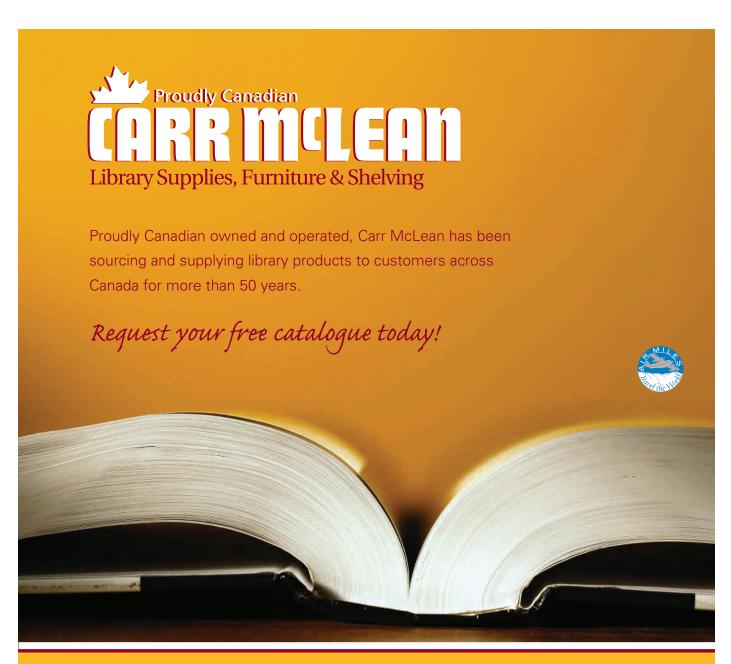
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As a self-described "starry-eyed" McGill Library School student of the '90s, Bessie Sullivan had no idea what it really meant to work as a public librarian. She soon found out, and is living to tell about it.

"I never pictured myself stepping into the middle of a brawl when I was studying the Dewey Decimal system."

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Access is the official magazine of the Ontario Library Association, published quarterly for members as a continuing education service to keep them informed of its activities and of events, trends, and issues affecting the association as well as libraries all across Ontario and beyond. The magazine is a forum for discussion, a place for news, and a source of ideas for the development and improvement of librarianship in the province.





WHAT LIBRARY IS THIS? Send your guess to info@accessola.com and be eligible to win an Education Institute session.

Cover Photo: Mahesh Jaggi



from the editor

My first library job, way back in 1985 in the dark ages before the internet, was as a cataloguer of sorts at the Scientific Information Centre of the RCMP in Ottawa. It was the library that served the forensic labs and we had some interesting and disturbing illustrated books in the collection – not to mention the firing range downstairs, where on what must have been a slow day I was allowed to shoot everything from handguns to rifles. My assignment was to add subject headings to the records for the items in the pamphlet file. And by "records" I mean those 3 x 5 cards with the little hole in the bottom middle, the main tools for bibliographic access to library materials since at least the 19th century. I can't remember now whether I was handwriting or typing – for the centre's sake, I hope it was typing, because my handwriting is atrocious – but I do remember pasting little strips of adhesive tape at the bottom of cards, and then duly and diligently transcribing the subject headings. It was good practice for a wannabe cataloguer and I took the job very seriously, poring over those Library of Congress subject headings in my quest for *les mots* justes. My records never did make it into the formal, official catalogue, but it was with a sense of accomplishment that I plowed through the little corner of the universe of bibliographic control to which I had been assigned right out of library school.

The 3 x 5 card is long gone in most libraries now, certainly in public and academic libraries and even in special libraries as well. The catalogue is not though, and in fact it probably has never been more essential to users who are trying to find materials for all sorts of reasons. In this issue of *Access*, Melissa Cameron writes about an example of a new kind of catalogue that has come onto the scene only in the last few years, one that's easier to use but still delivers good search results – and also a catalogue that takes advantage of the so-called "social web" in order to leverage the input of the community of users and to take full advantage of the many possibilities that the web offers. Check out her article on page 12 about the new BiblioCommons catalogue at the Oakville Public Library.

In this issue, we're also welcoming a new contributor, welcoming back another, and saying good-bye to a third. Asha Bajaj is the new divisional editor for the Ontario Health Libraries Association: her article about the demise of the Canadian Health Network is on page 18. And returning after a year's absence – during which she was ably replaced by Mark Aaron Polger – is Elyse Pike, who

The catalogue has never been more essential to users who are trying to find materials for all sorts of reasons.

writes the Health Watch column (page 31).

And this issue is also the last for Vicki Whitmell as the World Outside columnist. Vicki has chosen to step aside from this responsibility, one that she has carried on for many years. The column is a key one for *Access*, as it provides a national and international perspective for readers which has nicely complemented the Ontario focus. Her last piece is about libraries in Australasia and the "new library universe" (page 10). On behalf of the editorial boards of *Access* both present and past, I'd like to thank Vicki for her excellent contributions and wish her well in any future writing endeavours.

I'd also like to correct an error which slipped through in the fall 2008 issue of Access: the excellent article "A Cite for Sore Eyes: From Index Cards to Citation Management Software" was actually written by Cynthia Bail, a librarian at the University of Ottawa and an OLITA councillor. Sincere apologies to Cynthia for this misattribution – ironically in an article about correct citation.

And of course there's lots more in this issue as well. If you read every single page (and, of course, you should) you'll learn about: Twittering and microblogs; parachronism and how it relates to library patrons in the 21st century; thousands of freely available e-books on the web; how to get rid of old medical books; communicating well inside your library before you try to communicate at all outside of it; the latest scholarship about reading for pleasure in Canada; the joys of stress; a conference, yes, but an unconference; mobile devices for reading e-books (free or otherwise); medicine for your ailing book club; suppliers and relationships; CI; the big bang; balloons; and the 10 things they don't tell you in library school. It all starts on page 5.

Wayne Jones is Head of Central Technical Services at Queen's University and Editor-in-Chief of Access (wjones@accessola.com).

Canadian Almanac & Directory 2009 The 162ND edition of this National Best-Seller, available December 2008, includes

the recent Federal Election results and Cabinet Shuffle.

This all-in-one resource has 16 directories plus an almanac, providing more statistics and specialized information than ever before!

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Section 2: Arts & Culture provides information on Canada's Art Galleries, Horticulture Centers, Museums, National Parks, Education Centres and much more!

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Section 5: Business & Finance combines Accounting Firms, Banks, Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, Insurance Companies, Canada's Major Companies, Stock Exchanges and more. Listings include valuable details such as: Class of Insurance, Assets, Revenues, Company Type and Ticker Symbol.

Section 6: Education includes Government Agencies, Districts, School Boards, Specialized and Independent Schools, Colleges, Universities and Technical facilities, and Private Schools.

Section 7: Government - Federal & Provincial outlines the Federal and Provincial government, providing contact information, designations and diplomatic and consular representatives.

Section 8: Government - Municipal arranged by Province, each section includes date of incorporation, square miles, population figures, a district map, notes concerning local government structure and elections.

Section 9: Government - Judicial provides thorough coverage of Federal and Provincial Courts in Canada.

enhanced Section 10: Hospitals and Heath Care Facilities provides contact information, descriptions, number of beds available and more, for hospitals, community health centers, retirement care and mental health facilities across Canada.

Section 11: Law Firms listings include descriptions, names of Senior Partners and the number of lawyers in each firm.

Section 12: Libraries provides valuable information on budget, staff and special collections for Canada's main Library/Archive and Government Departments for Libraries, Regional System Libraries, Public Libraries and Archives.

enhanced Section 13: Publishing includes Book, Magazine and Newspaper publishers. Magazine listings are arranged in six major categories, preceded by a Magazine Name Index for easy searching. Listings include frequency, circulation figures and profiles.

Section 14: Religion offers broad information on religious groups, followed by Associations arranged in 18 different denominations, from Anglican to United Church of Christ.

Section 15: Sports provides Associations for 88 single sports, plus detailed League and Team listings for Baseball, Basketball, Football, Hockey, Lacrosse and Soccer.

Section 16: Transportation provides comprehensive information for the major transportation modes along with Associations, Government Agencies and Port Authorities.

Section 17: Utilities provides Associations, Government Agencies and Provincial Utility

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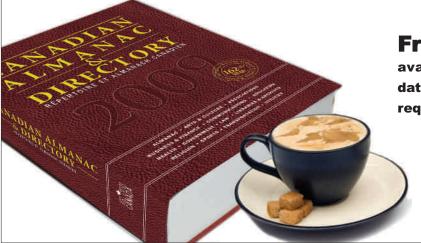
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- category - number of employees

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- contact name - language

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ontario

snapshot

LIBRARY NEWS, PROGRAMS, AND RECOGNITION

GEORGETOWN GROWS

September 15 was an important day for the patrons, board, and staff of the Halton Hills Public Library. After two years of intense planning, the area's council approved a funding strategy for a much-needed renovation of the library's Georgetown Branch. This \$11-million project will almost double the library's existing space to approximately 31,000 square feet. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2010, with the newly renovated/expanded branch opening in the fall of 2011. The new building will be aiming for a silver level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, which will significantly improve energy efficiency and reduce the impact on the environment. During the renovation project, the library will continue to provide a full range of services from a temporary location.

CaledonSings the Blues

Caledon Public Library, Albion Bolton Community Centre, and the Congregate Dining Program of Caledon Meals on Wheels joined forces October 9 to host a fun afternoon for all Caledon seniors. A delicious lunch was followed by the superb blues/jazz musical stylings of JakeRude and friends. Caledon Public Library was pleased to offer numerous lucky draw prizes of books and bookbags.





THE LAKESHORE SHRINERS PIRATE SHIP KICKED OFF COBOURG'S LIBRARY CARD CHALLENGE.

WHAT'S NEW IN COBOURG, MATEY?

The Cobourg Public Library has kicked off an exciting new library initiative. Working with area schools, the library targeted children in Grades 1 and 2 to raise awareness of the value of library membership. Children attending school in Cobourg or Hamilton Township received a pirate bookbag full of incentives, including a cool new pirate library card. Cards activated between September 20 and October 20, 2008, will accumulate points. Cash prizes will be awarded to the libraries of the top three schools. The Lakeshore Shriners Pirate Ship was on hand to kick off the 2008 card challenge on September 20. Local author/musician Ted Staunton entertained the crowd of approximately 400 people. At one point, customers were lined up through the doors to sign up for a pirate library card. A wrap-up celebration was held October 23 during Ontario Public Library Week. Canadian author Frieda Wishinsky was featured, as well as Captain Corbin, the magical pirate.

University of Ottawa Thanks Donors

In 2006, the University of Ottawa inaugurated the Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program. It also welcomed a new faculty member to that program, Rebecca Margolis, who teaches Yiddish language and culture.

Despite the new program, the University of Ottawa library did not have a Yiddish collection in place to support students. The market for these materials is limited and current publications can be difficult to obtain. The most practical way to build a suitable collection of Yiddish texts, therefore, was to seek donations of Yiddish books.

On October 5, Leslie Weir, University Librarian, hosted a recognition event for donors to the library's growing Yiddish collection (now more than 1,500 items!) in gratitude for the generous gifts. — *Submitted by Jennifer Dekker*

Ottawa's Pot-pourri

The Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association launched Pot-pourri 2008 on October 9. Pot-pourri is a compilation of winning poems and stories from the Ottawa Public Library's Awesome Authors Youth Writing Contest, which took place from November 2007 to February 2008. The book includes 18 English poems, 10 French poems, 18 English short stories, and six French short stories, all written by children ages 9 to 17. The stories were reviewed by local authors lan Roy, JC Sulzenko, and Michel Lavoie. Pot-pourri is available for \$12.95 and can be ordered by calling 613-580-2424 ext. 14383. All proceeds from the book will be used to support the OPL and its literacy programs.



