as she struggles to make it through the grieving process, moving ahead with her life while coming to grips with her loss. Meanwhile, something unexpected happens. As the weeks go by, her father begins slowly morphing into the role her mother once held, becoming the overprotective, “Jewish mother” figure who won’t be happy until he sees his little girl happily settled down.

All of this is told in an endearingly funny, down-to-earth style. Amy Cohen is one of those authors you’d love to have as a best girlfriend. Her book touches the heart and the funny bone.

Amy Cohen has been a writer and producer for the sitcoms *Caroline in the City* and *Spin City*, a dating columnist for the *New York Observer*, and the dating correspondent for the cable TV program *New York Central*. She currently lives in New York City.

*The Late Bloomer’s Revolution* was released in July 2007.

**PL:** You have such a delightfully wicked sense of humor. Where did you get that?

**AC:** First thank you for thinking I have a delightfully wicked anything. That’s so wonderful to hear, especially since I love the word “wicked.” Even just a “wicked stain on my shirt,” would be better than no wicked at all. Since I wrote the book, my father’s now claiming, “Ame, I think you get yuh sense a’ humor from me!” And I think that’s true to an extent. Both my father and

mother had difficult childhoods themselves, and I think it was their shared sense of humor as a way to deal with pain that brought them together. They passed that on to my brother, sister, and me.

**PL:** Your parents were both obviously hugely influential in your life. Aside from their impact, what or who else inspires you?

**AC:** I'm worried this is going to sound like one of those MySpace lists (which I just discovered and which has caused me recently to use phrases like "no, YOU rock the house," as everyone on MySpace is twenty-two), where people give long lists of their interests, but mine are pretty varied. I try to learn from people who are doing whatever they do well. There's a songwriter named Sufjan Stevens who writes these often peppy, sometimes heartbreaking, lilting, buoyant, amazing songs. One in particular, "Casimir Pulaski Day," about his friend's bone cancer, still makes me cry when I hear it (and I've heard it about six hundred times). It's just so honest and specific and visual, and so I'll try to incorporate that into my writing. Diane Arbus's photographs had a huge influence on me (her book was the first book I ever asked for, and yes I was taken to a psychiatrist.) Also, Woody Allen, if only because I can never decide if my favorite movie is *Manhattan*, *Annie Hall*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, or *Stardust Memories*. *This American Life* radio stories influence me a lot, too; most recently, a beautiful—just beautiful—story by Joshua Bearman called "Duty Calls," which is about going to take care of his estranged mother and brother at a retirement community in Florida.

**PL:** Do you have an average work or writing day? What kind of writing schedule to you keep?

**AC:** I work in my apartment in a small office that's painted hot pink. I usually work from about 7 A.M. until 1 or 2 P.M. and I just sit there, no matter what, even if I'm just staring. And moping. And wishing so much I had been good at anything other than writing. Like, dog whispering, maybe. Or clowning. I always say that when I'm working every day is Shabbat, because I don't answer the phone or watch any TV. But I do use the Internet and turn on the lights. So it's like Shabbat. Sort of. With lights and the Internet.

**PL:** You've written in so many genres. Have you considered, or are you currently working on, a novel?

**AC:** I wrote fiction almost exclusively for years. In fact, when I graduated from college, my thesis was a collection of short stories. It was in these stories that I originally wrote about my Hebrew school teacher (who really existed), who "told us Israel was essential to the Jewish people and had some of the best health clubs in the world." I'd forgotten that until I reread it. I think at some point I will write fiction again, definitely.

**PL:** How do you balance your writing with the rest of your life?

**AC:** This is such a smart question! I don't. I'm terrible at it. I've gotten better, but especially when I have a deadline, I tend to treat my schedule like a dirty floor and just wipe everything clean. I also used to prefer to not speak in the morning (the Shabbat thing), and I had to give that up pretty quickly when I met

my last boyfriend. I tried to convince him that "silent retreats can be fun! Look at Buddhists in India who do it for months!" but he wasn't buying it, which was good for me.

You can get very rigid about your weird, writing ways and think, "I can only write if x,y, and z are in place," and basically, you just get odder and more removed from polite society that way. It's a balance between having constructs that help you discipline yourself (No TV. No phone. Morning writing if possible.) and when you go a little nuts ("Honey, is there any way we can not speak at all in the morning?").

**PL:** What's the last book you read? Would you recommend it?

**AC:** I only read books I enjoy. It took me a long time to be a book put-downer, but I am, if only because there's nothing I love more than loving the book I'm reading. I recently read Allison Smith's memoir *Name All the Animals*, and I loved it. Highly recommend that one.

**PL:** How difficult was it to write about so many personal aspects of your life, especially about losing your mother?

**AC:** Another terrific question. I wrote about my mother for years after she died. These were very tender, emotional, absolutely terrible—did I mention terrible?—pieces, mostly about her when she was ill. These pieces were like watching a Bergman film from the inside of an oven. I mean just so bleak.

For a long time I couldn't remember what my mother was like before she got sick, so I wrote almost exclusively about her illness and its effect on me and my family. But I think I needed to get all that detritus out.

When I wrote about her in “The Fixer Upper,” I jumped out of bed every morning because I was so excited to spend time with her again. It was such an incredible way to reacquaint myself with the charming, kooky mother I adored and with whom I had so much fun.

**PL:** You’re so young to write a memoir! What made you decide to write this now, in your prime, instead of later in your life?

**AC:** You’re sweet. When people say I’m so young, I always say “clearly, you haven’t seen me naked.” But yes, it’s true. I didn’t march through Poland in World War Two or survive an Irish childhood (if only!) But I think memoirs are about lives of all ages. My friend calls my memoir a “me-moir,” and I think there’s some truth to that, meaning it’s about me and my very specific, hopefully universal, experience. (Can you be both universal and specific? Boy, I hope so.)

**PL:** What’s your educational background? Did you major in journalism or creative writing in college?

**AC:** I was an American studies major at Wesleyan (but only because I couldn’t cobble anything else together with the classes I’d taken by sophomore year), but I focused on film and creative writing, which was fantastic. And a few years later I went to film school at USC.

**PL:** Was there one moment in your life when you decided to become a writer, or did you evolve into writing more slowly?

**AC:** I had so much trouble for so long expressing my feelings throughout my life, long into adulthood (hence, the eight-month rash). And so I’ve

always felt that I’ve needed to write to have a shot at even getting close to what I want to say. I was a terrible student and athlete when I was growing up, and the only thing I was ever

remotely good at, that I liked, was writing. So I feel like it chose me.

**PL:** What would you advise to someone else considering opening

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themselves up in a memoir. Any advice, or cautions?

**AC:** Every time you think you've gone as deep as you can, go deeper. I know I was so afraid to write about being depressed or lonely and I had to look really closely at what I was afraid of. People thinking they knew me? People thinking they had something "on" me? So what. I tried to imagine if the people whose memoirs I'd loved (*The Glass Castle*, *Name All the Animals*, *Angela's Ashes*), the ones that saved me in the darkest times, had held back. How much we all would have been cheated.

In order to write a memoir you have to know yourself to a certain extent (trust me, I'm still working on it), but I think, in terms of writing, you need to be on to your own issues. A lot of people are surprised to hear for most of my life my big issue was being incredibly secretive. I would have a boyfriend for months before I told friends. Or I'd date someone secretly, it wouldn't work out, and none of my friends could understand why I was crying all the time. When I was growing up my best friends didn't know my mother had cancer on and off for fifteen years. When I first started writing this book, I wrote a lot of glib, jokey versions and you could tell I was

hiding a lot. So I wrote and rewrote, and, yes, rewrote again.

**PL:** Aside from writing, what else are you passionate about?

**AC:** I love cooking and have gotten used to hearing things like "No, you cannot bring your French macaroons or the Union Square café spicy cashews, it's MY dinner party." In terms of causes, I'm passionate about breast cancer awareness and our need to share our experiences and demand change.

**PL:** Were you a big reader as a child? What were your favorite books?

**AC:** Actually I was not a big reader at all. Very early on in school I was put in the slowest reading group, and I think that made me associate reading with something negative, which is so sad to me because I think I would have really loved reading. I do remember loving *James and the Giant Peach*, though.

**PL:** What's next for you after *The Late Bloomer's Revolution*? Are you working on another book?


**AC:** You sound like my agent (Who I love.) Not yet. Eventually, absolutely, but I'm a little nervous about spending another four years sitting by

myself in my coffee-stained pajamas in silence until two in the afternoon.

**PL:** As a public library employee, I'm compelled to ask, what role have libraries played in your love of books and reading?

**AC:** It was actually our grade-school librarian who saw in me the reader that I didn't know I was. I was such a bad reader physically (I'm not kidding when I said my reading group met on the stairs), I had so much actual trouble reading, and I had all but given up. This librarian was like a brilliant haircutter who looks at your face and knows without a word what would be perfect for you, better than you ever could yourself. I remember she gave me a book about Nat Turner, and I just devoured it. It was so specific and kind of dark and desperate, and I just loved it.

**PL:** Thanks SO MUCH, Amy. I just loved your book, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to do this interview with you.

**AC:** Lisa, your questions were fantastic! You're like the David Frost of the library world. So articulate and thought provoking. It was my pleasure. And I'm so thrilled you liked the book. 





**DAVID LEE KING** is Digital Branch and Services Manager, Topeka & Shawnee County (Kans.) Public Library; davidleeking@gmail.com. David is reading *Chocolates on the Pillow Aren't Enough: Reinventing the Customer Experience* by Jonathon Tisch.

**MICHAEL PORTER** is Community Associate at Webjunction.org; michael.libraryman@gmail.com. Michael is reading *Play between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture* by T. L. Taylor and *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* by Howard Rheingold.

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.

# What Is Your Internet Spotlight?

Your friendly neighborhood Internet Spotlight column authors enjoy highlighting practical emerging technologies you can use in your real life to work more efficiently and effectively (and occasionally even just have more fun!). Sure, most of us use e-mail and the Web as part of our regular routines. But sometimes, particularly with the advent of what many refer to as Web 2.0 tools, you'll find a Web tool that really sparks your imagination and becomes an essential part of your professional or personal life. Perhaps it helps you communicate or buy things; maybe it helps provide an overview of a subject; maybe it helps you discover expert information that you can use. Whatever the case, some of us have found one or two specific Internet tools that we currently find extremely valuable.

These are what we are calling Internet Spotlight Tools. These tools make you smile and add real value to your work and to your person. Once you find an Internet Spotlight Tool, you know you've uncovered solid gold and you'll have your eyes open for more treasure.

This time around, David and I have reached out to several of our library-land friends to hear about their Internet Spotlight Tools of the moment. Naturally, we've also added our own. So if you haven't found a tool that works for you as mentioned above, read on, and perhaps you, too, will be inspired to give some of them a whirl. If you have your own Internet Spotlight Tool(s) all lined up, read on anyway! You might feel validated in your selection and perhaps even find another useful, valuable, quality-of-life-improving Internet Spotlight Tool.

## Josh Has Two Vitally Important Internet Spotlight Tools, So He's a Great Person to Begin Our List

Joshua M. Neff, Web content developer at Johnson County (Kans.) Library, really had trouble picking just one or two Internet Spotlights. However, when forced to pick, he was able to whittle his list down to just two tools—but they

are big ones! Big for good reason. Josh shares:

I'd have to go with blogs and wikis. I've found both to be easy and incredibly flexible to use. Blogs make writing and publishing simple, for everything from ephemeral one-liners and nonsequiturs to news items and press releases to lengthy essays and diatribes. As well as written pieces, blogs can be used to publish pictures, sounds, and the semi-legendary Internet "memes"—quizzes, questionnaires, and lists of trivia. Comments-enabled blogs also allow for conversations between author and audience. Wikis make collaboration and the building of archives and databases easy. Through **my own blog** ([www.goblin-cartoons.com](http://www.goblin-cartoons.com)), I've found an audience and made friendships.

Josh has also experimented with a wiki recently, starting the fun-loving alternative librarians wiki for his self-started community he calls the "Library Society of the World." Josh was careful to reiterate to us that both blogs and wikis have become critically important for him on several levels and "have allowed me to connect with new people, share my own ideas, and get exposed to new ideas." That's exactly the sort of thing an Internet Spotlight Tool is there to accomplish!

### Michael Porter's Internet Spotlight Tool Makes a Pretty Picture

Michael Porter commented:

My Internet Spotlight Tool would have to be **flickr** ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) (obviously to lots of you,

too, I know :-). Flickr helps me communicate visually, which I enjoy greatly, allowing me to record and share highlights and beauty from everyday life. I do this primarily with digital photographs, but it isn't unusual for me to load a screenshot image of something interesting into my "photo stream" on flickr. This same visual communication tool also helps me more deeply share libraryland info. For instance, I use pictures I've uploaded to flickr to populate my blog with photos. Perhaps most importantly though, flickr lets me connect with other people in libraryland. One huge way flickr does this is through groups. Flickr lets me participate in and even create interest-themed groups. In these groups I can connect with like-minded people to communicate, share, inspire and work toward mutual goals. The **Libraries and Librarians Group** (<http://flickr.com/groups/librariesandlibrarians>) and the **365 Library Days Project Group** (<http://flickr.com/groups/365libs>—an ongoing library advocacy project that you, too, can join in on) are the best examples of this for me.

### David Likes to Gab

David Lee King's Internet Spotlight Tool isn't actually a specific tool, but rather the conversational functionality found in many Web 2.0 tools—the ability to comment and communicate directly to others. David says:

I have been fascinated with this ability! Just how have I been communicating lately? I have been commenting on blogs and on the comments left on my own

blog posts; writing on Facebook walls and giving Facebook "pokes" to friends; and commenting on flickr photos. What's fascinating to me about all this is the instant connection and the ease of use, no matter the distance. IM, for example, works the same whether I am talking to my library's Web administrator down the hall or to a friend in Europe. It's quick, it's easy, it's free, and it's extremely effective. I'm amazed.

Michael chimes in: "Oh yes! Facebook did some impressive things earlier this year with its highly successful launch of its developers platform, a tool designed to expand and centralize the use of 2.0 communication tools in a single place. Hmm . . . how can we turn this into a killer app for libraryland?"

### Scott's Internet Spotlight Lab

Scott Pfitzinger, of the Butler University Libraries, Indianapolis, and the BiblioTech Web blog, shares that he would "have to pick Google Labs for all the cool things they keep coming out with." Within Google Labs, his two favorite utilities are **Google Reader** ([www.google.com/reader](http://www.google.com/reader)) and the **Google Browser Sync** plug-in for Firefox ([www.google.com/tools/firefox/browser/sync](http://www.google.com/tools/firefox/browser/sync)). Scott explains: "Google Reader is a terrific RSS feed aggregator that's easy to use and easy to learn. I've moved everything but my electronic discussion list subscriptions from Bloglines to Google Reader." Scott reports that Google's Browser Sync is:

. . . an AWESOME tool that allows you to synchronize your browser on two different computers. It keeps your bookmarks, your cookies, your search history, and

other browser settings. Once you've set it up on [multiple] computers, all you have to do is occasionally put a password in to reconnect. When my hard drive crashed this spring, I got it replaced and was faced with the familiar problem of trying to get everything back the way it had been. With Google Browser Sync, all I had to do was download the tiny program again. Then my browser had all my bookmarks, links, and everything. It even saved the cookies that kept my login information, so when I visited those kind of sites the first time, they let me right in like normal. Great stuff!!

## Kathryn's Internet Spotlight Has Got Milk

Kathryn Greenhill works at the Murdoch University Library in Perth, Western Australia. She has an Internet Spotlight Tool that is typical of the kind of tools that capture most people's imaginations. Kathryn can accomplish valuable work both in her professional and personal life with her tool. She says:

My favourite Internet tool at the moment is **Remember the Milk** ([www.rememberthemilk.com](http://www.rememberthemilk.com)) . . . I use it daily and [it] has increased my efficiency and reduced my anxiety—what more could you ask for? Remember the Milk (RTM) is a “Things to Do” site that helps me balance my work and my home life. If you've ever thought of a great idea for a book display in the middle of cooking dinner or remembered while at the reference desk that you need to buy a present for granny, then this is for you. I always have it open, so when I

think of something that needs doing, I simply flick it toward RTM. It makes e-mail triage a dream—what can be done in two minutes is done immediately, otherwise it is posted to RTM for later. I love the tabbed folders. I divide my tasks up into “home,” “work,” “kids,” “housework” and “study.” I write topics for potential blog posts under “blog posts to write,” and have deadlines recorded for “ongoing projects.” I can enter plain English for the deadline, such as “tomorrow,” or “next Friday” or “fortnight,” and it magically turns it into a formatted date. I can look at all the tasks due today, tomorrow, or overdue, and mark them completed or postponed. I could import the tasks into my Google Calendar. There is an option to add a location to a task, then display them on a map so you can see which errands are near each other. I could join a group with other RTM users and share tasks with them (such as “conference paper draft due now”). And each page displays a soothing cow icon that makes me feel like it's all going to be all right.

## Marianne Adds a Powerful Voice to the Bloglines Chorus Ringing through Libraryland

Marianne Kruppa is a Web developer librarian at the St. Joseph County Public Library in South Bend, Indiana, where she proudly proclaims:

I adore **Bloglines** ([www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)). As a webmaster of four blogs and two wikis with multiple

authors, Bloglines provides a one-stop shop for keeping track of updates and catching those time-to-time quirks that pop up. I also use it to keep track of our flickr additions and comments. It keeps me on top of local and national news, libraryland, tech trends, and some pop culture fun here and there, allowing me to provide better customer service to staff and patrons.