THE AWESOME AUTHORS OF OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Whitby's Hottest Performer Is ... a Puppet?

Yes! Beatrice the Mouse, a puppet who is very popular with children and adults at the Whitby Central Library, has produced a children's CD as part of a project called Beatrice and the Brooklin Project.

This project has been launched to raise money to purchase children's programming materials and fund programs at the new Brooklin Branch, scheduled to open in fall 2010.

Beatrice and her partner JoAnne Alexander (who is celebrating 30 years working at the Whitby Public Library) decided early in 2008 that it was time to give back to the Whitby community that they have been fortunate to live, work, and play in.

The CD *Beatrice and Friends* is a collection of children's nursery rhymes and songs that brings together the talents of Whitby's local fire chief, children in the community, and work by Loris Lesynski

(with permission from Annick Press Inc.) and local Brooklin author Paul Duggan.

The project has been embraced by the Whitby community in a big way, with the Whitby firefighters as part of this fundraising effort. The CDs are \$15 each, and READ bookmarks and posters, featuring Beatrice and the firefighters, are available for a nominal fee.

At present, Beatrice is working on a firefighter calendar. She can be found on Facebook (Beatrice the Mouse) and You-Tube. Beatrice's friend JoAnne says, "It is wonderful to have sponsors who believe in what we are doing, which is not only raising money for the project, but raising awareness for libraries in the community and promoting the love of reading and music for children. The best place to begin is at your public library."



... AND CHIEF BOTTLE WASHER

University of Guelph's chief librarian, Michael Ridley, is also the chief information officer and, many would agree, chief bottle washer. What does that mean? He'll do whatever it takes to build bridges between the university community and the library.

Examples: Approached by the Scottish Studies department to assist in celebrating 40 years of Scottish Studies at U of G, Ridley and the McLaughlin Library hosted a month-long display of Scottish artist Calum Colvin's Ossian: Fragments of Ancient Poetry, including an opening gala.

The library's strategic mandate includes the role of Academic Town Square, so Ridley moderated a series of Open Forums with a panel made up of students, faculty, and staff to debate important issues, including censorship.

Ridley also pens a regular column in the student newspaper and even challenged frosh to go head to head at Guitar Hero during O-week.

Hail to the chief!

THE MANAGEMENT LIBRARY: OPEN, CONNECTED, COLLABORATIVE

The new Management Library is the result of the hard work of a devoted Library Committee at the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management. This committee wanted the students and faculty members to have access to a high-quality learning environment that includes dedicated areas for scholarly discussion among small groups, as well as quiet space for individual work. Since the official opening in November 2007, the Management Library has ensured direct and easy access to indispensable learning materials such as academic journals and trade publications, reference works, an increasing number of databases, and the help of subject librarians.

There remains much to do in the coming years: continue to support instructional activities, research activities, and curriculum development; build links with librarians and collections from outside business schools; and continue to develop, promote, and improve access to management resources.

The vision is for the Management Library to be open, connected, collaborative, and constantly evolving. — *Maryse Laflamme, Head, Management Library*



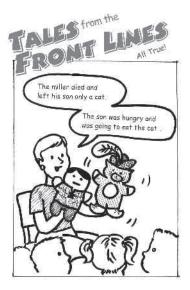




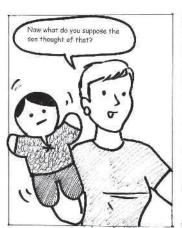
Read to Feed at the Welland Public Library

The Welland Public Library partnered with local community organizations to initiate an annual literacy-based program called Read to Feed. This program is in support of the not-for-profit organization, Heifer International. Partners included the United Way of South Niagara, the Rotary Club of Welland, Parks and Recreation, Christ Community Church, and four southwest elementary schools in Welland.

The goal of this program is to promote literacy in the community while at the same time teaching children about the variety of families in developing regions and how they can make a difference by doing something as simple as reading. In 2007, children participated at various locations and raised a total of \$1,500 ... just by reading. This provided animals for 21 families in developing regions. Because this program was such a success in 2007, the Welland Public Library and the partners have once again come together to work on this initiative and are looking forward to expanding it to other areas of the community.









Got tales? Send them to spaterson@accessola.com



ADVOCACY

New Canadian Library Association Executive Director

Kelly Moore launched into her new career in October with her first day at CLA's National Summit on Library Human Resources. She brings extensive experience with membership and policy development from her previous positions at Library and Archives Canada and IFLA. Kelly received her MLIS from University of Toronto.



KELLY MOORE

Library Networking Group

Have you joined LNG? You may have received an email invitation recently from OLA to join the new electronic Meeting Space for libraries and the information profession. What is it for? Connecting with each other to discuss ideas, work on projects, share news ... the possibilities are endless. If you have not yet had the chance to delve into networking tools such as podcasts, blogs, online forums, and more, this is a great place to start.

Post your own podcasts and webcasts, and your best practices. Describe your local upcoming events. Form a group to discuss issues large and small, or work together on a project that matters and appears not to be on the association's current agenda. Or just visit and read.

You don't need anyone's permission to participate. Join in and help make this new developing tool a remarkable addition to our group communication and collaboration.

Welcome to the library online community, the Library Networking Group.

PROGRAMS

National Summit on Library Human Resources

Representatives from library schools, library associations, and all types of libraries met in Ottawa in October. Their mission? To develop a national strategy and action plan to ensure a well-staffed supply of information professionals to meet Canada's knowledge and information management needs. Broader issues facing our sector include continual professional development and how to recognize this, strategies for filling an expected shortage of trained staff, and library programs that are accessible to people across our country. Not to be missed is a session featuring these next steps at the Super Conference. Find out how you can be part of the solution!

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET HAD THE CHANCE TO DELVE INTO NETWORKING TOOLS SUCH AS PODCASTS, BLOGS, ONLINE FORUMS, AND MORE, LNG IS A GREAT PLACE TO START.

OLA EDUCATION

LAWRENCE HILL THE NEGROES NEGROES



LAWRENCE HILL, AUTHOR, THE BOOK OF NEGROES

What Should I Read Next?

Ponder no longer. The Book of Negroes by Lawrence Hill was the number one Evergreen choice of readers across Ontario. An 11-yearold child is abducted from her village in West Africa and forced to walk for months to the sea in a coffle – a string of slaves. Years later, the child forges her way to freedom, serving the British in the Revolutionary War and registering her name in the historic "Book of Negroes." This book provides an immensely revealing record of freed Loyalist slaves who requested permission to leave the US for resettlement in Nova Scotia, only to find that the haven they sought was steeped in an oppression all of its own.

The Evergreen Award is an OLA program offered via participating public libraries for adult library patrons who vote for a work of Canadian fiction or non-fiction that they have liked the most.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of kids across the province are in the midst of reading for other Forest Programs. Voting for these occurs April 23. It is not too late for your school or library to register. Visit OLA's website for more details.

Is Your Library Becoming More Accessible?

Nearly 1.5 million Ontarians have a disability. Removing barriers ensures that all people can participate in your services and programs. Take some time to review the Initial Proposed Standard for Accessible Information and Communication. Feedback is required by mid January. This standard will have a direct impact on your library. This proposed standard details what is required in providing formats and methods of communication that can be used by people with a variety of disabilities under different circumstances.

Examples include:

- Providing information your library has created (such as brochures) in an accessible format such as e-text, braille, audio, or large print.
- Accessible websites, online catalogues, and any electronic service your patrons need to use.
- Accessible educational materials for students.
- Staff training on meeting the needs of people with disabilities for accessible information and communication.

Visit the Ministry of Community and Social Services website for more information, and to submit your feedback: www.mcss.gov.on.ca/

the world OUTSICE

OBSERVATIONS ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

THE BIG Creating a New Library Universe in Australasia In tackling these challenges the group ha

By Vicki Whitmell

One of the most exciting initiatives that I have come across in more than a decade is underway in Australia and New Zealand, spearheaded by National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA). The group, which represents the national libraries of Australia and New Zealand and the state libraries of Australia, has set out a forward-looking approach to dealing with the changes that electronic information is bringing to the delivery of library services.

Working closely together, these libraries recognize the challenges that they face alone and together. In particular they understand:

- · Users' increased needs for access to electronic information
- The importance of mass digitization of library collections
- The impact that significant changes to the publishing industry have on library processes, staffing, and delivery
- The need for collaboration and resource sharing
- The need for innovation

In tackling these challenges the group has set in place 10 projects that together promise to change the way that libraries work together, serve their clients, build their collections, and interact with their communities. These projects include:

- 1. Do it now! initiatives to improve services immediately
- Open borders opening up access to e-resources and services across libraries
- 3. **Virtual reference** integrating virtual reference as a core function, with a new business and resourcing model
- 4. **Delivery** developing a standard service model for user-requested document supply
- Community-created content identifying and implementing a framework and tool set for everyone to create and transform online content
- Changing capability and culture developing a framework for new work environments
- Collaborative collections delivering efficiencies through collaborative collecting
- 8. Flexible cataloguing designing improved business processes for collection management
- 9. **Scaling up digitization** demonstrating the economic benefits of mass digitization and defining best practice in the management of digital collections
- Connecting and discovering content enhancing metadata and making collection holdings more visible and linked online

The strategic plan is a concrete, practical outline for changing the face of libraries and has transformative ideas for public, academic, school, and special libraries around the world. Its mantras are:

"Use Our Stuff to Make Your Stuff"
"Come on In"
"Liberate Our Expertise"

(You can find it online at: nsla.org.au/publications/papers/2008/pdf/NSLA.Discussion-Paper-20080704-Re.imagining. Library.Services.Strategic.Plan..July.2008.pdf.)

I visited the State Library of Tasmania last July and had the chance to speak to an official about the plan. There is a great deal of excitement in the library community there around the development, for the first time, of a shared vision and national approach to the delivery of library services and collections in Australia. While developed at the national level, the implementation of the individual projects will be at the state level. (Like other state libraries in Australia, the State Library of Tasmania administers and funds all public libraries in its state. It offers a centralized reference service in the capital city of Hobart and provides document delivery throughout the state.)

NSLA sees strengths and efficiencies in having a national approach and its primary goal is to put people at the centre. They see this as best done by providing a consistent and easy experience across all of Australia's public libraries. There is one catalogue and one borrowing card for the nation, databases and subscriptions are purchased through a consortia, and digitization projects are shared.

Of most interest to me in the project is the goal of transforming the work culture of libraries to support new services, innovation, and emerging technologies. A number of papers were developed to support the strategic plan. The discussion paper is titled *The Big Bang: Creating the New Library Universe*. It states that "no job will remain unchanged," "some things we have always done we will no longer do," and "librarians must move away from traditional roles as guardians, protectors and gatekeepers." Transformative ideas indeed if libraries can recognize and accept these imperatives and make needed cultural change to the way we work together and deliver our services and collections.

(You'll find *The Big Bang* online at: nsla.org.au/publications/papers/2007/pdf/NSLA.Discussion-Paper-20070629-The.Big.Bang.creating.the.new.library.universe.pdf.)

THERE IS ONE CATALOGUE
AND ONE BORROWING CARD
FOR THE NATION, DATABASES
AND SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE
PURCHASED THROUGH A
CONSORTIA, AND DIGITIZATION
PROJECTS ARE SHARED.

I have noticed in my travels to Australia and New Zealand (this was my fourth trip) that the Australian librarians seem more willing to work together, more able to try new things and make use of the newest technologies, and somehow find ways to break down many of the barriers that we build for ourselves and our libraries in Canada. We could do well to pay attention to what transforms over the next few years in Australia and to consider the change and transformations needed in Canada in order to serve our users better and for libraries to work together in a cohesive way.

One tiny step that holds promise for libraries to work most closely together in Canada was the National Summit on Library Human Resources that was held in Ottawa early last October. The invitation-only event brought together academic, public, college, and government libraries, library associations, and library educators to consider the issues raised in the 8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study published in 2005 (Is.ualberta.ca/8rs/home.html). Possible projects and next steps were debated and discussed in areas such as online library education, competencies for library staff, leadership training, and the collection of updated HR information and data.

As an attendee of the summit, I was heartened by the recognition of the need to pay attention to developing future librarians and library leaders. The event attracted the important players and their associations (including OLA) who should be able to carry the initiatives forward over both the short and long term. It is expected that a report of the summit will be published and released over the next few months.

Vicki Whitmell is the executive director of the Legislative Library at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Let Your Customers Design Your Website

The BiblioCommons Experience

By Melissa Cameron

"I can't believe how much I use this website! I LOVE IT! It is a constant open tab (along with my Gmail website) on my computer. I've stopped contributing to Amazon and Chapters – they are just too big. With the Oakville Public Library website, I actually feel like my comments and rating are going to be read and

When's the last time you received

this kind of passionate comment about your website?

Three years ago there was no way the Oakville Public Library (OPL) website would have caused such a reaction. Our website and online catalogue needed help. The Facebooks and Amazons of the world had changed the way people used the internet. More and more of our customer transactions were taking place online, and for many of our customers, online use of the library formed the majority of their experience with us. We knew we had to change or risk losing customers.

But how to do it? As anyone who's tried it knows, re-vamping a website is a mammoth undertaking. We also knew that this couldn't be a simple makeover: we had to drastically re-think the way we were interacting with customers online.

Happily, with Knowledge Ontario we developed a partnership with entrepreneur Beth Jefferson of BiblioCommons.

We wanted a customer-focused website, and she needed a library to help develop her idea of a whole new kind of online library space. Our shared goal was to design an online experience that reflected exactly what our customers wanted.

But what did they want? Customers jumped at the chance to tell us, and months of extensive research ensued. Many wanted better ways to discover the collection, much as they would in a physical library branch: they wanted to "browse the shelves" or look at the recently returned items. But they also wanted more than that. They wanted to know what other people were reading and talking about, they wanted to review and rate items. They wanted to keep better track of their borrowed items.

And they didn't want to have to think like a librarian to find what they were looking for. For the legions of customers used to Google, easier searching would be paramount.



Search





considered. I am able to keep track of what I read, what I liked, what my kids liked, what I want to read for later ... it's great! Also, with two kids under three years old, I find it difficult to browse the books for me (and them). I am thrilled with the 'search the shelf' feature. Even though I find myself running in once a week to pick up a handful of holds, I'm also visiting more with my sons. Thank you so much for this upgrade — it really adds to the sense of community." — Oakville Public Library Customer

INTEGRATING WEBSITE AND CATALOGUE

To make all of this happen, we quickly realized that we would have to completely integrate our website and catalogue. Customers simply don't distinguish between the two. While good at inventory management, the catalogue is not capable of providing the kind of service we wanted to deliver.

This is when the real work started. The staff of BiblioCommons and Oakville's Online Services department began the complex task of integrating the catalogue, our website, and the new discovery features into one seamless online experience. According to Gail Richardson, acting director of Online Services for OPL, "This is a huge leap forward. The BiblioCommons product acts as an OPAC, a Next Generation Catalogue and a Discovery Layer – and we've only just started. The potential to connect our customers with our customers, our customers with our customers, our customers

with collections from customers of other libraries, is huge. With BiblioCommons's hard work and original vision, we're able to connect people and ideas in so many new ways. It is very exciting!" Hundreds of intrepid Oakville residents participated in a lengthy beta-testing phase. Finally, the new website arrived this past July.

What happened next? In the three months since launch, more than 11,000 people have registered with the new website, with more signing up each day. Customers have called the site "addictive" and have said, "I only know a fraction of what is available on the site, but I am still totally amazed at what I have found so far."

The new features are even wowing many of our more savvy users: "I think the new site is awesome! Totally web 2.0 – you've taken all the good practices of Amazon and Chapters-Indigo and worked them into a great, consolidated web presence. Love the star-ratings, the user -generated tags, the networking ... I

showed my Mum how to build lists and rate items yesterday. Bravo! I feel that this is showing my tax dollars put to good work."

With just barely three months of statistics, the popularity of our new site is apparent. Our holds are consistently up 10 per cent over last year. Hits on our website are up 123 per cent over last year and the number of visitors to our website is up 64 per cent over last year. People are using the site again and again to discover new items and information.

As with any new service, there have been a few growing pains. Predictably, a small number of customers weren't happy with the changes. Through feedback forms on every page, we've received everything from the inevitable "I want the old site back" to real, constructive suggestions for improvement. "Change can be tough," says Beth Jefferson, CEO of BiblioCommons. "The front line staff at OPL has done an incredible job of working through the challenges of the









first release. As customer concerns have come forward we've worked together to make real improvements to the site."

One of the issues that had to be resolved was requiring customers to enter an email address when registering for the first time. The beta-testers hadn't balked at providing their email addresses, but when we went live, a small percentage of customers either didn't have email addresses or were uneasy about providing them.

When we decided that, first and foremost, libraries are about accessibility for everyone, BiblioCommons worked quickly to remedy the situation. Customers are now given a choice: they can enter an email address and take part in the full range of services the site provides (such as receiving notices that books are coming due one to five days beforehand), or they can opt out of these services and receive notices from the system in the inbox of their account. This is just one example of some of the many refinements that have taken place since launch.

Which leads to the principle lesson in all of this: just as everyone uses the library in different ways and for different things, everyone wants to use the online library space in different ways and at different levels of engagement. The beauty of our current site is that it allows people to do just this. By heavily involving our customers from the beginning, we have created a website that is truly an extension of the high level of service we provide in our branches. It showcases a library keeping pace with change and remaining relevant to the community. Above all, it is a community space that allows people to exchange ideas, discover new things, and find the information they're looking for quickly and easily – truly the heart of any library's mission.

Melissa Cameron is manager of marketing and development at Oakville Public Library.



Following Oakville

Oakville was the pilot library to receive and test drive the BiblioCommons Online Public Access Catalogue. It was created under a partnership agreement between BiblioCommons, Knowledge Ontario through its Connect Ontario project, and the Provincial Library Services Branch of British Columbia. The partnership involves joint funding for the project.

With the Oakville pilot now successfully completed, Connect Ontario collected expressions of interest from other public libraries with plans to launch an additional 12 to 15 "early adopter" sites in 2009. Several British Columbia libraries are now up and running on BiblioCommons, and plans are underway to extend there as well.

"We are delighted by the early success of this joint venture, and the social networking capabilities it puts at the heart of the online experience for library patrons," says Knowledge Ontario's executive director, David Thornley. "So many patrons prize their libraries and they will revel in the added value of being able to see the covers of books they are interested in, to search easily right from the home page, and to create reviews and find trusted sources among other patrons with similar interests.

"It's also a vibrant way for libraries to stay relevant. Young people who are so at home with internet technology simply expect to find this kind of ease and interaction."

For more information: knowledgeontario.ca/connect

 Louise Slobodian, Communications and Marketing, Knowledge Ontario

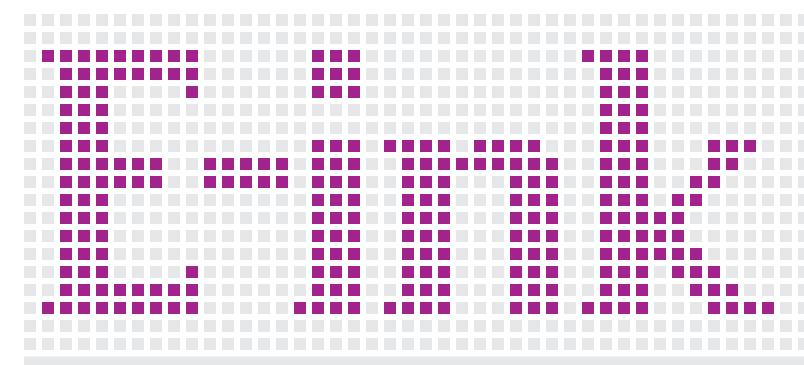


WorldCat.org gives your library more visibility on the Web. It showcases your materials within the largest library network in the world. Your users will connect with more of what they're looking for—more materials, more formats, more social networking features, more languages—in your library, your groups and beyond.

See how to make more connections for your library, at www.worldcat.org.







Mobile devices are increasingly affecting what and how we

read. In fact, my choice of a new cell phone was influenced by the availability of NetLibrary's e-audiobook collection through Guelph Public Library's catalogue. I chose a phone that runs Windows Mobile because it includes a version of Windows Media Player that can play my library's e-audiobooks. Windows Media Player interacts with Microsoft's digital rights management (DRM), which limits how often downloadable audiobooks can be copied and how long they can be played once the DRM license expires.

However, before I could play an e-audiobook, I discovered that I had to apply a software patch to Microsoft Vista's Media Player because of a bug that affected the sync feature. Next I installed an inexpensive audio file player that could remember each place I stopped in the e-audiobook – an improved solution to Windows Mobile Media Player which always returned me to the beginning of the book. Finally, I was ready to listen to e-audiobooks on my new cell phone.

E-BOOK FUNCTIONALITY

While I was new to e-audiobooks, I had been following the development of text e-books for many years. Competing standards and vendor lock-in have always been a problem with e-books. For my computer and my mobile devices I had found Mobipocket to offer the best e-book reader. Fictionwise.com is a great site where I could purchase titles and have the site store them so that they can be transferred to a new computer or other devices. But library e-book services use Adobe Acrobat (PDF) files. NetLibrary's e-books are not downloadable and can be viewed only within a web browser. OverDrive is another company offering PDF e-books for libraries and these files are DRM-based.

Sony's announcement in the summer of 2008 that its e-book

reader could be upgraded to support DRM-based PDF files caught my attention. The Sony Reader is one of the few e-book readers with "e-ink" displays. E-ink displays do not use battery power when displaying text. Paging forward uses a small amount of battery power. An e-ink device, with its high-contrast, lower-power display, comes close to mimicking the feel of reading a paperback.

Support for DRM-based PDF files also means one advantage over the Amazon Kindle, an e-ink device that locks in users to the Amazon store for e-book purchases. By contrast, the Sony Reader works with many e-book stores and the OverDrive service used by libraries. In addition, the Sony Reader was the first e-ink device to provide support for the new EPUB format, a standard promoted by the International Digital Publishing Forum (idpf.org). The EPUB format is an open XML-based standard, has DRM options, and allows publishers to distribute a single electronic product that can display on a multitude of devices.

E-INK DEVICES

As far as e-ink devices go, the Amazon Kindle has had the most press recently. The Kindle, which features a built-in keyboard, sets the bar in e-book functionality despite its lack of support for DRM-based PDF and EPUB files. Amazon provides free access to Sprint's wireless EVDO network, although not in Canada. Amazon has designed the Kindle to stimulate impulse buying from its online bookstore.