Michael adds: “Yes, yes! Not enough room in this article to discuss it, but Bloglines (and other similar aggregator tools) should be used by most libraries to keep vanity feeds that track what people are saying about your institution online. David and I both agree this is a very powerful and important facet of Bloglines and other, similar tools that is woefully underused across the industry from an institutional perspective.”

## Two Kinds of Librarian, Three Powerful Internet Spotlight Tools, One Amazing Dutchman

Edwin, who works at the Zeeuwse Library in Middelburg, Zeeland, the Netherlands, notes that his Internet Spotlight Tool depends on the task he is addressing: “**Netvibes** [[www.netvibes.com](http://www.netvibes.com)] for information management” and “**Blogger** [[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)] for sharing the thoughts.” As we chatted with Edwin via e-mail for this article, though, this joint public and academic librarian was quick to add another Internet Spotlight story (funny how they often seem to pile up nicely like this, eh?):

I would have really loved to send in more tools but you only asked for two. There are so many useful

tools that have become Internet Spotlight Tools for me! At this moment I'm excited about **Ning** [www.ning.com]; for example, I started <http://bibliotheek20.ning.com>, and in just six weeks have 132 members from all over the Netherlands and Belgium. That proves to me something IS happening!

## A NY State Library Student, Library Coordinator, and Backpacker

As with so many of us, Chris Harris wears a lot of hats: librarian, presenter, school library system coordinator (for Genesee Valley BOCES in Le Roy, New York), blogger at Infomancy, and tracker of online tools for the *School Library Journal* blog, Digital Reshift. Chris has found an Internet Spotlight Tool to share with us that has become an invaluable part of his life and work. Chris offers:

From managing tasks at work to keeping on top of assignments as a graduate student along with a healthy dose of writing and a growing number of conference presentations, I just couldn't keep everything together without my Internet Spotlight Tool **Backpack** (<http://backpackit.com>). This life management tool from 37Signals lets me create separate "pages" for different projects, presentations, or whatever else I

am working on. The site is built around these distinct pages, which provide a combination of editable text areas, to-do lists, and file storage. The free version provides five pages, but I moved up to the basic plan (\$5/month) for 25 pages and 80 MB of file storage. Now each presentation I do has its own Backpack page where I can keep and edit online notes, collect links, store the presentation file, host handouts, and more. If desired, I can make the page (and the associated files) available to the public. While the free version comes with reminders that can be set to e-mail or TXT important updates, the paid versions of Backpack also include a very nice calendar.

## Jeff Manages to Use His Internet Spotlight Tool to Communicate and Keep Up in Arizona

Jeff Scott, a manager at the City of Casa Grande (Ariz.) Public Library, says: "My Internet Spotlight would have to be **Twitter** ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)). I have been a bit obsessed with it lately." Jeff recently authored a very popular entry on his blog **Gather No Dust** (<http://gathernodust.blogspot.com>) that reveals how Twitter has had deep practical value for both him and his library. He also is currently working on another blog post about Twitter that details

exactly how the tool has increased his productivity at work.

Michael chimes in one last time: "While working on this article, I mentioned to a co-worker that we had talked with Jeff and that his Internet Spotlight Tool would be included in the article. Her response? 'Oh, I know Jeff, he's been doing this, and this, and this and that.' How did she know Jeff and where he worked and what he was working on? She met him in the very active libraryland community on Twitter, of course!"

**Michael:** "So we managed to get some great input this time around, eh David?"

**David:** "It's better when readers don't just have to listen to us all the time."

**Michael:** "Yep, but we had such a great response that we couldn't list everyone's contribution."

**David:** "Totally. Things such as Facebook, Instant Messaging, Meebo, WebJunction, MySpace, Open API functionality . . ."

**Michael:** ". . . and LinkedIn, Pandora, Netflix, YouTube, RSS . . ."

**David:** "Oh my!"

**Michael:** "Exactly. Makes you wish we had more room for these columns, eh?"

**David:** "There's always next time . . . as long as folks are reading the column, that is."

**Michael:** "Well if they aren't, can we ask them to tell us what they want us to write about?"

**David:** "Of course! In fact, I think you just did it!" ☐



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](mailto:leeaprice@comcast.net).

Lee is reading *The Mabinogion Tetralogy* by Evangeline Walton and *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism* by Ross King.

“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.

# With a Little Help from My Friends

It's late June in Houston, Texas, and it's already brutally hot. Know what sounds mighty good? A nice cold glass of lemonade. Even better than that . . . how about a nice cold glass of lemonade that benefits the local library? Well, it turns out there's money in those lemons, or at least there is in Houston, where the Friends of the West University Branch Library (part of the Harris County Public Library) turned their “Lemonade for Libraries” idea into a first-class fundraiser that raised more than \$4,000 in its first year.<sup>1</sup>

For this particular fundraiser, the Friends recruited families to set up lemonade stands at designated times over the course of a weekend. From inception it was conceived as a very child-centered event, with creativity fully encouraged. The children and families set up colorful stands with playful themes, and they competed to see which booth could raise the most money. In addition to creating lots of warm fuzzy feelings, this fundraiser built community, marketed the library, and brought in the money.

At their core, Friends organizations are among the most grassroots of all American institutions. They are formed from an overflow of genuine good will from people who are convinced that a great library is the key to a healthy community. At towns and villages all around the country, in hundreds upon hundreds of locations, Friends have gathered together into official groups, written bylaws, applied for their 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and then raised money just to help their libraries prosper.

Friends groups come in all shapes and sizes: Friends of state libraries, Friends of library systems, teen Friends, Friends foundations, and Friends of individual libraries. Most are small volunteer organizations, but the largest have professional staffs that oversee major annual campaigns, lead volunteer-driven programs, and host events that draw sizeable crowds.

## Friends of Libraries U.S.A.

The hub of information for Friends groups throughout the United States is located on Walnut Street in Center City, Philadelphia. This is the home of Friends of Libraries U.S.A., commonly known by the acronym FOLUSA.

For me, contacting FOLUSA is an exercise in nostalgia, representing a homecoming of sorts. Back in the 1990s I assisted FOLUSA with some initiatives while working as a fundraising consultant. This was when Sandy Dolnick, FOLUSA's founder, was serving as executive director. They are one of the finest organizations that I ever worked with. Their programs are exciting, their events fantastic, and their commitment to their cause exemplary. So while I would usually do an interview by phone or e-mail for this column, in this case I called to ask if I could return to visit the office in-person.

The interview was scheduled with Sally Reed, FOLUSA's executive director since 2001. Sally came to FOLUSA with extensive experience in library administration and fundraising, as well as success in working with Friends groups in several library systems. My intention was to get her perspective on the fundraising potential of Friends groups . . . and perhaps to wheedle out some free advice on how library professionals can nurture that potential.

FOLUSA is still located on the fourth floor of a corporate building, but they've switched offices on that floor, disorienting me slightly. However, going in, it's the same old FOLUSA, with posters lining the walls advertising celebrity appearances at literary events as well as such special programs as Books for Babies and Literary Landmarks. Just as I remembered, there were still

boxes all over the place, as a small staff struggles to meet the needs of more than three thousand member organizations. There are toolkits for Friends groups in the process of forming, Books for Babies supplies to foster family literacy programs, and material for literary events to inspire libraries and their Friends.

## Friends Raising Money

"Friends are a grassroots phenomenon," Sally told me. "They are terrific for raising the profile of a library . . . and raising money, too. And they are at their best when they work closely with the library staff, raising funds for short-term needs." She went on to elaborate the many ways that Friends groups throughout the country creatively raise money for their libraries every year:

- **Traditional book sales:** "There will always be a place for the traditional book sale," Sally predicted. They are a high-profile event that people look forward to. "Often, people are not consciously aware of their local Friends group," Sally said. "But when you say that the Friends are the ones who run the library books sales, suddenly they know exactly who you're talking about."
  - **Online book sales:** This is a rapidly emerging area for ongoing fundraising, and it can realize surprising profits. A book that might sell for fifty cents at a traditional book sale can suddenly be matched with a specialty collector anywhere in the world who is prepared to pay top dollar for it. Sometimes the Friends group recruits a volunteer to review the books targeted for resale, looking for items that may have online
- sales potential. In other cases, this project may become a close Friends and library collaboration, with the library dedicating a staff person's time to book selection. Finally, because this field truly is potentially lucrative, some Friends and libraries are deciding to contract with professional middleman services that offer to scan the books targeted for the book sale and then check the titles to see what prices they are fetching in auctions and Internet sales. It's a twenty-first-century opportunity for Friends!
- **Literary or author events:** Larger, well-established Friends groups often specialize in these high-profile affairs, but in reality they can be organized anywhere. They can celebrate the work of a local author, or they can be coordinated to time with an appearance by an author on a book tour already scheduled at a nearby chain book store. These authors are often eager to show their support for libraries, plus they get a double-dose of promotion. At these literary events, Friends often organize additional money-making activities, such as raffles and silent auctions. These are especially attractive because they offer opportunities to nurture local business partnerships through the donation of a gift certificate to a fine restaurant, a spa day, or a fancy basket of goodies. Businesses that donate feel invested in the causes they support, turning them into potential long-term advocates for the library.
  - **Other creative ideas:** Usually, it's the Friends themselves who come up with ideas that are just right for their particular community.

“Friends are a grassroots phenomenon,” Sally told me. “They are terrific for raising the profile of a library . . . and raising money, too.”

This is part of the advantage of being a grassroots organization. For instance . . .

Utilizing the talents of local craftsmen, the Friends of the Kirkwood (Mo.) Public Library are taking books traditionally designated for the book sale, hollowing them out, and transforming them into very attractive book purses. Through this sleight of hand, a Readers Digest Condensed Book suddenly becomes a \$25 to \$50 fashion accessory. They are selling briskly at the Greentree Books Shop, an attractive retail store located in the library and managed by the Friends.<sup>2</sup>

For their annual Glance at Romance fundraiser, the Friends of the Adamstown Area (Pa.) Library recycle Valentine’s Day cards to make elaborately decorated bags that are then filled with donated romance novels. The actual decorating begins in early January so that a hundred bags are ready for sale by Valentine’s Day. According to library director Kathy Thren, “This is a much-anticipated event for our patrons as they wait eagerly in line for the library to open. This year, at the end of the day, all the bags were gone, yielding a net profit of \$400 slated for children’s programming.”<sup>3</sup>

## Planning for Success

Sounds great, right? But from the perspective of a public library pro-

fessional, dealing with a Friends group can sometimes seem like just one more potential headache. Some Friends groups are notoriously high-maintenance. Others seem oblivious to the real needs of the library. Plus, there is always a risk of personality conflicts emerging. It’s hard enough to keep the staff happy, and then here come these people who think they deserve special attention just because they’re your Friends!

According to Sally Reed, good communication is the key to a healthy library and Friends relationship. She suggests that once a year, the Friends should schedule a strategic planning meeting or retreat to set goals for the coming year:

It’s important for a representative from the library staff, ideally the director, to be present to show the big picture of library operations and current goals, challenges, and information about new audiences. Everyone should have an opportunity to share information. Ultimately, this reduces disagreement and nurtures a culture of shared goals.

Just as with any organization, Friends groups go through cycles of youth, maturity, and renewal. Recruitment of new members can pose difficulties and lead to frustration. The most successful Friends groups directly address these problems through aggressive recruitment, written job descriptions of the volunteer positions, mentorship of new leaders, and internal retreats that unite the members around a common vision for the future.


It’s especially exciting for Sally to witness the birth of a Friends group, that wonderful time when anything seems possible and the sky’s the limit. Recently, the magic happened in Sidney, Nebraska. At a Chamber of Commerce meeting in Sidney, community resident Angela Raffensberger heard the library director say their library was one of the few in the state without a Friends group. Angela took the hint, and started organizing the Friends of the Sidney Public Library. She shared some of her thoughts on the process of organizing a Friends group in an e-mail:

As soon as I made up my mind that this was something I wanted to do, I spoke with a good friend of mine and we got to work. Basically, it started with word of mouth with our close friends, but it wasn’t long before word spread and we had volunteers from all over our community. We put up flyers around town to advertise our first meeting and the rest just fell into place. Our core group is about 35 people now, not bad considering this group only sprang to life about three months ago!

The library staff and Trustees were BEYOND helpful in organizing our group. I can’t even express what a tremendous support they have been for us. Our latest meeting was a bit different. We hosted a BBQ social/meet-and-greet for all library staff, library board, and Friends members and immediate families. The Friends board met beforehand

for about 45 minutes with the library board to discuss our by-laws and fundraising goals. Then we enjoyed the BBQ together. . . . We had about 80 people show up for the food and fun.

This fall we will be focusing efforts on helping the Library board with the fundraising for the library's building addition and we are all very excited about that. And yes, I'm feeling GREAT with how things are going. I see our future as being very bright in Sidney!<sup>4</sup>

Angela's work in Sidney, Nebraska, is exemplary, but far from unique. In every community, there are people who love their libraries. And a Friends group offers the perfect opportunity to transform their enthusiasm into an effective instrument for advocacy and fund-raising. 

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## PLA 2008 Goes Paperless

PLA 2008, the 12th National Conference of the Public Library Association (PLA), will feature online access to all handouts at [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) before, during, and after the conference, allowing attendees to download or print out only the handouts they need, significantly reducing the amount of wasted paper. Registered attendees will be notified via e-mail when conference handouts are available online. In addition, there will be a limited number of printing stations available onsite at the conference for attendees to print handouts. Paper copies of handouts will not be available at the concurrent program sessions.

As with many conferences, it is difficult for PLA to reliably gauge how many people will attend a program, which often leads to excessive paper copies and wasted handouts. Going paperless allows PLA to create a more environmentally friendly conference.

"PLA members are ready for us to be more responsible about how we use paper," said Jane Eickhoff, chair of the PLA 2008 Program Coordinating Committee and associate director of the Harford (Md.) County Public Library. "At this conference, it will be much easier for attendees to access just the handouts they want in a more convenient, electronic format."

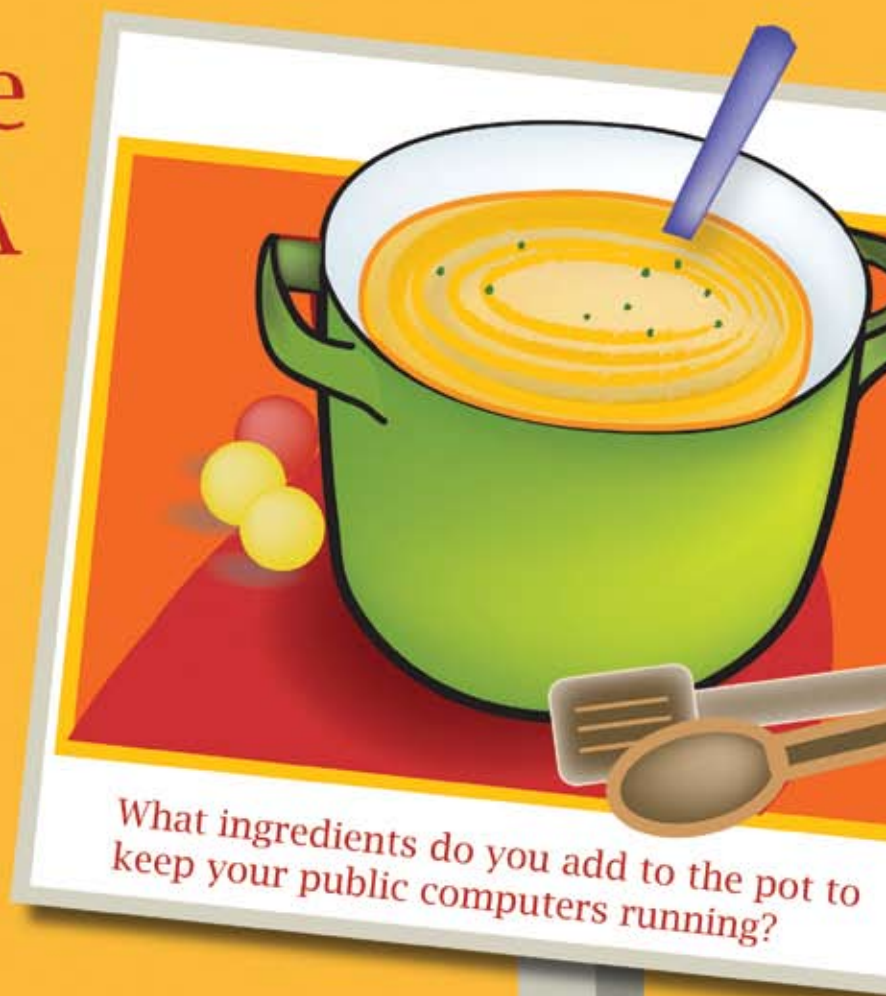
Offered biennially, PLA National Conference is the premier event for public libraries, drawing librarians, library support staff, trustees, Friends, and library vendors from across the country and around the world. The conference includes more than 150 top-quality continuing education programs, preconferences, and talk tables; several social events and networking opportunities; and a bustling exhibits hall. PLA 2008, the PLA 12th National Conference, will be held March 25–29, 2008 in Minneapolis.