In October 2008, Sony offered a new Sony Reader that included a touch screen with annotation capabilities, but no wireless access. Sony also launched a promotion to coincide with the American National Book Month. David Farrow, a speed reader and world record holder for memory feats, sat in a Manhattan

Mobile Devices and How We Read

By Thomas Brenndorfer

Websites for Further Information

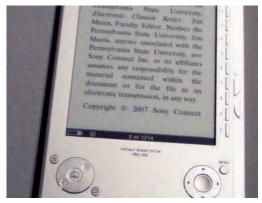


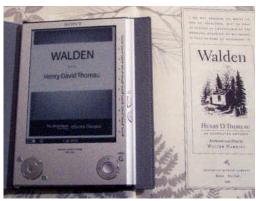
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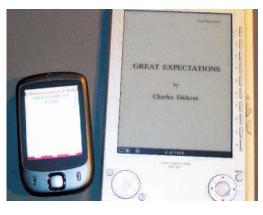
store window for a month and read books on the Sony Reader. Responding to studies indicating that reading for pleasure is declining, Sony launched its promotion to spark the imagination of young people and engage the public in digital reading.

Does reading in e-ink live up to the hype? I think these devices have a place for some readers and for libraries. The number of titles in PDF and EPUB formats is growing steadily. With more conveniences, such as wireless access and built-in dictionaries and annotation capability, these e-ink devices can build on their main features of low power consumption and highly readable screens. While I was reading a downloaded book, I noticed I became absorbed by the text because I was free of the distractions that come from reading on a computer. I think that's the secret of all good reading – if we are fully engaged, then it does not matter what technology we use to read the text.

Thomas Brenndorfer is Technical Services Librarian at the Guelph Public Library. He obtained his Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Western Ontario in 1990.







VOLATILE

By Asha Bajaj

The news of the closure of the Cana-

dian Health Network (CHN) website in April 2008 came as a big blow to all those interested in healthcare in Canada. Since 1999, CHN had been a national, bilingual website providing Canadians with relevant information on healthy living and prevention of disease. Its closure four or five years ago might have been understandable, when it was in the initial stages of development. But by 2008 there was an increase in its overall usage.

Although the CNH website (canadianhealth-network.ca) was managed by the Winnipeg-based Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), it was a collaborative effort of 26 organizations, including government departments, universities, hospitals, libraries, and non-profit health providers. CHN looked at controversial issues from all sides and was constantly updated as new knowledge became available. Due to the budget constraints, the government of Canada ordered PHAC to cut its grants and contributions to outside groups by \$16.7 million, which led to the closure of the CHN site. Most of the participants were shocked. Beginning April 1, 2008, any one who visited the CHN website was automatically redirected to the Public Health Agency of Canada's website (publichealth.gc.ca).

In fact, Health Minister Tony Clement launched a new website (healthycanadians. gc.ca) in October, with the aim of centralizing all of Ottawa's health information in one place. The popular links of the CHN site, however – from health and the environment, disease, poverty, and abortion to sexual abuse and mental illness – were missing.

NETWORKS

Cyberspace's Ups and Downs in Promoting and Protecting the Health of Canadians

The mission of PHAC is to promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation, and action in public health. Its vision is "Healthy Canadians and communities in a healthier world." Its values are leadership, healthy work environment, ethical behaviour, commitment to excellence, and dedication to service.

Since its inception the agency has been working with the provinces, territories, and community organizations - including hospitals and universities – to further develop an effective, coordinated public health system to serve Canadians. The agency visualizes public health in Canada as connected with the health of communities outside our borders. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) reinforced this vision of public health. PHAC works with its domestic and international partners, strengthening the public health infrastructure. It also facilitates dialogue and knowledge sharing among partners, and engages in new research to foresee future health trends. PHAC has a presence in all regions of Canada and with the Northern Secretariat. These offices carry out the agency's mandate through program delivery, research, policy analysis, and public and professional education.

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES? THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

The Public Health Agency of Canada was created in 2004, five years after the inception of the CHN, and now serves as a healthy alternative to CHN. PHAC is part of Health Canada, a department of the government of Canada, and is responsible for public health, emergency preparedness, as well as infectious and chronic disease control and prevention. Its headquarters are located in two places, one in Ottawa, the other at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. The head of the PHAC is the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, Dr. David Butler-Jones.

The Public Health Agency of Canada works with its domestic and international partners, strengthening the public health infrastructure

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PHAC

The National Microbiology Laboratory of PHAC, the only level 4 microbiology lab for human health in Canada, has been selected as the initial chair for the proposed Global Health Security Action Group-Laboratory Network and is also chairing the recently formed International High Security Laboratory Network (all the world's level 4 laboratories).

The WHO Collaborating Centre on Non Communicable Disease Policy housed in the PHAC under the scientific leadership of the Deputy Chief Public Health Officer is the only collaborating centre on non-communicable disease policy in the Americas and Europe, and has become a global centre of excellence in the analysis of chronic disease policy development and implementation.

As a more mature organization, PHAC is collaborating with CHN contributors to provide credible health-related information to more than a million visitors per year at its own website as well as other health-related sites. Although on one hand there had been widespread opposition to the closure of CHN website, on the other hand collaborative efforts of PHAC with CHN contributors in fulfilling the mission of CHN are showing a greater success for public health in Canada. At present there are about 540 provincial public health units and subunits in Canada to oversee the work of PHAC.

Asha Bajaj is Assistant Editor for Scotts Directories - Medical/Health.

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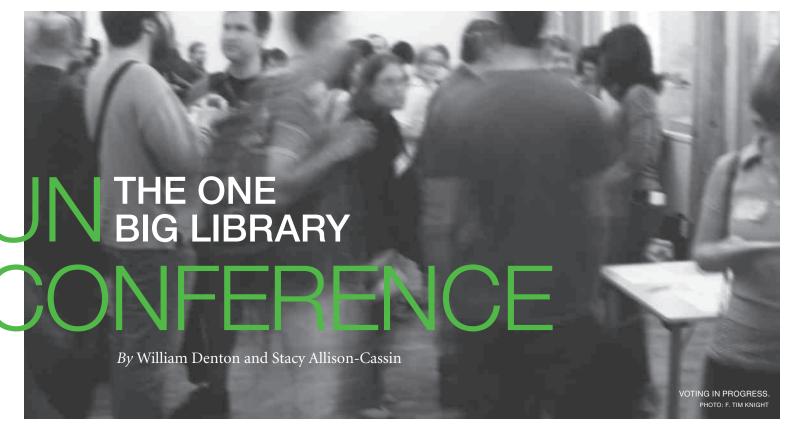
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Seventy of us crowded into the room by 9 o'clock on a hot morning late last June to decide what we'd do for the rest of the day. That's how our unconference worked. We made it up on the spot.

We came from Ontario (Toronto, Sudbury, Windsor, London,

North Bay, Hamilton, Kingston, Waterloo, St. Catharines, etc.), Montreal, New York, Iowa, Ohio, and Virginia. We were librarians – public, academic, school, special, government, law, music. We were there to talk about the One Big Library.

Wendy Newman, senior fellow at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information, put it like this: "It seems like there are lots of different kinds of libraries – public libraries, school libraries, university libraries, college libraries, law libraries, medical libraries, corporate libraries, special libraries, private libraries. But really there's just One Big Library, with branches all over the world."

The authors of this article, along with John Dupuis, fellow York University librarian, thought the One Big Library was an important idea and needed more attention. How do we get a bunch of smart, thoughtful, interested people together to talk about it? Why not host an unconference, where anyone could come, at no cost, with a free lunch?

An unconference is a conference where the participants decide

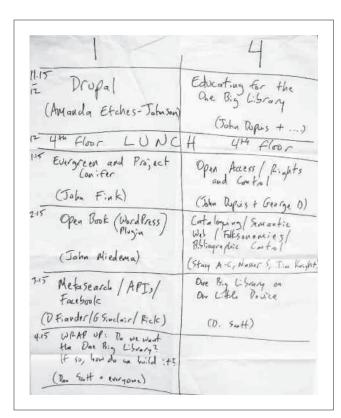
the content. There was a wiki (still up at onebiglibrary.yorku.ca) on which anyone could suggest a topic. For participants, that was all the planning there was. They knew they were to show up in downtown Toronto at the Centre for Social Innovation on June 27, 2008, and what happened after that was up to them. All of the possible sessions, listed on the wiki or suggested that morning, were voted on, and by 10 a.m. the day was scheduled.

There were 10 sessions. The opening and closing sessions were combined, and there were four blocks of two concurrent sessions. Openness was the main theme: open source, open data, open access.

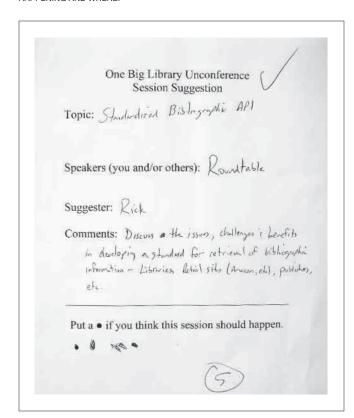
THE SESSIONS

Trevor Owens from the Zotero Project led the first session, telling us about their Firefox plug-in. Zotero supports all parts of the research process, from initial browsing and note-taking to the final citations. It helps people build, manage, and (soon) share their personal branches of the One Big Library.

Track One contained technical sessions. McMaster's Amanda Etches-Johnson and Western's David Fiander led a discussion about the open source website content management system, Drupal. After lunch, McMaster's John Fink talked about open source ILS Evergreen, as well as the ongoing work of Project Conifer to deploy it at McMaster, Laurentian, and the University of Windsor. John Miedema covered his WordPress plug-in, called OpenBook. (With it, a blogger can enter the ISBN of a book and OpenBook will automatically retrieve the author and title details, plus a book cover image from the Open Library.) Three technical sessions were put together into one block: David Fiander on



SCHEDULE. THE UNCONFERENCE PROGRAM. TWO OF THESE, AND THE SCHEDULE PAGE ON THE WIKI, WERE ALL WE NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND WHERE.



 ${\bf VOTING\ FORM.}$ A SUGGESTION SHEET. THE CHECK MARK INDICATES IT MADE IT INTO THE PROGRAM.

metasearching; Geoff Sinclair of Nipissing University on work he had done to make his catalogue easily available on Facebook; and Rick Mason of Capital University on APIs.

Track Two was more conversational. The first session was on educating for the One Big Library. Three recent McGill graduates were commandeered to lead the session: Jacqueline Barlow, Aliki Tryphonopolous, and Marian Davies. George Duimovich from Natural Resources Canada and John Dupuis moderated the session on open access and rights and control of data and systems. In session three, Nasser Saleh of Queen's University, Tim Knight of the Osgoode Law Library, and Stacy Allison-Cassin led a wide-ranging discussion about cataloguing, the Semantic Web, and folksonomies to determine how they fit into the One Big Library. Laurentian's Dan Scott went last, with a session on portable computing, which was titled: One Big Library on One Little Device.

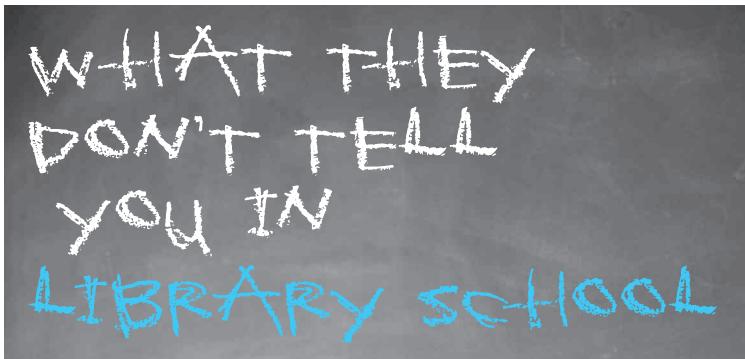
The day wrapped up back in the room where we had started. People from each session summarized what they'd talked about. A common thread of openness had emerged. The One Big Library depends on all being able to share information easily. The conversation didn't stop at the end of the unconference, however. BiblioCommons invited everyone back to its offices for a party, and three dozen of us went. Some continued on to a pub after that. Library talk continued until after midnight.

NEXT STEPS

We didn't come out of the unconference with an absolute definition of where the One Big Library is right now, or what next steps we need to take to help push it along. But we'd seen some of its building blocks and talked about some of its aspects. The informal nature of the unconference, including the direct participant involvement in deciding what would happen, the freedom to speak up during the sessions, and the balance between the semi-structured format of sessions and common break schedules all created an open, engaging environment that encouraged the discussion of ideas, possibilities, and practices. With less money available for travel and more concern over carbon footprints, small, mostly local, informal, participant-driven unconferences may grow in popularity. Will there be another one next year? Perhaps. Organize one where you are, on a topic that you care about, and see what happens.

William Denton is the web librarian at York University.

Stacy Allison-Cassin is the music cataloguer at York University.



By Bessie Sullivan

I was a starry-eyed student at the McGill Library School in the early '90s. I happily learned to catalogue (I aced that Dewey test, by the way), puzzled over the notion of collections development, and embraced my inner techie as I built databases and conducted timed Boolean searches on what was a fairly new internet. Not once during that period did the reality of what it really meant to work in a public setting that is a library ever set in.

Throughout the years I have found myself in situations that make me wonder about what I'd thought being a professional librarian meant. I recently polled my colleagues at Kingston Frontenac Public Library on the "things I never thought I would have to do as a librarian." From their suggestions and my own experiences, I've compiled a list of 10 observations:

1. PLUNGE TOILETS

Although this seems so obvious ... you do it at home so why not at work? I guess I always thought there would be other people to do that. But with budget cuts and shrinking staff numbers there never seem to be any other people.

2. GATHER GROCERY CARTS

I don't know what happens in your parking lots, but I often have abandoned grocery carts taking up spots in ours. My record for carts in a day is four ... from three different stores! The stores are very good about coming around with a truck and collecting the carts. But what truly amazes me is the time it takes to remedy the situation. First, I round up the carts. Next, I figure out which stores they are from. Then I wade through the web of hierarchy at said grocery stores to reach someone who actually cares. Finally, I impart the message that one of their carts has gone astray.

3. SELL THINGS

We've all sold baked goods, tote bags, gift cards, and pens to raise money for our libraries. This constant quest for dollars through grants, community partnerships, fundraising, and the tax base is a reality. Yet the future need to embark on such a quest does not occur to the average library student. I, for one, always figured public libraries had money. Somehow it just magically appeared so that I would have a lovely place to work. Consequently I must thank all those taxpayers out there who provide a place for me to justify my expensive education.

4. REMOVE BATS AND RODENTS

One of the branches at Kingston Frontenac Public Library uses an old farm house. For the first few years bats kept finding their way into the branch. One evening I found myself armed with a bucket and a large piece of cardboard. I was swinging the bucket around in the general vicinity of the bat and somehow managed to snatch it out of the air. I clamped the cardboard over the bucket and released the bat outside. I had a student at the time who stood there watching. I think I heard him murmur "Impressive!" under his breath as the poor mammal got trapped in the bucket.

5. MAN THE BAR

A.k.a.: Prevent people from drinking in the library. Fellow public librarians, do you ever feel like a bartender? After one particularly blatant display of consumption of alcohol in our library, I found myself looking around to see what was on tap! Did I miss the announcement that we'd secured a licence? It might be an interesting way to add to revenue. Circulation desks kind of look like bars, don't they?

6. BREAK UP FIGHTS

Continuing on with the bar theme, I never pictured myself stepping into the middle of a brawl when I was studying the Dewey Decimal system. The strangest part about one of the fights I had to break up was that I'm certain the argument erupted over who was viewing more objectionable material on the public stations. "You are a pervert!" "No, *you* are!" "Oh yeah? Well I'm more of one than you!"

7. SNIFF BOOKS

Often I'm forced to see myself through the eyes of others. Our library received a particularly fragrant batch of books back from somewhere and I started sniffing them to identify the offending odour. You know ... to decide if I should discard them or if a good airing would remedy the problem. I was caught doing so by a student who had a very puzzled look on his face, as if to ask: "What are you doing?" I found myself explaining that books come back smelling of urine (I'm never sure if it's animal or human), smoke, mould, and many other things I can't even imagine. For some reason I'm compelled to sniff returned books. Judging from the response of my colleagues, I'm not alone.

8. COLLECT CANS

In our area, Habitat for Humanity collects aluminum cans. They sell them to purchase building materials. I collect cans from three branches and deliver them to Habitat in clear plastic bags. As a library student I could not have anticipated the place that the librarian occupies as a leader in the community. It seems to me that people in stable, safe houses are more likely to be library users. Why else would I spend my lunch hours delivering cans if it weren't to secure more patrons?

9. MANAGE THE LOST AND FOUND

Twice a year I go through the lost and found for three branches, wash the clothes, and donate them to the Salvation Army Thrift Store. As a student, it never occurred to me that recycling would be such a huge part of a librarian's job.

10. CARE

The 10th thing that I never thought I would do in my professional life was to care so profoundly for the communities and people I serve. Libraries and librarians play a much bigger role than I ever imagined as a student 15 years ago.

Bessie Sullivan has worked as a branch librarian for the Kingston Frontenac Public Library for almost 10 years. When she isn't rounding up shopping carts she likes to read and be physically active.

angle

CYBERINFRASTRUCTURE

Cyber what? Cyberinfrastructure (CI) is a new concept that describes the highly sophisticated information technology infrastructure needed to support advanced, groundbreaking research. The components of CI are such things as advanced networks, massively distributed computers, enormous storage, visualization tools, remote sensors, and collaboration tools. And people. Librarians.

By Michael Ridley

This isn't just a better internet and its got nothing to do with web 2.0. Cyberinfrastructure is about problem solving and nation building in the virtual realm.

In the early days, cyberinfrastructure was called "e-science." This was unfortunate since it is about much more than science, and arguably the biggest impact of CI will be in the humanities. In Canada we tried to call it "networked-enabled environments" (ouch!). The European Union, the Australians, and the Americans have a significant head start in creating a national CI. Aside from Alberta, which has started to build a provincial CI, Canada is largely missing in action on this one. And it is something we need be concerned about.

What are the components of CI? For the most part CI is comprised of fairly cool but admittedly geeky stuff: very fast computers (grids, clusters, supercomputers), high-speed and high-capacity networks (fibre optic lightpaths, for example), lots and lots of data storage (petabytes, maybe exabytes), temote sensors and instrumentation (for environmental monitoring, climate data, cosmology), visualization and interpretation tools (that analyze and present data in different ways), and advanced collaboration tools (that enable people to engage and contribute from around the world).

One of the technology layers of CI is often called middleware. Middleware is the tools and services that connect all the other layers (hardware, software, networks, people). Much of the innovation and insight comes from the middleware. Without trying to push this metaphor too far, it seems to me that libraries and librarians are the ultimate middleware. And that is why I see them as the missing ingredients in the evolution of CI.

Another aspect of the middleware concept can be seen in the research organizations that have been created to leverage the capabilities of cyberinfrastructure. These are Virtual Research Organizations (VROs) that have no physical manifestation but rather are massively distributed organizations linked by technology. VROs are fueled by information, particularly the specialized information set in the context of the problem being solved. These VROs are not being well served by research libraries although the members of these organizations are typically university faculty and graduate students. Instead they are developing their own capacities and expertise. Librarians and their invaluable expertise need to find their way into these VROs.

A catalyst for building CI is the availability of data on the network. Lots of data – massive amounts of data. The Large Hadron Collider at CERN didn't cause a black hole when it started up but it did initiate a cataclysmic flow of data – more than 15 million gigabytes a year. How will we understand this much data? We won't. CI tools will monitor, analyze, and recommend answers or interpretations. The operative phrase is "correlation is enough." It will be sufficient proof to see in the data patterns evidence to suggest an answer. As a result, getting

data modeling and data interpretation right will be a critical function. This suggests that librarians must branch out from their focus on texts and documents (an honourable pursuit but no longer fully sufficient) to specialize in the arcane arts of data, numbers, statistics, numerical transformations, and just plain complex math. Numbers not letters.

One of the reasons Canada is struggling with CI is the lack of national focus. In the U.S. the National Science Foundation has taken the lead, and there are similar organizations in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Australia. In Canada there is no equivalent central agency. In typical Canadian fashion, we will have to build a coalition of organizations to advance this agenda. Groups like CANARIE (the national advanced network organization), CUCCIO (the Canadian university CIOs), CRKN (the Canadian Research Knowledge Network), CARL (the research libraries), and Compute Canada (the high-perfor-

Installation & Maintenance

mance computing group) will have to find the common ground and shared determination to build a strategy and coordinate the implementation. The failure of these groups to cooperate will profoundly hurt Canada's capacity to participate in the 21st-century world of research and development.

Cyberinfrastructure may be just a new buzz word to you now. However, it represents a significant challenge to our country and an important opportunity for our profession. Librarians are the missing components of the CI model. Perhaps the Ontario Library Association can, as it has done so many times before with other initiatives, take a leading role in this innovation.

IT Network Service & Support

Children's Stations

Michael Ridley is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph.



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watch

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT LINES OF WEB 2.0

MICROBLOGGING GETTING LESS OUT OF YOUR BLOG

By Amanda Etches-Johnston

You can't toss a dart towards a library conference program these days without hitting a session on blogging. Blogs were, arguably, the first major web 2.0 application that libraries turned to in considerable numbers. Libraries are blogging about their news, events, programs, collections, suggestion box submissions, renovation projects, technology implementations, and more. They're also blogging about some of the larger issues in the knowledge economy: literacy, intellectual freedom, copyright, and civil liberties, among others (check out the Blogging Libraries Wiki for a fairly comprehensive look at what libraries are doing with blogs blogwithoutalibrary.net/links).

While blogging still continues to be a popular communication method for libraries, there's a new kid on the blogging block that provides a little something different that could allow libraries to take their blogging in a different direction ...

MEET MICROBLOGGING

Microblogging is exactly what the name suggests: short blog posts. While you might not have heard of microblogging, my guess is that you've probably heard of Twitter (twitter.com). On Twitter, users answer the question "What are you doing?" in brief textual updates of 140 characters or less. Sounds ridiculously inane, right? Well, it can be. But Twitter works for the same reason that applications like Facebook and MySpace work: they're social applications that revolve around *friends*. Just as Facebook is a vapid void until you start "friending" people, Twitter can be a quiet, boring place until you've got friends to "follow" who also follow you.

WE ALREADY HAVE BLOGS: DO WE REALLY NEED MICROBLOGS?

As a format, blogs are conducive to certain types of conversations: reverse-chronological posts ensure that the most recent content is always at the top of the page, categories allow users to browse similar posts, and comments facilitate conversation between the library and its community. All useful features, to be sure, but have you ever written a blog post for your library, or read another library blog, and despaired at the utilitarian nature of the posts and the lack of interaction with users? While it's important to keep your library's users up to speed on network status and maintenance downtimes, sometimes there is just no way to make that post about the printer network being down sound interesting and engaging!

I'd wager that less than half the posts on most library blogs are interesting enough to warrant comments from users. That's not to disparage any library blogs; rather it's about recognizing that we're using our blogs to post announcements and updates that really could be better handled by another tool – perhaps one that allows users to receive updates via text and IM, rather than just RSS (as is the case with most blogs). Enter Twitter.