For more information about PLA 2008, visit the National Conference Web site, [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org). For more information about other PLA events and programs, contact the PLA office at [pla@ala.org](mailto:pla@ala.org) or 1-800-545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or visit PLA's Web site at [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org).



# Librarians Are Cooking Up A Storm!

What's your recipe for **SUCCESS**?



At the Suwannee River Regional Library system in Live Oak, Florida, they simmer their broth with **Deep Freeze**. Other libraries add a generous helping of **FORTRES** seasoning. Some invite volunteer **cooks** into the kitchen or develop robust meal plans.

**T**he MaintainIT Project is gathering practical tips and techniques from libraries about how to maintain public computers. These stories will be the main ingredient in easy-to-use Cookbooks, distributed free to public libraries.

## MaintainIT

What's your recipe for success?  
Tell Us: [www.maintainITproject.org](http://www.maintainITproject.org)

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



Contributing Editor

**MICHAEL GARRETT**

**FARRELLY** is a Youth Services Librarian and graphic novelist living in Chicago; michaelgarrelly@hotmail.com.

Michael is reading *Soon I Will Be Invincible* by Austin Grossman, *The Insanity Defense: The Complete Prose* by Woody Allen, *Crooked Little Vein* by Warren Ellis, and *Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police* by John O. Koehler

“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.

# YA Services in a Post-Harry Potter World

**D**id you feel it? Did the earth move beneath your feet? Did the skies crackle with some weird energy or ripple with tidal forces tearing the very fabric of reality apart?

Where were you when Harry Potter ended?

It’s been called the most significant event in publishing history. It’s made J. K. Rowling richer than the Queen of her country, and made such words as “muggle” and “Hogwarts” household terms around the world. I visited Scotland a few years back, and on a walking tour our guide pointed out the small flat where Rowling lived while writing the first book. It was like looking at Sun Studios or Abbey Road—this was a place where something world-changing started.

Make no mistake; Harry Potter has been a global phenomenon, cutting across languages, nations, and cultures. Harry Potter manga, Harry Potter knock-offs in Hong Kong, Harry Potter “sequels” written in Russian—the scope is breathtaking, a feverish fit of excitement, wonder over the mysterious climax of the seven-book-long saga.

And now, it’s over. Is it?

It’s an understatement, really, to say Harry Potter has changed libraries. Some libraries have held huge events, midnight release parties, costume dramas, reading circles, and magic-themed events. Others have simply seen the massive bump in circulation that having Potter on the shelves brings. Still others have seen the adult fandom for the series open up discussion about shared adult and youth materials and spaces. A cultural phenomenon swept in the doors and touched every facet of librarianship. Even technical services folk found themselves suddenly the keepers of secret lore as the final books came into their possession for processing.

But that’s all in the past, isn’t it?

There are still two final films to be made, which if the recent box office estimates say anything, are going to surpass most nations' gross domestic product in profit. Rowling is still young and vital and may produce more magical mysteries, or perhaps retire to a castle made of gold. But is that all the magic that's left? Of course not.

Generation Harry Potter has grown up in the midst of a literary phenomenon. A singular event that draws together the bulk of a generation is often a negative thing. The Kennedy assassinations, the death of John Lennon, and 9/11 all stand in recent reckoning as moments of singularity. But to children growing up in the past decade of Potter, it's been something altogether positive. They'll remember the late nights waiting up at a bookstore, furious reading sessions going way past bedtime, and the sense of accomplishment at swallowing the huge tomes.

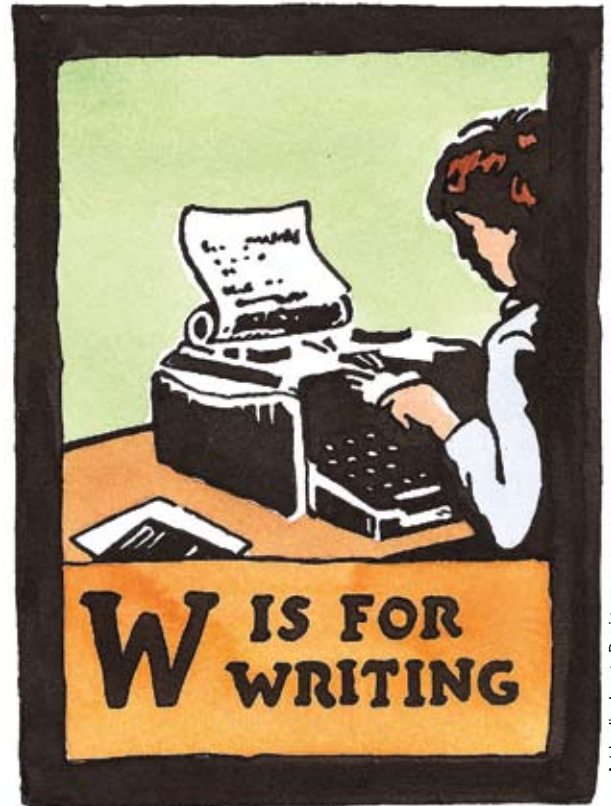
But how can we keep Generation Harry involved in literature and libraries now that the monoculture frenzy is dying down? It's a question that's more vital to young adult services than almost any other. Tapping into the energy and excitement produced by Harry Potter is nothing short of a coup for librarianship.

What are the lessons learned from the Harry Potter frenzy? First and foremost, interactivity. While book discussions and reading groups are fantastic, young adults also are interested in participating more actively. Generation Harry watches television, but it also plays video games. The idea of a library event where they can actively participate, even shape the event themselves by their participation, is very enticing.

There's also a certain amount of do-it-yourself spirit to tap into. Look at the costumes kids cobbled together out of old graduation robes, stuffed animals, and cool-looking tree branches. For every store-bought costume I've seen in the past few years, I've seen a dozen home-made models. A manga costume celebration, a "come as your favorite literary character" party, or perhaps even workshop focusing on creating literary-themed crafts could be ideal for motivating the crafters among Generation Harry.

Of course, the most crucial thing is how to continue the passion for reading. Since the beginning of Pottermania, libraries have had themed booklists and suggestions. Remember, one key to the success of the Potter phenomenon has been branding. Creating a book brand (Magical Reads, Sorcerous Tales, Slam-Tastic Stories) within your collection can help create connections for young adult readers. Use new media, such as online video and podcasting, to spread the word about the literary worlds beyond the walls of Hogwarts.

Reaching out to parents is key as well. They've seen their kids excitement and are looking for new books, new adventures to share with their kids. Young adult fiction is a vibrant



Art by Jim Lange Design

area where older readers can share experiences with their kids. Going from Hogsmeade to the City of Ember, exploring the dark mysteries of Octavian Nothing, or exploring the magical realism of such graphic novels as Courtney Crumrin and Scott Pilgrim, are all things that parents can enjoy right along with their young adults.

In a few years' time, when the youngest of Generation Harry is matriculating out of college, I think we'll see that the greatest magic trick ever pulled wasn't written in the pages of Rowling's books. It's the generation of readers who viewed books the same way previous generations viewed rock stars. ■

# INDEXED COLLECTION BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

## A TOOL FOR QUANTITATIVE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT BASED ON CIRCULATION

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**T**he San Marcos (Tex.) Public Library (SMPL) is located in the central part of Texas, just south of Austin, the state capital. It serves a population of 65,000 citizens in a building with 27,000 square feet. The library has approximately 135,000 volumes in its holdings and circulated 390,567 items last year, for a stock turnover rate of 2.9. Each year we conduct a collection development appraisal in conjunction with our fiscal year planning. This annual review establishes budget allocations for each of our individual collections (such as easy picture books, juvenile fiction, juvenile nonfiction, general fiction, and general nonfiction).

### **Circulation As the Foundation for Collection Analysis and Development**

Many factors, both quantitative and qualitative, need to be addressed when performing any collection analysis, such as age of the collection, condition of the materials, and current trends in format technology.<sup>1</sup> Any analysis must start somewhere, though, and we have chosen to use circulation as our baseline guide to establish collection development parameters. After circulations per bibliographic unit are determined, we then consider other qualitative factors in our analysis.

With modern library automation, accurate circulation statistics are easily at our disposal.<sup>2</sup> Reports can be generated with most circulation automation systems to track the most minute bibliographic unit, sometimes even on an hour-by-hour basis. The annual circulation reports for our discrete collections form the foundation of our acquisitions budget plan for the new fiscal year.

Although we discuss and propose target numbers of acquisitions for each individual collection, in reality it is much more efficient to track the dollar amount spent for each bibliographic unit.<sup>3</sup> By coding each order and keeping separate spreadsheet ledgers for each discrete collection, we track the acquisition process and report to individual selectors the status of their budgets throughout the year.

We formerly began our annual collection planning meeting by simply converting the circulation numbers for each discrete collection into a raw percentage of the general library materials budget. If our total materials budget was \$100,000, and general fiction accounted for 23 percent of circulations for the previous year, we would begin the discussion by proposing to spend \$23,000 for general fiction. The other bibliographic units also would be allotted their budgets based on the prior year's circulation.

And here let me reiterate that this allocation strategy based on circulation is only the foundation for our collection development budgeting process. It is simply a quantitative place to start the discussion. Many more factors ultimately dictate the final materials allocation plan for the year. I will address some of these other qualitative collection analysis considerations at the conclusion of the article.

## The Problem

Something odd kept happening when I crunched the accession numbers at the end of the year and compared what we actually acquired versus what we had planned to acquire in each collection. Even though the budget targets for each bibliographic unit had been met, the acquisitions per collection percentages were consistently skewed from the circulation numbers that we initially based the budgets on. Often the general nonfiction collection was underrepresented, but the juvenile fiction and science fiction collections had been overselected. Yet my bibliographers had faithfully spent their budgets as I had instructed.

Then our director, Stephanie Langenkamp—who has always been a math and budgeting whiz—discovered a fatal flaw in the foundation of our collection development process. The base of our allocation strategy had been converting circulation numbers to raw budget percentages. However, an important step was missed when calculating the budget allocation percentages: not all books are the same price, and some categories of materials—the discrete collections, or bibliographic units—have higher average prices per unit than others. For instance, \$23,000 will buy a great deal more fiction and juvenile titles than

general nonfiction titles, especially when many fiction first editions are exclusively mass market paperbacks and a new nonfiction title is rarely anything but a more expensive hardback.

To create an accurate collection allocation budget foundation, the average cost of each bibliographic unit would have to be considered separately. The average cost of an item in each collection needed to be determined. Although indices of book prices are published each year these lacked the specificity of our needs.<sup>4</sup> I needed to examine a current selection of materials that my bibliographers had chosen for my library and calculate my vendors' discounts for each format. At first I used a sample of marked-up book reviews from each of my selectors and an adding machine to statistically infer the average price of a unit in each of my collections. Now my twenty-first-century acquisitions system can produce a report of this parameter for any designated period.

However, even with the average price per unit of each discrete collection, I was still at a loss as to how to translate this information into a budget that could be easily manipulated during the collection development process. Again our director came to the rescue with her advanced mathematics. She developed an algebraic formula that takes into consideration circulation percentages and the current average price for each bibliographic unit to calculate a weighted index for setting our baseline budget allocations each year.

## The Solution

The budgeting index (BI) produces an accurate allocation budget for discrete collections based on circulation data, and weighted by the average cost per unit in each collection. To find the correct budget of a particular bibliographic unit, one must first establish the total number of items that can be purchased with the total budget. The ultimate goal is to translate the circulation percentage of each collection into a matching percentage of acquisitions for that bibliographic unit in the next year.

BI works by examining each collection individually. For each bibliographic unit, the circulation percentage is multiplied by the average cost per unit and a variable ( $\% \cdot \$ \cdot x$ ). For example, if general nonfiction (NF) accounted for 32 percent of last year's circulation, and the average price for a NF title is \$19, this part of the equation would be  $(32\% \cdot \$19x)$ , or  $608x$ . The variable  $x$  represents the number of items that will be purchased with the annual budget for the collection categories in question. Each bibliographic unit is computed in this way, and

the tables are summed. (Note: for the BI algebra to work, the individual circulation percentages must sum to 100 percent.)

For demonstration purposes, I will use the following simplified example; however, in practical application, most libraries will have many more bibliographic units to compute (see table 1). (My library has nineteen individual collections that are tracked.) Libraries may have as many bibliographic units as can be tracked through their circulation and acquisition systems. SMPL considers all of the general nonfiction to be a single category; but a larger institution, or an academic library that employs several individual subject bibliographers, may want to include more granular or specific categories, perhaps by Dewey classification or Library of Congress division.

With this information, the algebraic formula can be assembled:

$$[10\%(\$15)x] + [9\%(\$9)x] + [11\%(\$12)x] + [23\%(\$10)x] + [8\%(\$8)x] + [7\%(\$5)x] + [32\%(\$19)x] = \text{Total Budget for these collection categories.}$$

To solve for the variable  $x$ , the total budget for these materials is inserted. For demonstration purposes, we will use \$100,000.

$$150x + 81x + 132x + 230x + 64x + 35x + 608x = \$100,000.$$

$$1300x = \$100,000.$$

$$x = 76.9$$

With the variable  $x$  now solved, the number of items to acquire in each bibliographic unit can be calculated. Then the dollar amount to allocate for each collection can be calculated. The original circulation percentages are multiplied by the variable  $x$  to find the number of individual items each bibliographer will need to select for the next year (see table 2).

The variable  $x$  (76.9) tells us how many items to add to each collection given the average price per item, the percentage of acquisitions desired, and our total budget. (To check the math, divide the number to acquire per collection by the total number, and you find the original circulation percentage.) The number of units in each discrete collection can be multiplied by the average price per unit in each collection to produce a table showing the budget breakdown for each bibliographic unit (see table 3).

To check the math, sum up the individual budgets to see if they equal the total budget of \$100,000. (My rounded demonstration numbers sum to \$99,974.) The following table demonstrates the value of balancing the individual collection budgets with the BI algebra. In table 4, the first columns show our

unweighted circulation percentages and budget allocations, and the second columns show BI-adjusted budget percentages and allocations.

Without using BI to balance the average price of each of the collections, the budget allocations would have been skewed. Many more juvenile fiction, juvenile nonfiction, general fiction, mystery, and science fiction titles would have been purchased than intended; and fewer easy picture books and general nonfiction titles would have been acquired than the circulation numbers dictated. Using the budget index, the proposed budgets will now much more accurately purchase the desired number of individual items in each collection.

## Using the Budget Index As the Foundation for Annual Collection Development

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, SMPL uses BI and circulation numbers merely as the foundation of our annual collection development planning. BI simply lays a base for the collection analysis

**Table 1.** Base Table: Collections, Circulation, and Price Per Unit

Code	Legend	% of circulation	Price (\$)
E	Easy picture books	10	15.00
J	Juvenile fiction	9	9.00
JNF	Juvenile non-fiction	11	12.00
F	General fiction	23	10.00
M	Mysteries	8	8.00
SF	Science fiction	7	5.00
NF	General non-fiction	32	19.00

**Table 2.** Budget Index of Items to Acquire

Code	% of circulation	Formula	No. of items to acquire
E	10	10(76.9)	769
J	9	9(76.9)	692
JNF	11	11(76.9)	846
F	23	23(76.9)	1,769
M	8	8(76.9)	615
SF	7	7(76.9)	538
NF	32	32(76.9)	2,461
			Total items to acquire = 7,690

**Table 3.** Budget Index of Budget Allocation

Code	No. to acquire	Price per unit (\$)	Individual collection budget (\$)	% of total budget
E	769	15.00	11,535	12
J	692	9.00	6,228	6
JNF	846	12.00	10,152	10
F	1,769	10.00	17,690	18
M	615	8.00	4,920	5
SF	538	5.00	2,690	3
NF	2,461	19.00	46,759	46

**Table 4.** Comparison of Pre- and Post-adjusted Budget Allocations

Code	% of circulation	Unweighted budget (\$)	BI % of budget	BI budget allocation (\$)
E	10	10,000	12	11,535
J	9	9,000	6	6,228
JNF	11	11,000	10	10,152
F	23	23,000	18	17,690
M	8	8,000	5	4,920
SF	7	7,000	3	2,690
NF	32	32,000	46	46,759

discussion. Although patron use is a very important barometer of a collection's viability, it is certainly not the only factor to consider in the analysis of a collection.<sup>5</sup>

Some bibliographic units in a library collection may be underrepresented in circulation statistics. The reference and room-use collections will not have any circulation numbers to analyze unless an in-house use survey has been conducted (and conducted accurately). Other collections may not have robust circulation numbers because they are too new and do not have enough items to fulfill patrons' needs yet. A report of stock turnover rate by discrete collection can elucidate information that the raw circulation numbers may miss.

Often our bibliographers will identify collections that need special attention, whether it is a new format (for example, DVDs or juvenile fiction on CDs), or an underrepresented collection that needs additional development (such as English As a Second Language or foreign language materials). For these special focus areas, I will often dedicate a separate

budget and not include these collections in my BI base table, or the total budget number I use for the BI algebra. Once circulation numbers for these special collections can be trusted as representational, then they can be included in future BI allocation formulas.

The reference collection by its very nature does not lend itself to BI allocation based on circulation. It does not have true circulation statistics, and its average price per unit can vary wildly from year to year depending on what materials need to be updated. I reserve a separate budget for the reference collection, and do not include it in calculating BI.