TWITTER IN PRACTICE

There are already a few libraries making use of Twitter to send their message out to their users. The Undergraduate Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign uses Twitter for everything from network status updates to reminders about open student positions at the library. They also syndicate their Twitter updates on their homepage (library.uiuc.edu/ugl/).

Cleveland Public Library posts updates about interesting items from the collection on its Twitter stream, including links to catalogue records (twitter.com/Cleveland_PL). The reference staff at the Nebraska Library Commission publishes the reference questions they receive to their Twitter account in an attempt to market the service (twitter.com/NLC_Reference). The Missouri River Regional Library posts reminders about upcoming programs and pictures from library events to its Twitter stream (www.twitter.com/mrrl). The Science Libraries at Yale use Twitter to promote new resources, upcoming events, and general announcements about the library (twitter.com/yalescilib).

YOU STILL LOOK SKEPTICAL

I'm always the first to admit: not every 2.0 tool is for every library. If your library is doing just fine with the social applications and 2.0 channels you already use, then you can probably walk on by with nary a glance at microblogging. But if what you've read so far intrigues you, try this: set up an account for

your library on Twitter and publish your network status messages to it. Then add a Twitter "badge" to your news page (or any page) listing your most recent updates. Provide a link to the RSS feed as well and start publicizing your Twitter stream. Encourage your users to add the library account as a friend and allow them to get network updates via their cell phones or their favourite Instant Messaging client.

If library 2.0 is all about getting our content out to where our users are, Twitter just might be able to get you a step closer.

Amanda Etches-Johnson is the User Experience Librarian at McMaster University. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario. Both of her jobs are pretty 2.0 focused, and that makes her happy. You can find her online at blogwithoutalibrary.net.



library

marketplace

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS, AND LIBRARIES



By Catherine Baird

When people think about marketing and advertising, they often associate these activities with an external focus. There's messaging and audience to think about, and then there are fun promotional activities such as contests and events. Don't get me wrong, these things are all important, and as a librarian who does this kind of work, they indeed occupy quite a bit of my time and energy.

However, one thing that I've learned after just over a year on the job is that the external-facing stuff works much better if you have solid internal communications in place.

In fact, in my eyes, that's one of the main distinctions between marketing and communications. Marketing considers external stakeholders or audiences, whereas communications is broader. It includes internal stakeholders – everyone who works at the library.

Why is this important? Consider what you would do if you were thinking of putting a house up for sale. What would you focus on first? You'd tidy up, de-clutter, streamline your belongings, slap on a bit of paint, and fix a leaky tap or two.

Before you go and buy the air freshener to spray around your library, the point I'm making is that before you advertise, before you promote, before you even can think about air freshener ... you need to streamline your internal communications.

There are several reasons for this. Say you've done some promotion on a new series of workshops happening at the library. If people from your community show up for these workshops and no one behind the desk knows a thing about

it, you're in trouble. There's an easy solution, though, and that's just making sure that everyone who works at the library knows about the new workshops.

There's an even better solution. Instead of simply knowing about the workshops, wouldn't it be great if the staff were so excited about them that they enthusiastically directed people to them, or utilized their own personal and social networks (online or otherwise) to help get the word out?

You need to be able to harness the energy of all library employees, convince them that there's a message that's worth communicating to patrons. In order to do this, you will have to do more than just circulate a calendar of events. You have to engage people. In short, you'll have to promote internally before you even think about going outside.

One way to facilitate this internal promotion is to incorporate communication planning into your day-to-day activities and projects. Communication planning for a project would involve the following:

- Crafting a short statement to describe the project or activity to be communicated
- Deciding who needs to know, either because they will have to tell other people about it, or because you want them to become an end-user
- Identifying a number of activities, such as email, blog posts, presentations to groups, launch events, or articles in a newsletter

Once you've created a communication plan a few times, you'll have an arsenal of activities for both internal and external audiences.

Getting everyone involved in marketing and communications is much like having everyone over to your house before you put it on the market. Not only are you asking them to paint, fix, patch, clean, and de-clutter, but you're also getting them excited about this great gem of a house that's about to be sold. They'll tell a couple of their friends and family members. Maybe they'll even post some pictures on Facebook. Before you know it, that house will have more than a few offers.

YOU NEED TO BE ABLE
TO HARNESS THE ENERGY OF
ALL LIBRARY EMPLOYEES,
CONVINCE THEM THAT THERE'S
A MESSAGE THAT'S WORTH
COMMUNICATING TO PATRONS

If you have any feedback about this article, or you're interested in obtaining a template for communications planning, contact Catherine Baird, the Marketing, Communications and Outreach Librarian at McMaster University Library in Hamilton, Ontario. bairdca@mcmaster.ca





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readers' advisory

PROMOTING ENJOYMENT AND PASSION FOR THE WORLD OF BOOKS

Book By

As wonderful as book clubs are, the reality is there are challenges. Occasionally, both library and community-based groups may require resuscitation. Through something called Book Club Rx, as a group leader you can help them overcome some common stumbling blocks.

By Sharron Smith

One commonly faced challenge – something that can result in member drop out – is when the balance between book discussion and socializing is uneven. Sometimes, there's too much gossip. A simple fix is to encourage an annual group review. Ask if discussions are meeting expectations, establish goals for meetings, and find out what kind of atmosphere would be best. These questions can open a dialogue, and will remind participants why they joined a discussion group in the first place. The review can also lead to renewed common goals.

A lack of preparedness can also contribute to less-than-successful discussions. Avoid this by ensuring readers have access to discussion resources. Send out monthly emails with links to reading guides, author profiles, interviews, podcasts, and book trailers. Participants will feel they are informed, and this communication will have the added benefit of serving as a meeting reminder. Remember that it can be difficult to sustain discussion if there aren't enough people in the group; most experts agree the ideal group size is eight to 10. And finally, remember to build a small amount of time for chat into each meeting: it will contribute to overall group success.

At some point, you may find yourself faced with the challenge of dealing with a person who dominates a meeting; this can potentially fracture a group. It is important to remember that every group needs to be kept on track. You should consider if this is why someone is dominating – the group may not have enough structure for the dominating person and she is applying it. If this happens, speak to the individual privately. Also, be sure that everyone understands that a discussion is not school, there is no test, and ultimately there are no right answers. It can help to remind everyone that no two people

read the same book. As a result, all perspectives and comments have value.

From time to time, dissatisfaction may also arise related to book selection. In a recent book group survey, respondents said that book selection was a contributing factor to them not finishing certain books, or even dropping out of a group. To address this, ask members to describe their perfect book. As a group leader, this conversation can provide your participants with information about the group, and will help you gain understanding of individual reading preferences. This understanding is at the heart of every reader's advisory transaction. Every RA knows that not every book will appeal to every reader. During this conversation, remind them that one of the reasons they joined a book club was to discover new books – books they might not otherwise have read.

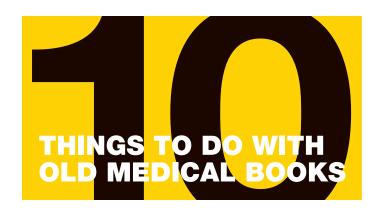
As well, help them understand the appeal factors (character, language, setting, and frame), but refer to them as "storytelling styles." Explain that all authors have their own way of telling a story. Sharing this in advance will help them come to the discussion prepared to talk about whether or not the author was successful in telling their story, and will move members away from simply saying, "I didn't like it!"

Helping readers understand the power and importance of story is at the heart of readers' advisory. By practicing a bit of Book Club Rx, your book groups can have a more enriching and positive reading experience.

Sharron Smith is with Kitchener Public Library: sharron.smith@kpl.org.

health Watch

KEEPING WATCH OVER LIBRARIANS' HEALTH ISSUES



By Elyse Pike

I admit I am possibly one of the cheapest people on this planet. Not only am I cheap (I actually prefer the word *frugal*), but I am also a packrat, a compulsive keeper and a recycler. It breaks my heart to see good stuff go into the trash. So when it came time recently to cull my medical book collection, I had a hard time.

I needed to cull for two reasons:

- 1. Our library footprint is big and the hospital is crying for spaces for teaching rooms and computer instruction areas. So before the library space is wrenched from my hands by a cruel, unfeeling hospital facilities planner, I made a preemptive strike and chose to incorporate a small instructional space into the library proper. As a result, I need to free up some floor space.
- 2. Many of my books are old. Not dusty, mildewy, or spider-webby old, but old for a medical book, whose useful life is about five years. Besides, we have the most recent editions available electronically.

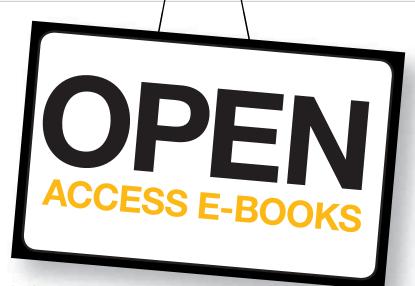
I now have boxes and boxes of pristine, older textbooks that I want to find a second use for. Used bookstores are not interested. Our local public library book sale kindly but firmly declined my offer of the 15 boxes. Donations to underdeveloped countries sounded good until I dug and found donations were welcome as long as material is less than five years old. Dumping the boxes seemed to be my last resort, but we have to pay tipping fees and these have increased lately. In this tight market, dumping is not an attractive option.

In desperation, I came up with these next 10 alternative ideas:

- Place them in four equal piles two-feet high, glue them together, and use as supports for a sheet of glass. Now you have a lovely coffee table.
- Make a hollow book to hide treasures or use as a jewelry box. Instructions at wikihow.com/Make-a-Hollow-Book. No one will question why you have a 15-year-old Merck Manual on your shelf. Your valuables will be as safe as safe can be.
- 3. Give them to your mother-in-law. My mother-in-law treats her cats like her babies, so perhaps she would like the outdated *Rudolph's Pediatrics* to help her resolve some of Sweetums's veterinary needs.
- 4. Use the books' pretty illustrations as Christmas wrapping paper. Nothing says "festive" quite like the step-by-step colour illustrations for keyhole surgery of gall stones.
- 5. Use a pile of these books for step aerobics. Add a new challenge to your aerobics workout by stepping on and off the three-volume surgical pathology set. You will no longer need to visit the gym. Save on gas and parking fees, and who cares if you aren't wearing the latest in workout wear (or any workout wear for that matter!).
- 6. Use as a booster seat. When small bodies can't reach the table, use a copy of Canadian Pharmaceutical Specialties to bring them up to eye level. Those slick, shiny covers wipe right off in case of spills.
- Rip out pages, ball them up, and use as fire starters. Fuel costs are rising as the economy tanks. This could be the only way to keep warm this year.
- 8. Children's crafts. Two words: papier mâché!
- Personal use for self-diagnosis. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* surely has something in it to appeal to everyone. Tip: the DSM gives great tips on symptoms if you need a few days off and want to claim mental fatigue.
- 10. Construction material. In the end, I think I am just going to pile up my discards and use them to build the new wall for the instruction room in my hospital's library. Medical books are solid, strong, and have great insulation value. It's a cheap solution, and Holmes on Homes would be proud.

Elyse Pike is the medical librarian for Grey Bruce Health Services, Owen Sound, and she is adding a classroom to her library. Unfortunately the building code does not recognize medical textbooks as structurally sound. library@gbhs.on.ca eye on the web

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES
ON THE INTERNET



By Jennifer Dekker

Libraries have changed so much over the last 25 years that readers at least occasionally lament the loss of printed book collections and a cherished, if nostalgic, ideal of what a library is. Quiet spaces have been replaced by computing centres, foyers are home to coffee bars, and browsing library shelves may not offer as many treasures as it once did. The days of getting lost in a mass of interesting, eclectic, old, and lovely books sometimes feel as though they are over.

But electronic content, and specifically e-books, has advantages for both library and reader. Aside from saving space on library shelves, e-books provide clients with a vast range of material for low cost. Some e-book collections offer features that a printed book never could: links to knowledge tools such as dictionaries or atlases, the ability to instantly change text size, and excellent search functions. E-books also offer historical content that many libraries would never have been able to acquire in print. The research value of these texts is undeniable.

Being able to take full advantage of e-books can be challenging though, especially when they are available on various platforms, have unique collection features, and look completely different onscreen. Regardless, when one can read the original text written by the Venerable Bede, or Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (or Tacitus, or Virgil, and so on), the advantages of e-books make challenges seem insignificant by comparison.

Here we are covering only a few open access e-book collections:

PERSEUS DIGITAL LIBRARY (A.K.A. PERSEUS HOPPER)

www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper Perseus's flagship collection, started in 1987, covers the history, literature, and culture of the Greco-Roman world. Newer projects include Arabic and German collections, 19th-century American history, and Renaissance and non-literary papyri. It includes both primary texts as well analytical works. Features of the Perseus library are impressive: clicking on most words in the digital text gives the reader definitions, parses, dictionary entries, and frequency statistics. The reader can choose from various types of Greek font display, or can display in Unicode or in transliteration from the Arabic collection. Tables of contents are included with hyperlinks to sections or chapters of works for easy navigation. One can also choose to view the text grouped by chapter, book, or folio page. Perseus Digital Library is a valuable addition to any classics or history collection.

BEING ABLE TO TAKE FULL
ADVANTAGE OF E-BOOKS
CAN BE CHALLENGING THOUGH,
ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY
ARE AVAILABLE ON VARIOUS
PLATFORMS, HAVE UNIQUE
COLLECTION FEATURES, AND
LOOK COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT ONSCREEN.

While books printed on paper are embraced for their warmth, portability, and ease of use, e-books offer an important opportunity for collection development. The potential for filling in historical gaps while not burdening library shelves is but one reason to provide access to e-books. Although this article has not directly addressed the issue of marketing, it is hoped that the collections of e-books mentioned here cause librarians to think about how best to present the positive features of e-books to readers who are not yet aware of the advantages of this format.

Jennifer Dekker is a librarian at the University of Ottawa.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO BOOKS ONLINE

link.library.utoronto.ca/booksonline At the time of writing, this collection contained 858 works from the University of Toronto library that are no longer protected by copyright. This means that all content is published before 1923. The collection comprises scanned images of books, enabling readers to see original typeface, pagination, and any marginalia or author signature appearing on pages. Enhanced features of this database include the option to change image size and the ability to skip to highlights, including illustrations, tables, or indexes. If the reader prefers to see only the text rather than the page image, the View Text option is available.

THE INTERNET ARCHIVE

archive.org

The Internet Archive is a digital portal containing many types of online information, but the Texts section is the focus here. Within Texts, one can search Canadian library collections, as well as American libraries, Project Gutenberg (see below for more information), a substantial collection from 10 natural history museums, a children's library, and others. The Canadian libraries include several academic libraries. Library and Archives Canada, the Toronto Reference Library, Havergal College, the Ontario Legislative Library, and others. What is most impressive about this portal (apart from fantastic collections) is the speed with which one downloads colour images, and the options for downloading files. Readers can choose from "flip book" (software flips pages as though one were reading a print book), .pdf, full text (text only), or DJVU, which installs a reader enabling high-quality and easy-to-read images onscreen.

The Internet Archive is vast and wonderful. It presents research and reading possibilities that are too numerous to describe here. Visit the site to see for yourself.

PROJECT GUTENBERG

gutenberg.org/wiki

This volunteer initiative to digitize texts that are no longer protected by copyright began in 1971 and has an open and simple philosophy: provide as many texts as possible for as little cost to the widest audience possible. The texts are all available in "plain vanilla ACSII," which means that they are delivered quickly over slow internet connections and without any special formatting. At one time, content was mainly literary, but recent additions to Project Gutenberg indicate that content is much broader. One of the top downloads is Manual of Surgery, First Volume: General Surgery. There are more than 25,000 texts in the Project Gutenberg collection but new e-books are added every day. This is a multilingual collection with many minor languages represented. It also contains audio books, sheet and recorded music, and archival moving pictures.

every book, Its reader

CONNECTING COLLECTIONS
WITH READERS

The 21st-Century Patron

By Eva McDonald

I've been researching the future of libraries and library collections, but no matter which journals, presentations, podcasts, blogs, and wikis I read or listen to, I can't help feeling that there's some critical piece missing in the discussion. I believe that critical piece is the patron. Something interesting is happening to patrons that will affect their relationship to the library and the collection, and that something will, in turn, have a direct impact on the mission, scope, and future of the institution.

People who write or talk about the internet often use terms such as "paradigm shift," "new epoch," "wired revolution," and others that evoke a radical transformation. One phrase that seems to be gaining momentum was coined by Clay Shirky, the internet pundit: "phase shift." Shirky prefers "phase shift" because recent history has shown that there is nothing gradual about internet adoption. As soon as developing countries have the infrastructure in place, everyone seems to start using it overnight. But what, exactly, is the radical transformation being referred to by experts? I think that the revolution is the creation of the 21st-century user.

If you've studied history, you've run across the idea of parachronism. Parachronism occurs when you inadvertently project your thoughts and knowledge and feelings onto an event in the past that you are studying. For example, when I taught history to undergraduates, they would always remark on how stupid the people in medieval times must have been. After all, wouldn't simple observation and basic calculations reveal that the planets revolve around the sun, and not around the earth? It was always satisfying to explain that in the middle ages, authority trumped everything, even observation. If the church said that the sun and planets revolved around the earth, then it must be true, in spite of observations to the contrary. To the medieval mind, all that is material is illusion anyway. As Paul wrote, "We see as through a glass, darkly." The lesson:

one can't assume that people from other eras think like we do, yet that is exactly what we do when we try to predict the future of collections. We fall prey to parachronism except that, rather than looking to the past, we project our knowledge and way of thinking onto future generations.

Mark Federman is the former Chief Strategist of the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto, and is now at OISE. Carrying on McLuhan's work, Federman makes a strong case for modes of communication shaping consciousness and identity throughout history. His argument goes like this ... In the prehistoric era, before the invention of writing, everything was communicated orally. An esteemed person was someone who could recite the history of the community faithfully. If you were an esteemed person, you might be a ruler, and your domain would extend as far as the spoken word could travel without loss of meaning (signal lossage). The extent of the kingdom would be the area covered by one degree of separation, e.g., a village. Who you are in this time period is equal to where you fit in the village hierarchy.

RECENT HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT THERE IS NOTHING GRADUAL ABOUT INTERNET ADOPTION

About 4000 BC, humans invented writing. If you were an esteemed person, you could read and write, and if you were a ruler too, your domain could extend beyond the spoken word. As long as there was someone else who could also read and write, you could transmit your decrees to them without any signal loss over time or distance. This new mode of communication transformed the community's relationship to other communities. Who you are in this time period is still community-based, but

THIS IS A GENERATION FOR WHICH IT IS NOT ONLY COMMON-PLACE BUT EXPECTED THAT YOU HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH EVERYONE ELSE AROUND THE WORLD

rooted in a more complex and extensive hierarchy.

Fast-forward to the 15th century and the invention of the printing press. We all know what happens next: the masses get their hands on the Bible, literacy spreads, people start having their own ideas about the church (among other things), and the western world enters a long period of secession and reform of both church and state. Who you are in this time period is no longer determined by the community alone, but by the individual. The late 15th century marks the beginning of individualism, an idea that gained currency through the Enlightenment of the 18th century and industrialism in the 20th century.

With the invention of the internet, Federman thinks we are again entering a new epoch of communication that will define the consciousness of mankind, and fundamentally affect how identity is constructed. He sets the beginning of this era as 1995, the year when Netscape had its initial public offering, forever validating and cementing the internet as a permanent technology in the collective mind of society.

Cast your mind back to 1995. If you recall, what we now know as web 1.0 was the passive web, with a one-way flow of information. There was text and pictures to be found, but not much audio and video due to bandwidth issues. The interactive part of the web was confined to BBSs and news groups. The software required for the former (web browsers) was different from the software required for the latter (news readers).

A few years later, server space became inexpensive and regular people starting putting up websites. Blogging software made it easy for the average person to create and maintain web journals, without knowing any HTML coding. When the comments feature was added to blogging software, we saw the beginning of web 2.0.

Federman thinks the reason web 2.0 is so revolutionary is that we're entering an age of mass collaborative intelligence. One can see this collaborative intelligence at work in Wikipedia, Flickr, and other sites that fall under the broad category of social networking. Anyone born after 1995 is growing up in a world that Federman refers to as "UCaPP": ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity. This is an era which produces content and immediate responses without signal loss – an instantaneous feedback loop. This is a generation for which it is not only commonplace but expected that you have conversations with everyone else in the world. Federman theorizes that this new mode of communication will cause individual identity to be replaced by collaborative identity. In other words, who you are in this time period is no longer determined by the individual, but by everybody else.

Those of us born in the last century are enculturated to believe that the individual matters, that the individual is responsible, and that the individual determines her own identity. I believe that we're beginning to witness the erosion of these ideas, concepts that go back to the Enlightenment. Federman says that the full transformation of western society cannot happen until everybody who was born before 1995 is dead, but that it is inevitable.

I believe Federman is correct, and that we're starting to see the phenomenon of this new enculturation happening in high school and postsecondary students, people who were between two to 10 years old in 1995. For example, this youthful generation seems to have a complete lack of concern about privacy on the internet. They have no reservations about posting personal information on the web, such as real names, addresses, phone numbers, class schedules, photos, and so on. I've heard the argument that someone who does not post her private information on the internet must have something to hide. Given the risk of identity theft, this reasoning appears illogical, but for someone whose identity is constructed by the collective, it makes sense. All these other people in the world determine your identity, so you have nothing to hide from them.

Another example is how this cohort uses social networking tools such as MySpace or Facebook. If I join a Facebook group, it's because I have an active interest in the subject and find it a convenient way to keep up to date with the latest news. Once I am no longer interested in that subject, I leave the group. I've observed that members of this younger demographic join many, many groups, sometimes hundreds of them. They can't possibly keep up with all the news, and in fact they don't. These groups are added because they are facets of that person's identity, an identity that is not only constructed online, but projected and maintained online as well.

I don't have the space in this article to cover what I think are other key aspects of this new wired generation, but I believe it's important to keep in mind that when we're making predictions about the future of libraries, we're talking about serving a population that thinks quite differently from our own, due to their radically divergent enculturation. Friends, things are about to get interesting.

Eva McDonald is the electronic resources librarian at the Bibliocentre, and draws the Access cartoon feature, Tales from the Front Lines. She can be reached at eva.mcdonald@bibliocentre.ca.

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HOW CAN A LIBRARY CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUPPLIER?

By David Swords

Book suppliers' announcement and approval services, cataloguing, and physical processing save libraries money and make them more efficient. Right now in North America, three able companies are ready to battle for every account. How do you choose wisely among them?

RFPs are common instruments for selecting suppliers but may be a poor approach. To select its approval vendor, the University of Ottawa tested each supplier under live circumstances on a day-to-day basis. The process was lengthy, but when a relationship should last for years, the investment can pay handsomely. Nonetheless, testing requires more time than most libraries have, and RFPs often are an administrative requirement. All suppliers are selling, and their proposals typically become sales documents. Your job is to get through the claims to the reality.