Once the BI base table is constructed, the acquisition percentage for each discrete collection can be modified and adjusted based on the current collection development goals. Simply replace the circulation percentage table with the revised, desired value (and adjust the remaining circulation values to sum to 100) and recalculate the index  $x$  variable to find the number of items to acquire in each collection.

For instance, perhaps the easy picture book collection enjoys a very robust circulation, but for various reasons the children's bibliographer believes having a more diverse collection for the juvenile fiction chapter books would better serve the library's patrons. The raw circulation percentages for those two collections can be adjusted and BI recomputed.

Another possible modification scenario involves setting one BI collection percentage at an agreed level ad hoc, and adjusting the rest of the index percentages to accommodate it (summing to 100). If a library's bibliographic units are so granular that individual subjects are identified discretely, a bibliographer may hypothesize that the circulation for a unit is extremely low because much of the material is too old to be useful. (Date of publication reports from your catalog may demonstrate this.) In the next fiscal year, you may decide to devote 7 percent instead of 3 percent to this collection. The index will allow you to move your budget allocations in and out of discrete collections, yet still maintain the formal circulation-based tables for the remaining units.

Many libraries include in their mission statement language about preserving the historical record for future generations of learners. Such a mandate should influence the budgeting process. A book's long-term value is not necessarily reflected in its current usage.<sup>6</sup> Circulation per se may not justify the necessary allocation your library's history collection requires, so setting an acquisition goal in your collection development policy may be warranted. The index base can then be adjusted at the outset to reflect such a policy.

## Conclusion

The acquisitions percentages used to build the BI base were the circulation percentages from the previous year—a quantitative measure of collection performance. However, the entire BI base could be constructed with desired acquisitions percentages for a library’s individual collections regardless of circulation. The index is a tool to determine the correct allocation budgets—weighted by average price per collection—that can be used to allocate the correct amount of the total budget to meet any development strategy.

Here is an example with three individual collections that we want to equally acquire materials for, yet each has a different average price: reading, writing, and arithmetic (see tables 5 through 8). The total budget will be \$10,000.

The formula will be:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & [33.3(10)x] + [33.3(20)x] + [33.3(30)x] = \\
 & 10,000 \\
 & 333x + 666x + 999x = 10,000 \\
 & 1998x = 10,000 \\
 & x = 5
 \end{aligned}$$

This demonstrates the power of the index to assign the correct budget allocation to individual collections with disparate average prices, even when the desired acquisition levels are identical. Without computing the average price per bibliographic unit, it would have been impossible to accession equal numbers of items based on equally divided budget allocations. ■

## References

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3. G. E. Evans, *Developing Library and Information Center Collections* (Greenwood Village, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 2000).
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**Table 5.** Base Table: Collections, Desired Acquisition Percentage, and Price Per Unit

Collection	Acquisition %	Average price (\$)
Reading	33.3	10
Writing	33.3	20
Arithmetic	33.3	30

**Table 6.** Budget Index of Items to Acquire

Collection	Acquisition %	Formula	No. of items to acquire
Reading	33.3	33.3(5)	166
Writing	33.3	33.3(5)	166
Arithmetic	33.3	33.3(5)	166

**Table 7.** Budget Index of Budget Allocation

Collection	No. of items to acquire	Average price	Individual collection budget (\$)	% of total budget
Reading	166	\$10	1,660	16
Writing	166	\$20	3,320	33
Arithmetic	166	\$30	4,980	50

**Table 8.** Comparison of Pre- and Post-adjusted Budget Allocations

Collection	Acquisition %	Unweighted budget (\$)	% BI of budget	BI budget allocation (\$)
Reading	33.3	3,330	16	1,660
Writing	33.3	3,330	33	3,320
Arithmetic	33.3	3,330	50	4,980

*Library and Book Trade Almanac, 2004, 441–60* (New York: Information Today, 2004).

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# Spanish-speaking

## PATRONS IN KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### RESULTS OF AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON SERVICES, STAFFING, AND PROGRAMS

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**C**ensus statistics indicate that the Hispanic population, legal and illegal, is growing throughout the United States. In 2000, there were 281.4 million residents in the United States, and Hispanics accounted for 35.3 million (12.5 percent) of that number. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic population grew from 22.4 million to 35.3 million, a 57.9 percent increase. Table 1 shows a comparison of the Hispanic population according to the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census.<sup>1</sup>

In 1990, Kentucky had a Hispanic population of 21,984, or 0.6 percent of the state's population. In 2000, this population group increased to 59,939, or 1.5 percent of the state's population. This represents a 150 percent increase in the state's Hispanic population. Included were 31,385 Mexicans, 6,469 Puerto Ricans, 3,516 Cubans, and 18,569 classified as "Other Hispanic." The "Other Hispanics" category includes those from Central America, South America, Dominican Republic, and those not specified.<sup>2</sup> In 2004, the population once again showed an increase to 74,613, or 1.9 percent of Kentucky's total population.<sup>3</sup> While Kentucky had the thirty-ninth largest Latino population, between 1990 and 2000, it ranked eighth in the United States in the rate of growth.<sup>4</sup>

These figures do not take into consideration illegal immigrants in the United States, who numbered 7.0 million in January 2000, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Mexican immigrants accounted for 4.8 million of that number.<sup>5</sup> In March 2005, the number of illegal migrants was estimated at 11.1 million, according to the Current Population Survey.<sup>6</sup> Kentucky had 15,000 estimated unauthorized residents.<sup>7</sup> Seventy to 80 percent of the farm workers in Kentucky are Hispanic, with the majority living in the state illegally.<sup>8</sup>

This increase in the Hispanic population creates considerations and challenges for the public libraries in Kentucky that may now find Spanish-speaking patrons included in their service areas. Are these libraries and their staff members addressing this new challenge and if so, how? This article is a report of an exploratory study done to examine if, and how, the public libraries in Kentucky are dealing with the changing demographics among the patrons they serve.

## Review of Resources

A variety of information sources on the Spanish-speaking population in the United States is available. While many of these sources are not specifically about the Spanish-speaking population in Kentucky, they are applicable to understanding the migration of this group to Kentucky, the establishment and availability of services and programs to meet their needs, and the organizations and associations that support their cause.

## Historical Perspective

To understand the current situation of the Spanish-speaking population, it is beneficial to look at the history of their migration to the United States. *The Hispanics in the United States: A History* by Gann and Duignan provides an historical overview of the immigration of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans as well as those from the Dominican Republic, Central America, and South America to the United States.<sup>9</sup> The book also addresses other aspects of their new

lives in the United States, such as education, politics, culture, religion, and social problems. Even though it is copyrighted in 1986, this book still contains valuable information for anyone interested in understanding the history of Hispanics in the United States.

The book *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, edited by Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon, brings together the writings and experiences of authors from across the United States.<sup>10</sup> One chapter, "The Sociopolitical Dynamics of Mexican Immigration in Lexington, Kentucky, 1997 to 2002: An Ambivalent Community Responds," details the history and the effects of the influx of Mexicans to the Lexington, Kentucky, area. The chapter includes the results of several studies conducted between 1998 and 2001 that provide demographic information on the Mexicans living in Lexington.

Another book, *Library Service to Spanish Speaking Patrons: A Practical Guide* by Moller, provides information on Spanish-speaking populations from Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, and Puerto Rico.<sup>11</sup> Included is a history and cultural information for each group, library selection and processing procedures, and useful reference sources and contact information. These books provide valuable insight into the lives of the Spanish-speaking population in the United States. Additionally, Guereña and Erazo's article "Latinos and Librarianship" covers the history of library services to Latinos.<sup>12</sup> It includes major studies, reports, key figures, special projects, publishing, and organizations related to the history of libraries and Latinos.

## Collection Building and Programs

Magazine articles, journal articles, newspaper articles, and a dissertation provide perspectives and experiences relating to library services for Spanish-speaking populations. The articles "Collections and Services for the Spanish-Speaking: Accessibility" by Marquis and "Library Services for Hispanic Patrons" by Buck et al. offer advice on acquiring materials and providing services.<sup>13</sup> The articles "Community Building and Latino Families" by Villagran and "Meeting the Information Needs of a Community: A Case Study of Services to Spanish Speaking Patrons at the Pasco Branch of the Mid-Columbia Library District" by Herring include examples of libraries with programs geared toward the Spanish-speaking population.<sup>14</sup>

Howrey's "De Colores: The Universal Language of Bilingual Storytime" tells

**Table 1.** Hispanic Population of the United States (in Millions)

Country of Origin	1990 Census	2000 Census	% Increase
Mexico	13.5	20.6	52.9
Puerto Rico	2.7	3.4	24.9
Cuba	1.0	1.2	18.9
Other	5.1	10.0	96.9

of the increasing Hispanic population of Kenton County, Kentucky, and the cooperative efforts to provide library services to them.<sup>15</sup> The article "Who Speaks for Hispanics" by Lannen details the efforts of the Lexington Public Library to address not only the library needs of the Hispanic community, but to provide information on immigration and employment.<sup>16</sup> Kreimer's article, "Bienvenidos A Estados Unidos," describes the increase of the Hispanic population in Kentucky's Gallatin and Carroll counties and mentions the Spanish story hours offered.<sup>17</sup>

While there is published information on programs in many other parts of the United States and on how to provide programs and services for the Spanish-speaking population, there are few published articles on Spanish-speaking library services in Kentucky.

### Online Organizations, Associations, and Government

Several Web sites contain information about providing library services for the Spanish-speaking population. On its Web site, the American Library Association provides "Guidelines for Library Services to Hispanics," a Hispanic and Latino bibliography for students and a section on diversity.<sup>18</sup> The Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives site includes "Strategies for Improving Library Services to Spanish-Speaking Patrons," which contains a list of the Kentucky libraries that offer services to Spanish speakers.<sup>19</sup>

**WebJunction** ([www.webjunction.org](http://www.webjunction.org)) is a resource site for online courses, discussion, policies and practices, technology resources, and an abundance of other information for libraries that serve the Spanish-speaking community. **REFORMA** ([www.reforma.org](http://www.reforma.org)), the Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latino and the Spanish Speaking, provides a wealth of information for librarians. Included on its site are newsletters, a discussion list, Spanish for librarians, information on providing services for Spanish-speaking patrons, and public libraries in the United States that provide information on their Web sites in Spanish. The **Public Libraries Using Spanish (PLUS)** Web site ([www.sol-plus.net/plus/home.htm](http://www.sol-plus.net/plus/home.htm)) contains library forms, flyers, signs, and programming ideas for Spanish patrons.

The U.S. Census Bureau not only has demographic information on the Spanish-speaking population, but there also is a special report, "We the People: Hispanics in the United States," that provides useful data.<sup>20</sup> Another government Web site, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, provides estimates of unauthorized immigrants in Kentucky,

while the Pew Hispanic Center offers data from the 2005 population survey.<sup>21</sup> These professional organizations, government, and information Web sites can provide training, advice, and current resources for providing services to the Spanish-speaking patrons of Kentucky.

### Design and Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory study was to collect information from the public libraries in Kentucky regarding their services, programs, and experiences with the Spanish-speaking population in their service area. To collect this data, the Survey on Spanish-Speaking Patrons at Kentucky Public Libraries was developed and distributed. Surveys were mailed to all public libraries listed as a part of the Kentucky Library Directory on the **Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA)** Web site (<http://kdl.ky.gov>). The surveys were addressed to the contact person listed for each county library as well as any branch libraries. One hundred and ninety-five surveys were mailed on March 21, 2006. Postcards had been sent on March 6, 2006, so the contact person would be expecting the survey, and reminder cards were mailed on April 4, 2006, to those libraries not responding to the initial survey.

There were five sections to the two-page survey: demographics, staff, policies, collections, and programs and services. The first section of the survey collected information about the library returning the survey. It included name and title of the person completing the survey, the number of staff members, and the number of Spanish-speaking staff and their job classification. The second section determined the population size of the library and asked about any increase in the number of the Spanish-speaking patrons served. In the policies section were questions on whether the collection development policy addressed the needs of this group. Questions were included on forms of identification needed to check out materials and to use public access computers. The next section, collections, asked if the library's collection included databases, audios, books, magazines, journals, newspapers, videos, or DVDs in Spanish. The programs and services section asked about any current or planned programs, the expected need for programs in the next five to ten years, how programs have been publicized, and the response to any programs aimed at the Spanish population. Space was included for additional comments.

## Results

This exploratory study was conducted to collect data about the Spanish-speaking patrons served by Kentucky public libraries. The sample included the 195 public libraries listed on the KDLA Web page, of which sixty-six were branch libraries. After the initial mailing, sixty-eight surveys were received from the libraries. Three surveys from the initial mailing were undeliverable because of incorrect address information. When reminder postcards were mailed, an additional eighteen surveys were received. Three surveys were unusable and discarded. The valid response rate of useable surveys was 43.9 percent. Data from the remaining eighty-three surveys were analyzed using SPSSx.

Surveys were addressed to the person listed as the contact for each of the libraries on the KDLA homepage. Sixty-three (76 percent) of those filling out the form served as the director of the library or head librarian; thirteen (16 percent) as branch librarian, branch head, or branch manager; one (1 percent) as business manager; five (6 percent) as librarians; and one unknown (1 percent).

## Demographics

The 2000 Census reveals that there has been an increase in the Spanish-speaking population in the United States and in Kentucky. Table 2 represents a cross-tabulation of the population of the libraries responding to the survey and their population increase in the past five years.

According to the survey, 51 (62.2 percent) of the libraries said that the number of Spanish-speaking patrons has increased in the past five years in their libraries. Twenty-five (30.5 percent) said the number has not increased, and six (7.3 percent) were unsure. When asked to describe the increase, 34 (43.6 percent) said the increase was slight, 15 (19.2 percent) said moderate, 5 (6.4 percent) said heavy, and 24 (30.8 percent) said there had not been an increase. According to table 2, thirty-five of the fifty-one libraries experiencing an increase in the number of Spanish-speaking patrons were in areas with populations of 10,000–19,999 or 40,000 or more. These statistics indicate that the Spanish-speaking patron population has grown along with the increase in that group statewide, even though the following comments do not seem to support that:

- “We’ve only had two families visit our library. One has moved away.”
- “At this time we have very few Hispanics in our county—that we know of—and most of them are bilingual.”
- “In the past 11 years—my tenure here—I have encountered no more than 3–4 Spanish-speaking patrons.”
- “Although the Spanish-speaking population is growing in the area, we have not had any library or bookmobile patrons at this time.”
- “I have not met the first Hispanic family. I have lived here 14 years.”
- “Our Spanish population is small.”
- “We have very few Spanish-speaking patrons in this library.”
- “The changes within the tobacco program have changed the number of Spanish-speaking in area.”
- “Most of our Spanish-speaking people here are migrant farm workers who have little if any interest in the library. We have had 1 patron who reads the newspapers printed in Spanish.”
- “We do not have a Spanish population in our area.”
- “We currently do not have any Spanish-speaking patrons.”
- “We are the smallest populated county in KY and have very few Spanish people living in the area.”
- “Our Latino patrons seem to want to speak English.”
- “I think that (at least in our county) the school systems are totally ignoring the Spanish population. Therefore, I think the library will have to become a leader in this area to address the unique needs of this rapidly growing citizenry.”

While the Census 2000 data and the survey results indicate that there has been both an increase in the Spanish-speaking population and the number of Spanish-speaking patrons at Kentucky public libraries, the comments written on the survey indicate

**Table 2.** Has Spanish-speaking Population Increased in Past Five Years?

Population	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
0–9,999	7	5	3	15
10,000–19,999	17	8	0	25
20,000–29,999	5	7	1	13
30,000–39,999	4	3	1	8
40,000 or more	18	2	1	21
Total	51	25	6	82

that there are areas of the state that have not seen an increase. Despite the comments, there may still have been an increase in the Spanish-speaking population of those counties. Further study would be required to determine if this were true.

**Policies**

Libraries develop policies to guide their year-to-year operations. Have the libraries in Kentucky written collection development policies that address the resource needs of their Spanish-speaking patrons, and, if so, do the policies address the changes, if any, in demographics?

Collection development plans guide the purchases of a library and therefore, the composition of the library collection. Because the patron demographics for some of the libraries' service areas have changed to include Spanish-speaking patrons, some of the libraries have included culturally diverse statements in their collection development plans. The survey showed that 95.2 percent (N=79) of the libraries had a collection development policy, and only 4.8 percent (N=4) do not have a policy. Twenty-six (32.5 percent) said that their policy addressed the needs of their Spanish-speaking patrons, forty-nine (59.0 percent) stated that their collection development policy did not address the needs of this group, and five (6.3 percent) said they do not have a policy.

When asked why they did not have a collection development policy that addressed the needs of the Spanish-speaking population, seven (8.4 percent) said it was not needed, three (3.6 percent) said they would add one when the collection development policy is revised, and one (1.2 percent) said there was not time to develop. One library said that they were developing a policy that addresses the needs of the Spanish-speaking patrons. Table 3 shows a cross-tabulation of the number of libraries that have a collection development policy and the libraries experiencing an increase in the Spanish-speaking population in the past five years.

**Programs and Services**

Members of the Spanish-speaking population have different needs from the library's English-speaking patrons. Have Kentucky's public libraries developed programs and services to meet their needs?

Table 4 includes statistics on the availability of programs and services for the Spanish-speaking population at Kentucky public libraries and the number of libraries that plan to add programs or services for that patron group.

While only a quarter of the libraries currently offer programs or services for Spanish-speaking patrons, forty-two (51.2 percent) felt that in the next five years that there would be a need for additional services. Thirteen (15.9 percent) did not feel that there would be a need, and twenty-seven (32.5 percent) were unsure. Figures were similar when those surveyed were asked about the need for services in the next ten years. Forty-five (56.3 percent) felt that there would be a need for additional services, seven (8.8 percent) did not, and twenty-eight (35.0 percent) were unsure. If the growth in the Hispanic population continues to increase at the rate it has from 1990 to 2000, the probability is that the need for these services will increase.

According to comments made on the survey, libraries that do offer programs for the Spanish-speaking population provide a variety of programs and services. These include, but are not limited to, storytime, street Spanish, immigration laws, how to budget, how to select a credit card, Prime Time (children and parents program), Hispanic fair, crafts, computer classes, English As a Second Language, bilingual café, Spanish for industry, and life skills. Storytime or children's programs were the most frequently mentioned by those offering programs. Seventy-three (91.3 percent) do not offer content on their Web site in Spanish, but seven (8.8 percent) do.

On the open-ended questions about any programs offered, eleven (52 percent) said they have had low attendance at programs for Spanish-speak-

**Table 3.** Cross-tabulation 1

		Does collection development policy address the needs of Spanish-speaking patrons?			Total
		Yes	No	Do not have policy	
Has Spanish-speaking population increased in past five years?	Yes	20	28	1	49
	No	5	16	3	24
	Unsure	1	4	1	6
	Total	26	48	5	79

ing patrons. One library stated that they felt that the low response rate was due to a fear of immigration. Another said they had better results with outreach programs. Ten (48 percent) reported statements such as "Very enthusiastic and positive response," "Favorable—several more Hispanic families started to use the library on a regular basis," "Great response. Increased use of library," and "Great response to Hispanic Fair—approximately 60 families attended."

Newspapers, radio, and television were used to publicize programs for Spanish-speaking patrons as indicated in table 5.

Twenty-nine (43.9 percent) of those responding indicated they use some additional methods to publicize their programs for Spanish-speaking patrons. Those include flyers posted in businesses that serve the Spanish-speaking population, Web sites, local cable, library newsletters, in-house promotion, English As a Second Language programs, community organizations, Spanish language papers, Mass service, and migrant education programs.

While only twenty (24.1 percent) of the libraries provide programs, and only twenty-four (29.6 percent) provide services, forty-five (54.2 percent) expect that there will be a need for additional services in the next five years. These statistics indicate that consideration should be given in any future planning of programs and services to the needs of Kentucky's Spanish-speaking population.

## Staff

To provide services for the Spanish-speaking patrons, it may be necessary to consider how the library staff can effectively reach the members of this group. Do

Kentucky's public libraries have librarians and staff who can work effectively with Spanish-speaking populations?

Table 6 indicates the number of libraries that had Spanish-speaking staff. Sixty-two (74.7 percent) of the libraries did not have any staff members who could speak Spanish.

Forty-two (51.2 percent) believe that there will be a need for additional services for Spanish-speaking patrons in the next five years. Twenty-seven (32.5 percent) are unsure if there will be a need for additional services, and thirteen (15.9 percent) do not think there will be a need. If libraries are to provide these additional services, there will be an increasing need for staff who can speak Spanish.

Table 7 provides a cross-tabulation of libraries that stated that the Spanish-speaking population increased in the past five years and the number of Spanish-speaking staff at those libraries.

If the increase in the Spanish-speaking population continues, and if the data from the survey are correct, there will be a need in Kentucky's libraries for those who understand the cultural backgrounds, needs, and language of those who speak Spanish.

## Collections

As Spanish-speaking residents integrate into life in Kentucky, resources will need to be available in order for them to utilize the library facilities. Are Kentucky's public libraries currently providing resources for their Spanish-speaking patrons? Table 8 indicates to what extent materials are available.

As one of the survey comments indicated, most DVDs offer Spanish as a language selection. Also,

**Table 4.** Programs and Services for Spanish-speaking Patrons

	Programs for Spanish-speaking patrons						Services for Spanish-speaking patrons					
	Yes		No		Plan to Add		Yes		No		Plan to Add	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
20	24.1	63	75.9	16	20.8	24	29.6	57	70.4	14	16.9	

**Table 5.** Sources Used for Publicizing Programs

	Newspaper				Radio				Television			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
22	33.3	44	66.7	8	12.1	58	69.9	4	6.1	62	93.9	

Kentucky offers a variety of online databases, including the Kentucky Virtual Library, for residents of the state who have current library cards. It is possible to use an interface through EBSCOhost that allows patrons to search in Spanish. While the available articles are not in Spanish, it might make searching easier.

**Table 6.** Number of Spanish-speaking Staff

No. of libraries	No. of Spanish-speaking staff	%
62	0	75.6
10	1	12.2
3	2	3.7
3	3	3.7
2	4	2.4
1	10	1.2
1	15	1.2

**Table 7.** Cross-tabulation 2

No. of Spanish-speaking Staff	Has the Spanish-speaking population increased in the past five years?			
	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
0	32	23	6	61
1	8	2	0	10
2	3	0	0	3
3	3	0	0	3
4	2	0	0	2
10	1	0	0	1
15	1	0	0	1
Total	50	25	6	81

**Table 8.** Libraries Offering Resources in Spanish by Type

Resources in Spanish	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Audio material	27	32.5	56	67.5
Books	64	77.1	19	22.9
Magazines	19	22.9	64	77.1
Newspapers	8	9.6	75	90.4
Videos or DVDs	26	31.3	57	68.7
Databases	22	27.8	57	72.2

## Discussion and Conclusion

Because Census 2000 figures indicate that the Spanish-speaking population is increasing in Kentucky, this exploratory survey was conducted to gather data on Kentucky's public libraries and the Spanish-speaking population they serve. The data collected provides information on services and programs available at Kentucky public libraries, the success of past programs, plans for future programs, and how services for the Spanish-speaking population have been advertised. Through the cooperation of the library directors, branch heads, and others completing the survey, a substantial amount of information has been collected. It is hoped that the accumulation of this data will provide a valuable resource for librarians in the state, and that the report will spark an awareness of the state's increasing Spanish-speaking population and the library needs of that group.

There were some limitations to the survey. For instance, it did not request information on any cooperative agreements with organizations in the community that facilitate library services to the Spanish-speaking population. Also, while the survey asked if librarians thought there would be an increase in the need for services within the next five or ten years, the survey did not inquire if cultural diversity needs were addressed in a five- or ten-year plan for the library. However, overall, the survey did meet its purpose in obtaining data and opinions about library services to Spanish-speaking patrons. A more in-depth study could be used to compare current census information, county by county, to survey results. Another possibility is a repeat of the survey in five years, which would provide interesting comparison data.

It is hoped that this survey will provide useful information to librarians and allow them to make more informed decisions about services for Spanish-speaking patrons. There are many librarians who are reaching out and embracing the state's change in the demographics by providing programs, services, and resources for the Spanish-speaking population. Others may discover a need for such services at a later date. ■



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# YOUTH, PUBLIC LIBRARIES, AND THE

# Internet

## PART TWO

### INTERNET ACCESS AND YOUTH'S USE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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June is reading *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. Melanie just finished Anne Tyler's *Digging to America* and just started *Maisie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear. Kay is reading *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett. George is reading *Einstein: His Life and Universe* by Walter Isaacson.

**T**his article is the second in a series of four that report the findings of a survey conducted in 2003 by a team of researchers from the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, designed to investigate the impact that youth's use of the Internet has had on their use of the public library. This article will provide the findings of the analysis of youth's opinions of service characteristics of both the Internet and the public library in an effort to better understand the reasons why youth use or do not use the public library as well as any connection that their preference for using the Internet may have on their use of the public library.<sup>1</sup>

### Survey Design

Researchers at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, received a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to conduct a survey of youth in grades five through twelve in both public and private schools in the Buffalo-Niagara region of western New York state.<sup>2</sup> A total of 4,237 completed questionnaires were obtained. In order to improve the representativeness of the sample, data were weighted to conform to current national estimates of the percentages of students enrolled in public and in private schools, broken down by Hispanic ethnicity and race.<sup>3</sup>

## Youth's Opinions of Service Characteristics of the Internet and Public Library

In order for the researchers to explore youth's opinions regarding their use of the Internet and the public library, and to determine if their Internet use may have had any effect on their use of the public library, youth were provided with thirteen statements describing the service characteristics of the Internet and thirteen comparable statements describing the service characteristics of the public library:

- A. It is easy for me to connect to the Internet.
- B. It is easy for me to get to the library.
- C. The Internet is always available when I need it.
- D. The library is always open when I need it.
- E. The Internet is easy to use.
- F. The library is easy to use.
- G. The information online is enough to meet my needs.
- H. The information at the library is enough to meet my needs.
- I. When I use the Internet, I expect to find what I am looking for.
- J. When I use the library, I expect to find what I am looking for.
- K. I like that I can get a digital copy or download what I need when online.
- L. I like that I can get a book I need from the library.
- M. I trust the information I find online to be accurate.
- N. I trust the information I find at the library to be accurate.
- O. I trust the information I find online to be up to date.
- P. I trust the information I find at the library to be up to date.
- Q. The Internet is fun to use.
- R. The library is fun to use.
- S. I can find what I am looking for online by myself.
- T. I can find what I am looking for at the library by myself.
- U. The help pages online are helpful.
- V. The librarians at the library are helpful.
- W. I enjoy surfing the Internet.
- X. I enjoy browsing the library's collection.
- Y. I feel that my privacy is protected when I use the Internet.
- Z. I feel that my privacy is protected when I use the library.

The youth were asked to read each statement then indicate their degree of disagreement or agree-

ment with each statement using a four-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree). As the wording of all of these statements is positive, the youth's responses to these statements are a measure of their positive opinions about the Internet and the public library. The youth's opinions about the service characteristics of the Internet and the public library are provided in table 1. The data are reported both as mean scale scores and as the percentages of youth who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" for each characteristic.

## Youth's Opinions about the Service Characteristics of the Internet

Data indicated that a majority of youth had positive opinions about all of the service characteristics of the Internet. The service characteristics about which the youth expressed the most positive opinions (in terms of the mean scale scores) were those related to:

- fun (Q);
- ease of use (E);
- enjoyment (W),;
- ease of accessibility (A);
- the ability to find what they are looking for (S); and
- the expectation of finding what they are looking for (I).

The service characteristics of the Internet about which the youth expressed the lowest positive opinions (although still positive) were those related to privacy (Y), help pages (U), and accuracy of information (M). Given that all of the mean scale scores for the youth's opinions about the service characteristics of the Internet were higher than 2.5 (the mid-point of the four-point scale) and that all of the percents were higher than 50 percent, the data indicated that the youth generally had positive opinions about all of the service characteristics of the Internet. The reader also is reminded that those service characteristics of the Internet that were rated lowest by the youth were, in fact, still rated positively by large majorities of youth.

## Youth's Opinions about the Service Characteristics of the Public Library

Data (as reported in table 1) indicated that a majority of youth had positive opinions about all of the service characteristics of the public library, with the



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exception of their opinion about the library's being open when needed (D). The service characteristics about which the youth expressed the most positive opinions (in terms of the mean scale scores) were those related to:

- accuracy of the information (N);
- being able to get a book (rather than a digital document) (L);
- helpfulness of librarians (V);
- expectation of finding what they want (J);
- ease of use (F);
- protection of their privacy (Z); and
- ease of accessibility (B).

The service characteristics of the public library about which the youth expressed the lowest positive opinions were those related to:

- the library's being open when needed (D);
- enjoyment of browsing (X);
- fun (R);
- the adequacy of the information to meet their needs (H);
- being able to find things themselves (T); and
- the up-to-datedness of the information (P).

The reader is again reminded that only one of the service characteristics of the public library was *not* rated positively by a majority of the youth. All of the other service characteristics of the public library that were rated lowest by the youth were, in fact, still rated positively by majorities of youth.

### Comparison between Youth's Opinions of Internet and Public Library Service Characteristics

To further understand youth's opinions of the service characteristics of the Internet and the public library, comparisons between the set of thirteen characteristics for each were conducted using t-Tests for related samples.<sup>4</sup>

The results of these tests revealed statistically significant differences between the pairs of mean scores for all thirteen characteristics (as reported in table 1). For ten of these characteristics, the opinions about the Internet were higher than the corresponding opinions about the public library. The Internet was rated higher than the public library for:

- ease of getting there (A/B);
- availability (C/D);

- ease of use (E/F);
- adequacy of information available (G/H);
- expectation of finding what is needed (I/J);
- getting a digital document (versus a paper copy) (K/L);
- up-to-dateness of the information (O/P);
- fun (Q/R);
- being able to find information without assistance (S/T); and
- enjoyment of surfing/browsing (W/X).

The public library was rated higher than the Internet for:

- accuracy of information (M/N);
- helpfulness of librarians (versus help pages) (U/V); and
- protection of privacy (Y/Z).

In general, youth reported more positive opinions about the Internet than about the public library; how-

ever, those characteristics of the public library that rated higher than the Internet speak to the youth's opinions that the public library is better for providing access to accurate information and assistance from information professionals as well as an environment where they feel their privacy is protected.

### Are Youth's Opinions of the Internet Related to Their Frequency of Public Library Use?

While the prior analysis indicates more positive opinions about the service characteristics of the Internet than the public library, the question of interest is whether these more positive opinions about the Internet are related to youth's use of the public library. In effect, do youth with more positive opinions about the Internet use the public library less? In order to explore this question, youth's frequency of visiting the public library was correlated with their opinions about the thirteen service characteristics of the Internet.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1:** Comparison of Youth's Opinions of the Service Characteristics of the Internet and Public Library

	Mean	%
A. It is easy for me to connect to the Internet.	3.25	85.8
B. It is easy for me to get to the library.	2.85	69.7
C. The Internet is always available when I need it.	3.01	71.7
D. The library is always open when I need it.	2.42	43.1
E. The Internet is easy to use.	3.29	86.5
F. The library is easy to use.	2.90	72.4
G. The information online is enough to meet my needs.	2.97	73.9
H. The information at the library is enough to meet my needs.	2.73	64.0
I. When I use the Internet, I expect to find what I am looking for.	3.13	82.8
J. When I use the library, I expect to find what I am looking for.	2.95	71.9
K. I like that I can get a digital copy or download what I need when online.	3.06	79.2
L. I like that I can get a book I need from the library.	2.99	79.0
M. I trust the information I find online to be accurate.	2.91	73.5
N. I trust the information I find at the library to be accurate.	3.09	82.1
O. I trust the information I find online to be up to date.	2.97	76.0
P. I trust the information I find at the library to be up to date.	2.76	63.7
Q. The Internet is fun to use.	3.34	86.8
R. The library is fun to use.	2.51	52.3
S. I can find what I am looking for online by myself.	3.24	83.2
T. I can find what I am looking for at the library by myself.	2.75	61.8
U. The help pages online are helpful.	2.82	67.9
V. The librarians at the library are helpful.	2.97	76.0
W. I enjoy surfing the Internet.	3.26	82.4
X. I enjoy browsing the library's collection.	2.51	51.6
Y. I feel that my privacy is protected when I use the Internet.	2.73	62.4
Z. I feel that my privacy is protected when I use the library.	2.88	71.8

The results of this analysis indicated that none of the correlations between frequency of library visits by youth and the youth's opinions about the service characteristics of the Internet was statistically significant. Youth's more positive opinions about the Internet did not have any effect on their use of the public library.

### Are Youth's Opinions of the Public Library Related to Their Frequency of Public Library Use?

The next question of interest is whether youth's opinions about the library were related to their frequency of visiting the public library. In order to explore this question, youth's frequency of visiting the public library was correlated with the youth's opinions about each of the thirteen service characteristics of the library. The sample for these analyses included both users and nonusers of the public library who had Internet access at home and used it.

The results of this analysis indicated that only two of the correlations between youth's frequency of library use and their opinions about the service characteristics of the library were statistically significant. These service characteristics include:

- I enjoy browsing (X) ( $r = .26$ ); and
- The library is fun to use (R) ( $r = .29$ ).

Although these correlations are rather weak, these results indicate that the more that youth enjoy browsing and the more they think that the library is fun to use, the more frequently they use the public library.

### Discussion

As reported above, youth have positive opinions about the service characteristics of both the Internet and the public library. However, while the Internet was rated higher for convenience characteristics (such as availability and ease of access of Internet over public library); self-service characteristics (such as ease of use, expectation of finding what was needed, being able to find information without assistance); sufficiency characteristics (such as adequacy of information available, up-to-datedness of information available online); and entertainment characteristics (such as fun, enjoyment of surfing or browsing the Internet), the public library was rated higher for accuracy of information youth found in public libraries, helpfulness of librarians, and protection of privacy.

It is important to note, however, that while the majority of youth have positive opinions of the service


characteristics of the Internet, the findings indicated that there is *no* correlation between youth's positive opinions of the Internet and their use of the public library. The analyses did show a correlation between youth's opinions about two of the service characteristics of the public library—browsing for library materials and the library as fun to use—and their *frequency* of visiting the public library.

The fact that youth generally had higher opinions of the Internet service characteristics than of public library service characteristics suggests that there is probably room for improvement in the public library's services to youth. The Internet is no doubt more available than public libraries. With decreasing budgets, public libraries may be reducing hours of operation, and service and youth will continue to view access and availability as a reason to use the Internet instead of the public library. Libraries need to demonstrate their value and the unique services they offer that are not provided on the Internet. One way that libraries have been addressing this access challenge is by developing youth-centered spaces within their Web sites as a way to encourage the wired generation to visit the library, albeit virtually. Once youth visit these Web sites, libraries have the opportunity to show them what the public library has to offer.<sup>6</sup> Youth also prefer to help themselves and to find information without assistance. They feel a sense of pride and self-efficacy when they find information on their own or successfully use a system.<sup>7</sup> Libraries often have been criticized for not being easy to use or having confusing systems of organization and classification.<sup>8</sup> However, as we continue to learn more about how youth use the Internet and online systems, libraries can provide more user-centered systems (OPACs and organization schemes) that youth will be able to use with less assistance. Quality or currency of materials will continue to be an issue, as libraries make purchase decisions specific to the needs of their user communities; public libraries simply cannot develop collections that are as extensive or current as the materials that youth might be able to find online. Youth also may prefer the interactive nature of the Internet to browsing shelves in the public library. The Internet allows youth to explore current topics of interest to them by clicking and browsing, often without requiring them to know how to spell correctly or learn confusing classification or organization systems. Youth also have grown up with computers and the Internet and have learned that they like browsing and searching online. It is fun and can be done with very little assistance. However, have our youth learned that public libraries can be fun places, or that libraries and librarians can teach

them to become better online searchers? How can we show youth that libraries can be fun, useful places that can help them find accurate, quality information? Public libraries need to consider the convenience, self-service, sufficiency, and entertainment service characteristics of the Internet that were rated higher than those in public libraries, and determine ways to address each of these service characteristics to make the public library a place youth will continue to visit. Furthermore, public libraries should continue to capitalize on services already being provided that youth prefer: accuracy of information, helpful librarians, and assurance of personal privacy.

## Conclusions

The results of these analyses lead us to conclude that only one of the service characteristics of the public library was *not* rated positively by a majority of the youth (the library's being open when needed [D]). All of the other service characteristics of the public library were rated positively by the majority of youth. When the service characteristics of the Internet and the public library were compared, the Internet rated higher than the public library in all areas except for accuracy of information (M/N), helpfulness of librarians (versus help pages) (U/V), and protection of privacy (Y/Z).

However, youth's positive opinions about the Internet were not related (inversely or otherwise) to the frequency with which youth visited the public library. Only two of youth's positive opinions of the public library service characteristics (the enjoyment of browsing [X] or that the library is fun to use [R]) were weakly related to frequency of public library use. These results indicated that while youth have, in general, higher (or better) opinions about the service characteristics of the Internet than those of the public library, these more positive opinions about the Internet appear to have no impact on youth's frequency of public library visits. This suggests that youth are using the public library regardless of their higher opinions about the Internet. 

## References and Notes

1. Additional discussion of the other aspects of this research project can be

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2. This project was supported by a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services under the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program, Research, and Demonstration. The contents of this article do not carry the endorsement of the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors.
3. A complete explanation of the survey method is provided in the first article in the series: Abbas et al., "Youth, Public Libraries and the Internet, Part 1."
4. The t-Test for two related samples (or paired differences) is a procedure that tests for differences between the mean scores of two variables that have been generated by the same group of subjects. A statistically significant difference is defined as one whose probability of occurrence by chance is so low (five chances

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- out of a hundred, or fewer) that we choose to conclude that the difference did not occur by chance but because the two mean scores are different.
5. The data were submitted to correlation analysis. Correlation analysis is a procedure that tests whether two variables are related. The correlation analysis produces a correlation coefficient that is an index of the strength of the relationship between the two variables. The coefficient can take a value from -1.00 (indicating a perfect negative relationship) to 0.00 (indicating the absence of any relationship) to +1.00 (indicating a perfect positive relationship). Typically, correlation coefficients appear either as a negative decimal value (indicating that as one variable increases in value, the other variable decreases in value) or as a positive decimal value (indicating that as one variable increases in value, the other variable also increases in value). The higher the decimal value, the stronger the relationship. A statistically significant relationship is defined as one whose probability of occurrence by chance is so low (five chances out of a hundred, or fewer) that we choose to conclude that it did not occur by chance but because the two variables are related. However, because correlation coefficients are affected by sample size (the larger the sample, the easier it is to obtain a significant correlation coefficient), statistically significant correlation coefficients also are evaluated in terms of the strength or magnitude of the relationship. A nontrivial relationship is defined as a statistically significant relationship of sufficient strength that it warrants attention. A trivial relationship is defined as a statistically significant relationship of such low magnitude that it does not warrant attention. In general, correlation coefficients equal to or greater than  $\nabla .20$  are considered to be nontrivial; correlation coefficients less than  $\nabla .20$  are considered to be trivial.
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# PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THE Internet 2006

## ISSUES, FUNDING, AND CHALLENGES

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**T**his paper presents national data and findings from the 2006 Public Libraries and the Internet survey, which provides current information describing public library activities in the networked environment.<sup>1</sup> Bertot and McClure have conducted these studies biennially since 1994.<sup>2</sup> Since the original 1994 study, there has been a steady improvement in the percentage of public libraries providing public access computers, the number of workstations per library, the amount of bandwidth, and the types and number of services and resources offered to library users.

The information from these studies is important not only to the public library community, but also to policymakers at local, state, and federal levels; manufacturers of information and communication technologies; library funding agencies; and the communities served by public libraries. Since 1994, Internet connectivity has risen from 20.9 percent to essentially 100 percent; the number of public access computers per library has increased from an average of two to nearly eleven; and bandwidth has risen to the point that 63 percent of public libraries had connection speeds of greater than 769kbps in 2006.

The 2006 Public Libraries and the Internet study employed a Web-based survey approach. Of the 16,457 United States public libraries, the study team drew a sample of 6,979 to represent public libraries based on three library demographics: 1) metropolitan status (roughly equating to the designation of urban, suburban, or rural libraries); 2) poverty level of their service population (as derived through census data); and 3) the state in which they are located.<sup>3</sup> The survey received a total of 4,818 responses, for a response rate of 69 percent. The 2006 study included case studies, site visits, and qualitative questions, but this paper focuses on the survey data. Unless otherwise noted, data come from the 2006 Public Libraries and the Internet study and its immediate predecessor, the 2004 Public Libraries and the Internet study.<sup>4</sup> A more detailed description of the survey methodology for the 2006 study can be found on the **Information Institute Web site** ([www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet](http://www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet)).

The findings from the 2006 survey demonstrate that public libraries generally continue to expand public access computing and Internet services to patrons. Virtually all public libraries are connected to and offer public Internet access. Connection speeds in libraries also continue to increase significantly. While some public libraries now encounter physical or financial limitations on how much access they can provide, patron demand for access remains enormous. Adding new workstations or replacing older workstations is a high priority at many libraries. Many libraries now use wireless access to overcome space limitations within the library building.

## Public Access for Individuals and Communities

One of the most significant, though not surprising, findings from the survey is that public libraries continue to provide important public access computing and Internet access in their communities. In 2006, a total of 98.9 percent of public libraries were connected to the Internet. In 2002, the connectivity rate was

98.7 percent, while the connectivity rate in 2004 was 99.6 percent, indicating a great deal of consistency in the level of Internet connectivity in public libraries.

As table 1 shows, 98.4 percent of connected public libraries offer public Internet access. In urban areas, where connectivity and access in public libraries are important because many patrons lack any other means of access to the Internet, Internet access is higher than the national average. Among libraries in high-poverty areas—those with greater than 40 percent poverty—100 percent are connected to the Internet and offer public Internet access.

The number of workstations offering public Internet access in libraries has increased slightly since 2004. In 2006, the overall average number of public access Internet workstations in each public library was 10.7. On average, one-quarter of public libraries had three or fewer workstations, two-quarters had six or fewer workstations, and three-quarters had twelve or fewer workstations. Libraries are increasing the number of hours they are open, resulting in increased availability of Internet access. The average number of hours open per public library is 44.8, which has increased slightly since 2004.

## Quality of Access and Number of Workstations

The quality of Internet access available to patrons continues to increase in important ways. The available connection speed is continuing to increase. Most public libraries now have either 769kbps–1.5mbps (34.4 percent) or greater than 1.5mbps (28.9 percent). In both of these levels of connection speed, there has been a significant increase from 2004, with 63.3 percent of public libraries having speeds of greater than 769kbps in 2006, compared to 47.4 percent in 2004; 28.9 percent had speeds of greater than 1.5mbps in 2006, compared to 20.3 percent in 2004. In the majority of libraries (53.5 percent), the connection speed is adequate to meet patron needs at all times, while connection speed is sufficient to

**Table 1:** Connected Public Libraries that Provide Public Access to the Internet by Metropolitan Status and Poverty

Metropolitan status	Poverty level			Overall (%)
	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)	
Urban	97.6	97.4	100.0	97.7
Suburban	99.0	100.0	100.0	99.0
Rural	98.5	96.8	100.0	98.3
Overall	98.6	97.5	100.0	98.4

meet patron needs some of the time in a further 29.4 percent of libraries. In 16.1 percent of libraries, connection speed is inadequate to meet patron needs at all times.

In the next two years, 16.6 percent of public libraries plan to add more workstations, while a further 28.6 percent of libraries are considering doing so. Also, a majority of libraries plan to upgrade workstations available for patron use. In the next two years, 72.8 percent of libraries plan to replace some workstations. Of these libraries, 35.3 percent have plans to replace a definite number of workstations, with an average planned replacement of 7.2 workstations per library.

Table 2 shows that libraries also are using wireless connectivity to increase the number of library computers that can take advantage of Internet connectivity. The number of public libraries offering wireless access has roughly doubled from 17.9 percent to 36.7 percent in the two years from 2004 to 2006. Furthermore, 23.1 percent of libraries without wireless connectivity planned to add it in the next year. If libraries follow through with their plans to add wireless access, about 60.0 percent of United States public libraries will have it by the end of 2007.

## Community Services and Impacts

Public libraries do not just provide Internet access; they also provide related services and training for patrons. Table 3 lists the most frequently offered public access Internet services by public libraries in 2006. The services include an array of educational and reference services in text, audio, and video formats.

Many public libraries also offer training to assist patrons in learning to improve their online skills. Table 4 shows the types of information technology

training most frequently offered by public libraries for patrons. These areas of emphasis in training show that many libraries have taken on the responsibility in their communities of not only ensuring that Internet access is available, but that training for all those who need such assistance is available.

In 2004, 31 percent of libraries reported that they were unable to provide information technology training to patrons. In 2006, that number had dropped to 21 percent, suggesting that the amount of training in information technology had increased significantly during this time period. In this two-year time period, libraries appear to have allocated more resources to support patron training in the use of information technology.

The greater availability of Internet access and training in public libraries is having great affect on the communities they serve, as shown in table 5. Public libraries now offer education resources for K–12 students (63.6 percent), services for job seekers (46.1 percent), computer and Internet training skills (38.0 percent), and access to and assistance with local, state, and federal government electronic services (21.4 percent). While public libraries maximize the use of Internet access as an educational resource, they also offer new ways to benefit community members, such as using Internet access to help patrons seeking employment.

## Funding Trends

Public libraries' total operating budget increased for 45.1 percent of libraries since 2005, stayed the same for 36.6 percent of libraries, and decreased for 6.8 percent. In contrast, the Internet-related technology budget increased for only 18.6 percent of public libraries last year, stayed the same for 64.2 percent,

**Table 2:** Public Access Wireless Internet Connectivity Availability in Public Libraries by Metropolitan Status and Poverty

Provision of public access wireless Internet services	Metropolitan status			Poverty level			Overall (%)
	Urban (%)	Suburban (%)	Rural (%)	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)	
Currently available	42.9	42.5	30.7	38.0	28.1	53.8	36.7
Not currently available and no plans to make it available within the next year	23.1	29.7	49.2	37.4	44.4	21.0	38.3
Not currently available, but there are plans to make it available within the next year	30.6	26.0	18.6	22.5	26.2	25.3	23.1

and decreased for 5.0 percent. When an operating budget stays the same from year to the next, it has the effect of a decrease in budget, as it is not compensating for inflation.

Table 6, which compares overall budgets and Internet-related technology budgets, reveals a curious juxtaposition. Overall, budgets in 45.1 percent of libraries increased, but only 18.6 percent of libraries had an increase in Internet-related technology budgets. Given the importance of the Internet in bringing people into the library and meeting patron information needs, it seems strange that so few public libraries would have increases in Internet-related technology budgets, and that several times as many libraries would have had increases in their overall budgets.

Generally, 85 to 90 percent of public library support comes from the local community; federal and state aid provide another 5 to 7 percent, and other sources of support account for 2 to 3 percent of public library funding.<sup>5</sup> Given this situation, E-rate discounts are still an important source of technology funding for some public libraries across the country, with more than \$250,000,000 in E-rate discounts distributed to libraries between 2000 and 2003.<sup>6</sup> As demonstrated in table 7, in 2006, 22.4 percent of public library systems were receiving discounts for Internet connectivity, 39.6 percent for telecommunications services, and 4.4 percent for internal connection costs.

Many libraries, however, no longer apply for E-rate funding for diverse reasons. For the majority of libraries not receiving E-rate discounts, the most common reasons are the application process is too complicated (35.3 percent) and the discount is too low to invest the time in the application process (31.7 percent). However, some libraries also are concerned about complying with the Children's Internet Protection Act's filtering requirements (15.3 percent), while other libraries have not applied because previous applications were rejected (3.3 percent).

## Key Issues

Data from the 2006 Public Libraries and the Internet study not only demonstrate

successes in providing Internet access and services, but also ongoing and future issues that public libraries face to meet patron needs related to the Internet. Some of these key issues are:

- 45.5 percent of public libraries indicate that their connection speeds are inadequate to meet user demands some or all of the time;
- roughly 45.0 percent of public libraries reported a decrease (6.8 percent) or flat funding (36.6 percent) in their overall budget as compared to the previous fiscal year (given inflation and increased personnel and benefits costs, flat funding equates to a funding cut; thus, nearly half of public libraries essentially experienced reductions in funding);

**Table 3:** Public Access Internet Services in Public Libraries Nationally

Public access Internet services	% of libraries nationally
Licensed databases	82.8
Homework content	60.9
Digital reference or virtual reference	55.1
E-books	37.9
Online instructional courses or tutorials	35.6
Audio content	32.8
Digitized special collections	23.3
Video content	22.4
Video conferencing	7.7

Note: Will not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

**Table 4:** Information Technology Training Availability for Patrons in Public Libraries Nationally

Training availability	% of libraries nationally
Provide information literacy skills	51.6
Provide general technology skills	42.7
Help students with their school assignment and schoolwork	41.9
Offer technology training opportunities to those who would otherwise not have any	41.2
Help users access and use electronic government services and resources	25.0
The library does not offer patron information technology training services	21.4
Help business owners understand and use technology or information resources	2.5
Facilitate local economic development	1.6

Note: Will not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

- only 20.7 percent of public libraries indicate that the number of workstations they currently have is adequate to meet patron demand;
- 45.4 percent of public libraries have no plans to add workstations in the next two years;
- space (79.9 percent), cost factors (72.6 percent), and maintenance (38.8 percent) most commonly influence decisions to add or upgrade public access Internet workstations;
- rural public libraries tend to have fewer public access workstations, lower bandwidth, and are less likely to offer wireless access; and

**Table 5:** Community Impact of Public Access Internet Services in Public Libraries Nationally

Public access Internet services	% of libraries nationally
Provide education resources and databases for K–12 students	63.6
Provide services for job seekers	46.1
Provide computer and Internet skills training	38.0
Provide access to and assistance with local, state, or federal government electronic services	21.4
Provide community information	20.9
Provide education resources and databases for adult and continuing education students	19.6
Provide education resources and databases for students in higher education	17.5
Provide education resources and databases for home schooling	12.7
Provide access to federal government documents	6.5
Provide information for college applicants	5.5
Provide access to local public and local government documents	5.0
Provide investment information or databases	3.7
Provide information for local economic development	3.2
Provide information about state and local business opportunities	2.8
Provide real estate–related information	1.2
Provide information for local business marketing	1.0

Note: Will not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

**Table 6:** Total Operating Budget Status in Public Libraries Nationally

	Total operating budget status (%)	Total Internet-related budget status (%)
Increased since last fiscal year	45.1	18.6
Decreased since last fiscal year	6.8	5.0
Stayed the same as last fiscal year	36.6	64.2
Average % increased	17.0	41.8
Average % decreased	9.8	20.7

**Table 7:** Percentage of Public Libraries Receiving E-rate Discount by Category and by Metropolitan Status and Poverty

E-rate Discount Categories	Metropolitan status			Poverty level			Overall (%)
	Urban (%)	Suburban (%)	Rural (%)	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)	
Internet connectivity	32.0	16.9	24.1	20.4	38.6	46.7	22.4
Telecommunications services	53.1	33.7	41.0	37.2	58.8	69.8	39.6
Internal connections cost	10.4	3.3	4.3	3.4	12.6	19.0	4.4

- there is a need to continually upgrade technology and provide sufficient bandwidth to meet increasingly demanding applications, digital content, and services.

Beyond the challenges faced by public libraries at the national level, libraries in some states face more extensive issues, lagging behind in terms of number of Internet-access workstations, connectivity speeds, and other important factors.<sup>7</sup>

## Challenges in Providing Internet Access

New technological developments and changing local situational factors related to the networked environment affect public library services, roles, and demands on librarians while increasing the complexity of the networked environment. This increased complexity is replete with service, technical, planning, measurement, and evaluation challenges, such as:

- **Determining actual library bandwidth.** Increasingly, libraries have multiple lines and services in operation within the library (for example, for the integrated library system, public Internet access, and wireless access). Moreover, bandwidth within a library facility (wired versus wireless) may vary, and bandwidth between locations may vary. Determining the level of bandwidth in a library or library system is a substantial challenge.
- **Determining adequacy of bandwidth.** Given the bandwidth picture, bottlenecks in throughput may exist in any number of places. The degree to which libraries can accurately assess adequacy and quality of bandwidth is unclear. Thus, determining adequate and quality bandwidth is a key consideration in the provision of future networked services.<sup>8</sup>
- **Access to services.** Libraries may wish to upgrade their connectivity speeds (or other technology infrastructure components), but simply do not have access to appropriate telecommunications services. For example, a library may only be able to subscribe to DSL services. Or perhaps the only provider in the area charges substantial rates for broadband capacity.
- **Nature of networked services.** The type, scope, and extent of networked services that libraries now provide and are likely to provide in the future are increasingly complex. Identifying

these services, understanding affects from the services on library management and users, and determining the affects on the library's information technology infrastructure will only become more complex.

- **The local context.** Study results consistently demonstrate that there are a number of local situational factors that impact a public library's public access computing and Internet access suite of services and resources. Managing these local factors will be a key challenge in the future.

All of these challenges will be significant concerns for public libraries as they try to meet tomorrow's needs.

## Public Policy and Public Libraries

Federal and state governments provide limited public policy guidance to describe the roles and responsibilities of public libraries. Further, they provide minimal direct support to assist public libraries to perform their tasks and roles. Despite the lack of direct support, however, federal and state governments increasingly view public libraries as important public Internet access providers. In the past two years, federal, state, and local governments relied on the Internet access provided by public libraries to support; for example, applying to the Medicare Part D drug coverage for seniors, providing vital access in the aftermath of a disaster like a hurricane, and being the access point to e-government for all the citizens who have no other means of Internet access.<sup>9</sup>

Given governments' increased set of expectations from public libraries in terms of public access computing, provision of networked services, and support of e-government responsibilities, there is a need to reevaluate a number of public policy issues related to public libraries. Such issues include:

- What are the responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments in supporting public libraries and the various services the libraries provide?
- What roles and responsibilities should public libraries provide to help residents succeed in today's and tomorrow's society?
- To what degree are librarians adequately prepared to offer these roles and activities successfully?
- To what degree is library building and technology infrastructure able to handle the increasing load of public access computer and Internet services and resources?

- Are adequate resources being made available to public libraries to accomplish these roles and activities?
- How successful are public libraries in meeting public access computing, networked services, and e-government roles and responsibilities?

Other public policy questions exist as well, but these specific questions can foster national, state, and local discussions intended to reevaluate public libraries' roles. This reevaluation could be done in terms of public access computing, networked services, and e-government as well as in terms of how public libraries should be resourced to perform these activities successfully. Increasingly, public libraries must address a range of unfunded federal and state mandates.

## Preparing for the Future

To a large degree, public access computing in the nation's public libraries now is taken for granted as an expected and reliable service. In many places, the public library's identity has become as closely linked to Internet access as it is to print material access. Findings from the 2006 national survey document the importance of public access computing and Internet access provided by public libraries. Public libraries often are the first choice for many people to access the Internet and engage in such networked services as applying for a job, applying for and engaging in government services, obtaining health information, and much more. But the need to continually enhance and upgrade information technology, telecommunications, and networked services continues to put considerable strain on already-stressed library budgets.

In addition, future demands on public libraries for new and evolving network-based services are escalating. Site visits conducted by Institute staff in fall 2006 revealed some libraries are already deploying public access blogs and wikis, RSS feeds, podcasting, interactive video, virtual field trips, e-newsletters, YouTube video announcements, multiworkstation instructional labs, gaming, and Web 2.0 applications. The bandwidth needs for these services, along with the skills to manage them and the cost to operate them, will be significant.

Given the widespread connectivity now provided from most public libraries, there are increased demands for more and better networked services. These demands come from governments that expect public libraries to support a range of e-government services, from residents who want to use free wireless

connectivity from the public library and from patrons that need to download music or view streaming videos, to name but a few. Simply providing more or better connectivity will not, in and of itself, address all of these diverse service needs.

Future key issues for public libraries in the provision of Internet access are likely to revolve around:

- increasing the quality and sufficiency of connectivity;
- developing new strategies to manage expanded and enhanced public access computing services;
- managing the regular and ongoing upgrades of the public library's information technology infrastructure;
- marketing networked programs and implementing local advocacy strategies that better demonstrate the role of public libraries in providing public access computing;
- grappling with new expectations of public libraries users, such as provider of e-government access and community lifeline in times of disasters;
- obtaining technically savvy and service-oriented librarians who excel in both the traditional and networked environment; and
- assessing, understanding, and incorporating new networked and interactive technologies into ongoing library services.

These issues are all framed by the rapid technological changes of the Internet and related technologies. The networked environment makes significant demands on bandwidth, including public Internet access, staff access, wireless access, and integrated library system access. Simultaneously, the services and content available online require increasingly large amounts of bandwidth. Finally, the addition of wireless connectivity may increase usage of the library, but it also places further burdens on the quality of the connection itself. Increased growth in wireless connectivity (and use) signals the need for significant improvements in the library's overall information technology infrastructure.

The Public Library and the Internet national surveys, of which the 2006 data are reported here, will continue for at least the next three years. The Information Institute expects that findings from these future surveys will continue to inform our knowledge and understanding of how the use of information technology and its deployment in the Internet affect public library operations and services. Clearly, a future of increasingly more complex technical environments is upon the public library.

The affects on libraries of this new and substantially more complex environment are potentially significant, shaping library service and resource provision, staff skills, training requirements, and public access computing and Internet access requirements. User expectations rise, and high-quality services are offered by other providers, leaving libraries in a competitive and service- and resource-rich information environment. Users have choices in terms of access to networked services—of which the public library is one. How public libraries continue to change and make the transition into a complex political, electronic, and service environment will have considerable impact on their long-term viability in tomorrow’s society.

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2. Information about the reports from the 1994–2006 is available at [www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet](http://www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet).
3. There are actually nearly 17,000 service outlets in the United States. However, the sample frame eliminated bookmobiles and library outlets for which the study team was unable to geocode

and calculate poverty measures. Additional information on the methodology is available in the study report at [www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet](http://www.ii.fsu.edu/plinternet) (accessed Aug. 14, 2007).

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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 *Queenpin* by Megan Abbott.

“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.

### **Training Library Staff and Volunteers to Provide Extraordinary Customer Service**

*By Julie Todaro and Mark L. Smith. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2006. 160p. paper. \$65 (ISBN 155570560X) LC 2006-020705*

No doubt the book market is bloated with materials on sales gurus and customer service. Few titles, though, specifically pertain to library and information environments. Enter Julie Todaro and Mark L. Smith, who address this deficit with their manual for library staff and volunteers, *Training Library Staff and Volunteers to Provide Extraordinary Customer Service*.

This work contains eight succinct chapters that illustrate the authors’ mindset: “Our core training philosophy—and thus the chief principle behind this book—is that it is crucially important that customer service is a perpetual process, a fundamental part of the life of the institution” (vii).

To this end, the authors emphasize continuous learning through the use of scripts, scenarios, role playing, and so on. From assessing learners’ needs and anticipating customers’ expectations, this book offers a comprehensive strategy on

designing and implementing a customer service program. Also emphasized are staff development days and customer feedback capturing. Additional resources include charts, tables, recommended Web sites, sample forms, strategies for using focus groups, and more.

We now live in a 2.0 world: Web 2.0, Library 2.0, Learning 2.0. And now—with the publication of *Training Library Staff and Volunteers to Provide Extraordinary Customer Service*—Customer 2.0. This book will ensure that libraries remain relevant in the twenty-first century; recommended without reservation for public libraries of all sizes.—*C. Brian Smith, Reference/Electronic Resources Librarian, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library*

### **Small Change, Big Problems: Detecting and Preventing Financial Misconduct in Your Library**

*By Herbert Snyder. Chicago: ALA, 2006. 214p. \$40 (ISBN 0-8389-0921-3) LC 2006-13937*

In Sue Grafton’s detective novel series, *L Is for Lawless*, but this book qualifies as an intriguing alternative title in the alphabet who-dunnit series, with a suggested title of *L is*

for *Library Fraud*. Currently a professor of accounting, Herb Snyder also is a certified fraud examiner and had a prior career as a U.S. Army intelligence analyst, making him well-qualified to lead librarians through the shady world of altered conference expense receipts, missing cash from library fine totals, and bogus book supply companies. He reveals in absorbing detail how these crimes are committed and, most importantly, how to detect and prevent them.

The book's first four chapters explain why library managers today need a heightened awareness of the possibilities for employee crime in their libraries, why employees commit fraud, what the common weaknesses are in a library's monetary control system, and how managers can effectively introduce the changes that will help prevent fraud. Snyder argues convincingly that all of us may be tempted at some time to misappropriate funds at work by "borrowing" a few dollars from petty cash, padding an expense account, or taking a book or CD from the new materials area, and he maintains that library managers have a responsibility to diminish that temptation through policies and procedures. These measures must be introduced as elements of responsible library resource management, not as punitive actions based on mistrust.

The final four chapters discuss specific types of library fraud, such as altered purchase orders and ghost employees on the payroll, how libraries can spot these frauds, what to do if you suspect an employee of fraudulent behavior, and the specific preventative measures you can introduce. Snyder uses numerous real-life case studies to illustrate just how easy larceny can be as he leads us through the intricacies of cash flow without using high-finance jargon. For me,

this book was an unexpected page-turner as I read about the motives and actions of library employees who have committed crimes of fascinating creativity, ingenuity, and audacity. I recognized all too often, in Snyder's scenarios, faulty financial control situations very similar to ones in libraries that I have managed.

A detective book with a twist, this book is highly recommended for librarians in all types and sizes of libraries as well as as a resource text for LIS students in library management and collection development classes.—*Ann Curry, Associate Professor, School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies, The University of British Columbia*

## The Romance of Libraries

*By Madeleine Lefebvre. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2006. 208p. \$27 (ISBN 0-8108-5352-3) LC 2005018779.*

This book is a compilation of anecdotes collected by Madeleine Lefebvre through her Web site, [www.libraryromance.com](http://www.libraryromance.com). Lefebvre became interested in library romances of all kinds after realizing that many people have a "cherished personal story that is connected with a library" (3).

When Lefebvre launched her Web site, e-mails came in from around the world, and the resulting book has something for just about everyone. From students meeting at library school and falling in love to patrons meeting clandestinely in the stacks; from librarians falling in love with coworkers to professionals finding love at conferences, just about every kind of library love is found within these pages.

Because Lefebvre edited these stories very lightly in order to preserve the writers' own voices, the

individual entries vary widely. Some are truly well-written and inspiring to general readers, while others may only hold a special place in the hearts of those who experienced the events. Most of the stories are different versions of the same theme: the library as a place that brings people together under just the right circumstances. Not all have happy endings though, and included throughout are tales of unrequited love, broken hearts, and missed opportunities.

The greatest strength of the book also is its greatest weakness: individual contributors writing in their own words give the book a feel of community and shared experience, but the author's decision to edit as little as possible can make for tedious reading in sections, when it seems that the same experience is being told from multiple perspectives over and over again.

Lefebvre's final assessment—one likely shared by all true library lovers—is that the physical library is still a special place, full of possibility and promise, with the ability to shape our romantic lives in ways that a virtual library never can. An optional purchase for public libraries, this book would make a nice gift for library lovers.—*Julie Biando Edwards, Ethnic Studies Librarian and Multicultural Coordinator, University of Montana–Missoula*

## Library Technology Companion: A Basic Guide for Library Staff

*By John J. Burke. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2006. 239p. paper. \$55. (ISBN 1-55570-550-2) LC 2006011069.*

The mission of any library is to contain, preserve, and disseminate information, and technology is inte-

gral to this overall process. Given the reality that twenty-first-century technology changes at an unyielding pace, how can librarians keep current with rapid developments? Enter author John J. Burke and *Library Technology Companion: A Basic Guide for Library Staff*.

Divided into five parts ("Library Technology Basics," "Technology Tools for Libraries," "How Libraries Put Technology to Work," "Building and Maintaining the Technology Environment in Libraries," and "Where Library Technology Is Going and How to Get There"), this roadmap helps librarians navigate the technological landscape. This is the second edition of this book, and new additions cover RSS, podcasts, e-books, tablet PCs, digital projectors, and more.

The second chapter, "How to Find Information on Library Technologies" is especially helpful. The author directs readers to a plethora of information sources, including Web sites, electronic discussion lists, periodicals, product reviews, and how-to articles. Likewise, chapter 17, titled "Our Technological Future: Ranganathan Meets Googlezon," is equally fascinating; it attempts to peer into the proverbial crystal ball, highlighting likely trends such as the proliferation of folksonomies, RFID, and digital reference services. Other useful features of this resource include a glossary (from Abstract to Zip Drive); questions for review at the end of each chapter; and screen shots, figures, and diagrams.

The information in technology books is usually outdated upon publication. Thankfully, Burke has foresight: a bonafide techie, the author was wise enough to understand that a book on technology is quickly outdated, and has created a companion

blog for his book at <http://techcompanion.blogspot.com>.

Bottom line: *Library Technology Companion* is recommended without reservation for all public libraries.—C. Brian Smith, *Reference and Electronic Resources Librarian, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library*

### Managing the Mystery Collection: From Creation to Consumption

*Edited by Judith Overmier and Rhonda Harris Taylor. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth, 2004. 220p. \$22.95 (ISBN-13: 978-0-7890-3154-9) LC 2005020982.*

Appealing to librarians, scholars, book collectors, and mystery aficionados alike, *Managing the Mystery Collection: From Creation to Consumption* covers the selection, acquisition, and promotion of mystery and detective fiction collections.

Mysteries, along with romances, are often the prime movers in public library collections. Thus, it comes as no surprise that one of the strongest chapters in the set deals explicitly with the cross-appeal of mysteries and romance. Tracy Allen of the Las Vegas Clark County Library explains how romantic suspense involves puzzle-solving, and how most mysteries have an element of romance. She also describes what she calls fiction "in the Janet Evanovich style" that defies easy categorization (163).

Other notable chapters explore the relationship between bookstores and libraries in promoting mysteries; review sources for choosing quality mystery novels, including less well-known trade magazines; and a case study of a successful mystery book discussion group. Finding out-of-print materials from online

booksellers becomes easier with Larisa Somsel's illuminating essay. Two chapters on ethnic detectives will give librarians and readers new authors to choose from.

Two sections on special collections of Sherlock Holmes materials and a popular reading collection at University of Texas' law library are less useful to public librarians, but still interesting. Aside from this, *Managing the Mystery Collection: From Creation to Consumption* offers new bibliographies, quality Web sites, and practical information for the public librarian.—Chantal Walvoord, *Public Services Librarian, Christopher A. Parr Library, Plano, Tex.*

### Crash Course in Children's Services

*By Penny Peck. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 136p. \$25 (ISBN 1591583527) LC 2006023646.*

Written for small public library personnel, this title from the Libraries Unlimited's Crash Course series is a concise guide to the many facets of children's library services. Seven chapters consider reference, homework help, readers' advisory (RA), book selection, storytime, programming, and issues in children's library services. Each chapter begins with a brief history and explanation of the service followed by the basics of doing the job. The RA chapter examines each type of book in the children's room (picture books, board books, easy readers, transitional fiction, fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels), explaining their unique elements and features (for example, easy readers are for children just beginning to read independently). Several popular titles and book series in each category are listed. Also in the RA chapter are

techniques for determining the right book recommendation for children based on their reading interest and skill level. Suggestions for collection development policies and procedures as well as review sources for books and media constitute the book selection chapter. In the chapters devoted to storytimes and programming, creative ideas are presented with clear, easy-to-follow, systematic instructions. The concluding chapter highlights current issues related to children's library services, including latchkey kids, equitable access to library resources, censorship, and outreach.

A bibliography of suggested further reading is included. In discussing everything from reference interviews to storytimes, Peck demonstrates a thorough knowledge and appreciation of child development and how it affects all aspects of library service to children. This book will be useful for library staff not trained in children's service as well as for newly graduated children's librarians attempting to chart a path to successful library service to children.—*Ernie J. Cox, Librarian, St. Timothy's School, Raleigh, N.C.*

## Introduction to Public Librarianship

*By Kathleen de la Peña McCook. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004. 406p. paper. \$59.95. (ISBN 1-55570-475-1) LC 2004-046012.*

In her 2004 book, long-time library educator Kathleen de la Peña McCook introduces new public librarians to the "historical, sociological, and cultural background" (ix) of United States public libraries and to the relevant professional literature. Her work also serves as a valuable reminder for public librarians

who were not fully aware of, or may have lost touch with, the principles and ideals that underlie our profession. Regardless of subject discussed, each chapter provides historical background, organizational context, discussion of its significance to public library development, and extensive endnotes and references to the literature.

The first three chapters introduce the important societal roles played by today's public libraries and trace the history of tax-supported public libraries and how they came to be as they are today, paying special attention to the work of women's clubs and women librarians, state library agencies, the American Library Association, and federal legislation. Chapter four discusses sources of public library statistics and the various sets of national standards as well as explains the move to community-based planning process. Chapters five through seven describe the public library's political and economic context, structure of governance, and the history of public library buildings, respectively.

Chapters eight and nine, written by youth specialists Linda Alexander and Barbara Immroth, review the history, current status, and various roles of adult and youth services. Chapter ten reinforces the importance of professional connections among libraries and with our professional organizations. Former ALA president Barbara Ford provides an important global perspective in chapter eleven. In the last chapter, McCook examines the factors she believes will affect public libraries during the first part of this century. Appendix A contains an extensive selected bibliography arranged by chapter, then by books and chapters or parts of books, articles, and Web sites; appendix B is a bibliography

of national public library statistical sources. Numerous figures provide statistical and other relevant illustrative information.

In addition to providing an understanding of our historic ideals and goals and their evolution over time, McCook's work is a fact-filled compendium of valuable information, a handbook for the working librarian, educator, and researcher. Information on the library's antecedents and early history, statistical sources and other evaluative measures, explanation of the movement from national standards to community-based planning, discussion of historic and current national initiatives, and works about the various adult and youth services, and their description and arrangement into categories, are enlightening.

Information about the roles of our professional associations, the work of state library agencies, and especially the references to which ALA, PLA, RUSA, and LAMA committees are working on various issues and aspects of public library work will be especially helpful to working librarians. Information about consortia and collaborative ventures emphasizes the importance of networking in today's library arena.

In considering this book as a text for her public libraries class, on first reading this library educator was disappointed that there were not specific suggestions on working with trustees, analyzing community needs, using the PLA planning process, selecting materials and technology, supervising staff members, and other such topics needed by public library directors. A second reading allayed these concerns. McCook's work is, after all, an introduction to the profession of public librarianship rather than a text on library management. Through read-

ing and studying it, librarians and students will gain fuller understanding of the underlying philosophies and reasons for why good public libraries are run as they are. This information is both more difficult to present in lectures and more necessary to the education of library professionals. Other texts and numerous articles provide the how-to-do-it information needed; references to many of these are provided.

In conclusion, this reviewer is in full agreement with McCook's assertion that her book "provides the essential information for future practitioners to go out and inherit the future of public libraries and continue to follow the ideas, principles, and goals, which have shaped over 150 years of public librarianship in the U.S." (xiii). Her book will not only be of value to future practitioners, however. Doctoral students, library educators, and long-time public librarians also have much to gain from a careful reading of her work.—*Annabel K. Stephens, Associate Professor, University of Alabama, School of Library and Information Studies, Tuscaloosa*

### **Sizzling Summer Reading Programs for Young Adults, 2nd ed.**

*By Katharine L. Kan. Chicago: ALA, 2006. 112p. \$30 (ISBN 0-8389-3563-X) LC 2005-028264.*

Katharine Kan, a freelance library consultant and writer, has put together another edition of *Sizzling Summer Reading Programs for Young Adults* to highlight a number of programs offered for young adults by various types of libraries. Why do we need the second edition? Since the first edition was published in 1998, she states that reading skill

levels have remained static, yet technology demands greater skills (1). According to Patrick Jones and Joel Shoemaker, 25 percent of library patrons are teens, but fewer than 15 percent of public libraries have young adult librarians (1).

In the introduction, the author discusses such items as Reading Scores Research, the effects of summer reading, statistics about teenagers reading, and teenagers volunteering in the library. Studies have shown that summer reading can maintain reading skills and prevent a setback—even light reading of magazines, comic books, and newspapers. A study of young adults conducted by Ken Haycock for his What Works column in *Teacher Librarian* in 2000–2001 states that 64 percent of teenagers rate reading as a seven on a "fun scale" of one through ten, 91 percent rated reading as "really cool" or kind of "cool," and 66 percent got their books from the library (4).

While this book is brief, it contains a wealth of information; Kan has the book divided into different sections, such as "Reading Incentive Programs," "Special Programs," "Volunteers and Teen Participation in Libraries," and "Outreach to Special Populations." The sections do not state step by step how to organize your library's young adult summer reading program, but they contain great examples of what other libraries offered to reach out to their young adult patrons, including themes, programs, and prizes. There also are black-and-white photographs of posters, reading logs, and programs included in the sections. For special programs, the section is divided into different categories, such as crafts, art, food, and stage and screen. The volunteer section discusses teen advisory boards and those libraries that offer volunteer

opportunities for teens, such as special summer volunteering or different tasks the teens can do. Outreach to special populations offers different programs for incarcerated teens, homeless teens, and those living on an Indian reservation.

There also is a list of contributors to this work, which includes contact information for the various librarians offering these programs. This is recommended for all public libraries interested in starting a young adult summer reading program or needing fresh ideas.—*Jen Dawson, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Fla.*

### **The Librarian's Guide to Developing Christian Fiction Collections for Young Adults**

*By Barbara J. Walker. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2005. 200p. \$55 (ISBN 1-5570-545-6) LC 2005-5112.*

Barbara Walker has proven herself to be a leader in understanding Christian fiction collections with her three previous (and similar) titles for adults and children: *Developing Christian Fiction Collections for Children and Adults: Selection Criteria and a Core Collection* (Neal-Schuman 1998); *The Librarian's Guide to Developing Christian Fiction Collections for Children* (Neal-Schuman 2005); and *The Librarian's Guide to Developing Christian Fiction Collections for Adults* (Neal-Schuman 2005). Here she provides the same useful information for young adult collections. In this handy guide, librarians can gain insight into this often confusing area of fiction. Those not familiar with Christian terminology may find Walker's opening explanations perplexing, especially those comparing inspirational and

Christian works. However, the well-organized recommendation lists make this guide worthwhile for those libraries that are interested in starting a YA collection.

The guide is divided into three main sections. The first contains background information that gives the reader an overview and history of the Christian fiction genre, how to build a collection of young adult Christian fiction, and how to market the collection once in place. Readers will find this helpful; however most tips are not specific to YA audiences and could be used for adult collections.

The second section lists key book titles as well as popular series and DVDs and videos. The book division carefully includes a wide variety of titles, including such areas as apocalyptic, fantasy, and romance. Many adult crossover titles are here, as well as modern titles that deal with pertinent issues, such as abortion and teen pregnancy. Useful information, such as publisher and recommended ages, are given, and Walker has thoughtfully included previously published reviews when available.

Fiction series are described with a list of most-available titles. The DVD and video list contains several mainstream movies that young adults may recognize, such as *A Walk to Remember* with Mandy Moore.

The third section is especially helpful, listing collection development resources, including Christian fiction award winners and top authors and publishers. Literature awards are often helpful when

beginning a new collection, and several are listed. These winners are helpful for adult collections also, as most awards are not specifically given for YA titles.

Perhaps as libraries grow to recognize the importance of having an exclusively YA Christian fiction collection, this guide will become the rule book of inclusions. Until then, most librarians will find that broader information on Christian literature is most helpful.—*Lisa Erickson, Youth Librarian, Fort Worth (Tex.) Public Library*

### **Résumé Writing and Interviewing Techniques That Work: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians**


*By Robert R. Newlen. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2006. 206p. \$55 (ISBN 1-55570-538-3) LC 2006005973.*

Robert R. Newlen notes in the preface to this excellent practical guide that “most standard job guides attempt to cover every job category imaginable, and if they include librarians and information professionals at all, they’re usually relegated to the ‘other’ section” (xiv). Here, though, librarians are front and center, and new graduates, career changers, and mid-career professionals alike will appreciate the tips, tricks, and hints available in Newlen’s book.

The first two-thirds of the book are divided into chapters that take the reader step by step through the construction of a résumé. Beginning

with advice on how to create a personal inventory and including a section on how to arrange a résumé depending on which skills job seekers want to highlight, Newlen walks the reader through résumé creation. Workbook pages are included, and readers should be able to complete their own résumés and compare them to the sample résumés in chapter five. The concluding section of the book focuses on interviewing techniques, sample questions and answers, and an overview of various types of interviews. An appendix of action verbs to use in résumés is included at the end of the text.

Newlen’s tone is refreshingly informal, and he includes the reasoning behind many of his suggestions. For example, when discussing why form is as important as content, he notes that because the average employer will spend only thirty seconds reading a résumé, creating a document that is eye-catching, easy-to-read, and professional-looking is essential. He also makes excellent use of related literature, pointing out other texts that readers can consult during various stages of résumé construction and interview preparation.

Overall, this book is a tremendous resource for library and information professionals and, despite the high price, it also would make an excellent addition to the personal libraries of job seekers.—*Julie Biando Edwards, Ethnic Studies Librarian and Multicultural Coordinator, University of Montana–Missoula* 



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](mailto:vnesting@bellsouth.net).

Vicki is reading *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad, *The Constant Princess* by Philippa Gregory, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne, and *Innocent Traitor: A Novel of Lady Jane Grey* by Alison Weir.

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

### The Way Cool Game of Science for Grades Four and Up

[www.Edustation.Disney.com](http://www.Edustation.Disney.com)

Featuring Bill Nye the Science Guy, star of the popular science series, *The Way Cool Game of Science* is a new series of interactive DVD games available exclusively from Disney Educational Productions.

Each game is standards-based and easy to integrate into classroom curricula; is simple to use and fun to play; turns a wrong answer into a opportunity for learning; and builds confidence in preparation for standardized tests.

The *Way Cool Game of Science* series of eleven DVDs includes life science (five DVDs), earth science (three DVDs) and physical science (three DVDs).

### Home Improvement Reference Center Now Available

[www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com)  
[www.creativepub.com](http://www.creativepub.com)

EBSCO Publishing has recently partnered with Creative Publishing international (CPI) to create a resource for home improvement and repair. Home Improvement Reference

Center contains twenty-four major, full-text reference works from CPI, and more than 10,000 illustrative images. None of the included content from CPI is available through any other database aggregator or eBook vendor.

Home Improvement Reference Center provides home improvement assistance, including maintenance, remodeling, electrical work, plumbing, wood projects, outdoor improvements, home and garden decorating, and much more.

Remote access also is available so library patrons can easily access the information from their own homes.

### Thomson Gale Brings Demographics Database to the Library

[www.gale.com](http://www.gale.com)

Thomson Gale is making DemographicsNow Library Edition, a comprehensive resource offering a wealth of consumer and business information, available to libraries across the country.

DemographicsNow Library Edition generates easy-to-read HTML reports that can be saved in Acrobat format or e-mailed for later retrieval, including standard reporting in four major categories: summary, comparison, ranking, and mapping. In addition to

business use, it also can provide cultural patterns and sociological trends in cities around the United States.

The demographic information available in DemographicsNow Library Edition is from the United States, with additional countries and increased database capabilities to be added in coming months.

## Marshall Cavendish Digital

[www.marshallcavendishdigital.com](http://www.marshallcavendishdigital.com)

Developed as a reference resource for students, Marshall Cavendish Digital offers materials covering a wide array of subjects and interests. Based on and expanded from Marshall Cavendish's print encyclopedias and nonfiction series, each title offers authoritative content and high-quality images with the addition of online functionality that addresses the needs of a new generation of students.

Marshall Cavendish Digital allows users to build their own digital library by purchasing only those



**Tech Logic EZ Tagging System**

resources that fit their and their users' needs. New titles are being added regularly, and articles and information are updated to stay abreast of new developments.

Site features include quick and advanced searches, a guided tour, research by category or by title, and refinement of results by articles, images, diagrams, and maps. For students, the "Cite This" tool allows them to quickly and easily cite an article using MLA, APA, or CMS15 format, and the incorporated Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary provides ready definitions of unknown terms.

## New Video and Music Tech Logic Creates One-Step Tagging Station

[www.tech-logic.com](http://www.tech-logic.com)

Tech Logic has created the EZ Tagging System, an integrated system that includes the software and hardware needed for converting library collections from barcodes to RFID tags. While current systems require that library staff activate each new tag by passing it over an RFID antenna, the EZ Tagging System programs and prints the tag—no RFID antenna required. Library staff can program and print single tags or batch load barcodes into the system to instantly program and print multiple tags.

The EZ Tagging System prints tags with the library's name and logo and the library's ID along with the barcode number and item title.

In addition to programming and printing tags, this new system identifies defective RFID tags and clearly marks them to prevent unintended use. The EZ Tagging System includes a wheeled cart so staff can move the

system right into the shelves and tag on the go.

## Apruebe el GED/ Passing the GED

[www.SpanishGED.org](http://www.SpanishGED.org)

InterLingua's Apruebe el GED/ Passing the GED is a new test preparation tool for Hispanic Americans who want to take the General Educational Development (GED) exam. It is available on CD in two formats: the Spanish-only version, and the Spanish and English version. Both versions prepare the student for all five portions of the GED.

This tool includes detailed explanations written for students who have not opened a textbook in years; numerous illustrations, charts, and tables to facilitate learning; exercises and drills to reinforce learning; a diagnostic pre-test; and full-length practice tests.

Written by teachers who have experience working with GED candidates and translated by bilingual teachers, the Apruebe el GED/ Passing the GED series not only helps students with math, science, social studies, and reading and writing skills, it also helps students understand how to take the tests and use the tools, such as calculators, that they're allowed to bring into the exam room.

## Content Now Available for Library's OPAC

[www.Syndetics.com/videoandmusic](http://www.Syndetics.com/videoandmusic)

Syndetic Solutions, provider of enriched content for library online catalogs, announced that it has introduced a wealth of video and



music content that can be seamlessly integrated into a library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

The new offering from Syndetics includes cover images for more than 742,000 music CDs and videos, summaries for more than 112,000 videos and 650,000 music CDs, and thousands of track listings for music recordings in various formats.

The new video and music content is the latest OPAC enrichment option offered by Syndetics and is compatible with virtually every integrated library system (ILS).

## The Latino American Experience

[www.greenwood.com/mosaic](http://www.greenwood.com/mosaic)

Comprehensive, informative, and easy-to-use, the Latino American Experience (LAE) is the first-ever database dedicated to the history and culture of Latinos, the largest, fastest-growing minority group in the United States. Designed, developed, and indexed under the guidance of Latino librarians and library directors to meet the needs of students, teachers, librarians, and researchers, LAE offers unparalleled depth and content. The Latino American Experience features:

- a virtual library on the topics—more than two hundred volumes of content, from encyclopedias to biographies;
- current content;
- a fully searchable timeline;
- origins section on modern-day Latin American countries, the history of the Hispanic diaspora, and indigenous peoples;
- Spanish-language content;

- classroom resources; and
- primary source material, plus links to vetted Web sites.

## New Points of View Reference Center

[www.ebscohost.com/pov](http://www.ebscohost.com/pov)

Designed to assist users in understanding the full scope of a wide range of controversial subjects, EBSCO's new Points of View Reference Center features a series of essays representing opposing viewpoints on a variety of important issues.

Points of View Reference Center provides full-text content pertaining to hundreds of topics, each with an overview, affirmative argument, and opposing argument. Topics covered include affirmative action, cloning, DNA profiling, HIV/AIDS status disclosure, immigration, Iraq, Israel and the Palestinians, Katrina and the FEMA response, nuclear proliferation, separation of church and state, standardized testing, stem cell research, tax cuts, voting machines, and many more.

The database also offers guides pertaining to debating, developing arguments, and writing position papers.

## Historic Map Collection Available Online

[www.broermapsonline.org](http://www.broermapsonline.org)

The Broer Map Library offers libraries and other organizations access to a large online map collection. The library was founded in 2002 by David Broer, an avid map collector and


advocate for equal access to resources for people living outside of major cities and universities. He also is the founder of LincOn.com, a Web-based service that provides access to thousands of Internet resources.

In addition, the Broer Map Library offers the Digital Historic Map Index, a search tool that provides links to 65,000 online digital historic maps located in more than one hundred collections from around the world.

## Shaping Outcomes Online Course

[www.shapingoutcomes.org](http://www.shapingoutcomes.org)

Shaping Outcomes, a new online course in outcome-based planning and evaluation (OBPE), is available to museum and library professionals. A collaboration between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, Shaping Outcomes is an instructor-mediated, online course that trains museum and library professionals to master and apply OBPE concepts to museum and library programming as well as exhibition planning. Participants in Shaping Outcomes work at their own pace through five interactive modules over approximately five weeks. With the support of an instructor, they learn OBPE vocabulary and methods and develop a logic model for a program or project at their own institution.

Librarians interested in registering for one of these courses or learning more about these course offerings should visit the Shaping Outcomes Web site, phone (317) 274-1406, or e-mail [outcomes@iupui.edu](mailto:outcomes@iupui.edu). 

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Visit [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org) for information about registration, conference programming, special events, travel, and insider tips on everything the Conference and Minneapolis have to offer.

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