The most important element in the process is constructing the RFP itself. Unless consciously built to elicit truths, an RFP will yield mostly unverifiable claims.

Vendors offer discounts in different ways, making them difficult to compare. One way is to determine cost efficiency is to require examples of five or 10 titles that would fit the rule and the exceptions for the terms suppliers offer. Carefully choose a list of books that includes many types of monograph – proceedings, titles from societies, minor works by major publishers – as part of

the RFP. Ask for the list price, the sale price, the discount, and any handling fees.

In academic books sales, we subsist on the narrow isthmus between the price we pay for a book and the price you pay for it. Differences in terms will be pretty small and may prove a minor concern. Buying books is in many respects the polar opposite of buying commodities because for books the real price is the efficiency of overall service. How can an RFP hope to get at and measure this abstraction?

The key in composing questions for the RFP is to relate them to the efficiencies you hope to gain rather than to focus on general capabilities. Suppose your goal is to efficiently put books on shelves that patrons want. You could express the goal as: How much does it cost to make a book available?

In the RFP require a list of titles each of the companies handled in straightforward subjects, such as nanotechnology, over three months. Include also a less clear-cut subject such as urban design, and add modifiers, either by subject (brown fields in urban design), format (references and proceedings), or level (popular, academic), and so forth. Ask for prices.

The resulting lists in the hands of selectors will help you understand the suppliers. Lists that have gaps mean your library will have to find those titles by other means. Lists that include

THE BURDEN OF THE RFP IS TO MOVE PAST THE WELL-MEANING APPRAISALS OF OUR REFERENCES TO THE TRUTHS OF EFFICIENCY

inappropriate titles suggest that returns will ensue and that selectors will need to weed inappropriate material. The burden of the RFP is to give you information rather than hyperbolic claims about capabilities.

Nearly all RFPs require respondents to submit references. Each of us can find people who will declare our worthiness, and we are unlikely to refer you to librarians we have disappointed. Again, the burden of the RFP is to move past the well-meaning appraisals of our references to the truths of efficiency.

One approach is to visit libraries that have recently converted to each of the companies you are evaluating. If you are looking to consolidate with one supplier, then these libraries will be barometers of how truthful the claims in the RFPs were, and of how well the transition went. Asking questions about the ease of implementing technical services, looking at forms, examining interfaces, and learning about the profiling process all will help.

My argument has many considered matters, including the intangibles of relationships. And the intentions of suppliers cannot be discounted. All of us are trying to get better; considering where we are going is as important these days as where we are or have been. But taking an RFP response from a simple sales document to measurable facts can help you weigh the likelihood that the future we project will be as advertised. With those facts in mind, the relative importance of relationships in helping you to achieve your goals can, perhaps, be considered more usefully.

David Swords taught technical writing at the University of New Orleans for 12 years, describing to students how to write RFPs and how to respond with proposals. As VP of sales and marketing at Blackwell, Swords is responsible for proposals.









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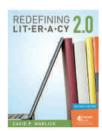






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RESEARCH FOR PRACTICE

"IF I DON'T HAVE A BOOK, I'M BARE"

What Avid Readers Tell Us about Reading for Pleasure

By Catherine Sheldrick Ross

A recent book by Michael Sheringham entitled Everyday Life addresses a paradox noted by Hegel: "Was ist bekannt is nicht erkannt" (translation: What is familiar is not known). This idea that what is all around us is also hardest to see is a central concept in an interdisciplinary research field that studies the everyday. The aspect of everyday life that interests me is reading for pleasure – what people do all the time when they read for the sheer fun of it. As performed by practiced readers, the act of pleasure-reading is transparent. Reading is like breathing, many avid readers say. Avid readers talk about being "lost in a book," entranced, or transported. In effect, when reading is most successful, the reading process disappears from awareness. For this reason, it can be hard to study. However, researchers have used all sorts of research techniques to study reading, from brain scans that measure brain activity during reading to questionnaires and checklists that measure the demographics of reading to intensive interviews with readers that explore the experience of reading.

During my own research on pleasure-reading, I have focused on the readers' experience, amassing some 220 open-ended interviews with avid readers, conducted either by me or by students in my MLIS course, Genres of Fiction and Reading, offered at the University of Western Ontario. These interviews invite readers to talk about their experience with pleasure-reading, starting in childhood, and include such questions as the following:

"WAS THERE ANYTHING IN YOUR CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE THAT YOU WOULD SAY FOSTERED READING?/DISCOURAGED READING?"

"WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE FOR YOU IF FOR ONE REASON OR OTHER YOU COULDN'T READ?"

"HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A BOOK TO READ?"

"HAS THERE EVER BEEN A BOOK THAT HAS MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE TO YOUR LIFE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER? HOW DID IT HELP YOU?"

"IF YOU COULD GET AN AUTHOR TO WRITE FOR THE 'PERFECT BOOK,' WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE? WHAT ELEMENTS WOULD IT INCLUDE?"

Readers' talk provided rich material for the exploration of themes reported at more length in *Reading Matters* (Ross, McKechnie, and Rothbauer, 2006) and elsewhere. But here are a few of the puzzles and discoveries that have emerged.

We think of the reader as solitary and engaged in a private
activity, but reading turns out to be a deeply social activity
right from the beginning. Avid readers commonly spoke of
coming from "a reading household" and reported that their
first memory of reading was the bedtime story, associated
with the comfort of a snack, a snuggle, and a parent's voice.

- We hear that reading is dying out, but when the readers were asked what it would be like not to be able to read, they said: "Blindness probably scares me more than anything." "I wouldn't be the person I am if I didn't read." "If I don't have a book, I'm bare."
- The choice of what book to read is a very individual thing. When asked how they go about choosing a book for pleasure, readers talked first about their own mood at the time of reading and went on to talk about the importance of trusted authors, the genre of the book, and "quick identifiers" on the book itself, and sometimes described reading a random paragraph as "an audition."
- Children's librarians have waged a century-long campaign against series books as "mediocre," advocating nothing but "the best" for children. However, 60 per cent of avid readers in my study talked about series books such as Nancy Drew, Tom Swift, and Sweet Valley High as providing their first experience of the pleasure of reading and of success as independent readers.

- The notion of "best books" suggests that there is a hierarchy of books from the poorest (e.g., series books, romances) to the best, existing in itself, apart from any reader. Readers, however, emphasized that it is not the text but their experience with the text that matters. What is best for one reader is not best for another or for the same reader at a different time.
- Pleasure readers are poachers. They take liberties with texts, rewriting them to suit themselves. They opportunistically take up whatever speaks to their immediate lives, they forget or simply skip over the parts they don't find meaningful, and they rewrite unsatisfying endings. This readerly agency makes it difficult to predict on the basis of the text itself what significance a particular reader will take from a text.

Catherine Sheldrick Ross is a professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario. ross@uwo.ca



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STUDENTS LOOK AT THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COMMUNITY WITH FRESH EYES

LIBRARIANSHIP = LOW STRESS?

By Meghan Ecclestone

My friend Bruce asked me if I wanted to do a survey with him. Of course, I said yes. With little consideration for where I might find the time, I launched into the world of student perception surveys: reviewing methodologies, conducting literature reviews, designing questions. This was yet another project I'd taken on for the summer while studying at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information. Others included the launch of an open-access journal, assisting with preparation for the Masters of Information's Orientation Week 2009, and the general responsibilities and planning that come with having taken on the position of Professional Development Co-Chair with the Masters of Information Studies Student Council. By day though, I was a Student Librarian at the Library of Parliament in the Parliamentary Information and Research Service, working with librarians and analysts to answer reference questions and research inquiries for Parliamentarians. Was I busy? Sure. Did I love every second of it? Definitely!

My willingness to tackle all these projects stems from my general excitement about the information professions. Since starting my Masters of Information Studies, my narrow view of librarianship has been completely altered. I see librarians everywhere, doing all sorts of different things. I see librarians working for aerospace engineering firms, doing research for non-profit organizations, and heading up consulting firms. What's more, our faculty's evolution from a traditional library school into an i-school signalled a greater shift to integrate information professions with information technologies and research. I had a sense that things were changing constantly and I wanted to be a part of all these transformations. The result has been to throw myself – sometimes haphazardly – into projects that have

afforded me some incredible experiences, allowed me to forge great professional relationships, and forced me to learn more about student perception surveys than I ever thought possible.

In writing a literature review for our student perceptions research project, I mused over several surveys completed at other library schools. Many focused on students' views of the library field, and the reasons for their pursuit of the field. I discovered that in some cases students chose to become librarians because of their perception that it was a low-stress career field. I hope those students aren't disappointed. I've never been as busy as I have since I began my master's degree, and things don't look to be easing up. With all the opportunity - and need - for volunteerism with professional associations, alumni and mentorship work, and professional development or skills upgrades, I wouldn't characterize our work as slow. As librarians' work becomes increasingly integrated with information technologies, knowledge management, and evidence-based research, there is significant opportunity to contribute and guide our field through these dramatic changes.

I hope that, in reading this article, other students and those considering librarianship as a career will take the initiative to pursue their own extra-curricular activities, be it fundraising for a public library, attending an association conference, or organizing a school event. These things will cost them time, effort, and possibly sleep, but the payback is huge. Besides the sense of satisfaction I've derived from my work, I can also say with great confidence that my job at the Library of Parliament came as a result of my volunteerism rather than my diligent coursework or marks. I work in a setting that is dynamic and exciting. I am required to do in-depth research on everything

from all-terrain vehicle trails to international trade agreements. I am required to meet some pretty stringent deadlines that can range from a few weeks to just a few hours, while still maintaining a very high level of user satisfaction. I also get to help others with their information-seeking needs, including the responsibility of devising a reference document that will eventually serve as a resource guide for librarians and analysts at the library. I work with a great team of information professionals who are hugely supportive of my own development and have taught me an incredible amount over the summer. Plus, our clientele runs the country ... you have to admit, that's pretty cool!

I took on more projects this past summer than I could ever have realistically managed, but it was worth it, and it feels great. Low stress? Not a chance. But then, I wouldn't have it any other way.

Meghan Ecclestone lives in Toronto with her computer-programmer boyfriend and their books. You can find her at the Faculty of Information library, drinking tea and writing a paper, or online at meghanecclestone.com. "AS LIBRARIANS' WORK
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JOINING

By Maggie Weaver

It can be hard, as a new professional, to decide which association to join. A large association may be more expensive to join, but joining earns a discount on continuing education; a smaller one's membership rate may be half and the focus is on (free) networking rather than formal programs. And then there are the activities that ought to be supported if one has enough money: provincial and national advocacy for the profession, library services for under-privileged Canadians and for developing countries, bursaries and awards for students ...

But few have enough money to join everything, just as few have enough money to give to all the deserving charities. And few have time to become involved with everything, just as few have enough wall space for all the art and books one would like to buy.

How to choose?

First, what do you want from your association? Do you need to feel connected to your own group or to a wider group? Do you need more formal training? Are you close to where programs are happening, or do you have to connect virtually? Does your employer allow you working time to engage with an association, or are such activities restricted to evenings and weekends? Are you a people person or a reading person? Jot down all these needs and constraints. Then rank them – what's the priority, what's a must-have, what might be an unexpected bonus?

It's like buying a house for the first time, or indeed like renting for the first time. It's not just about the price, or even the value. It's about access to transport, parking for your motorbike, proximity to evening classes, garden too big, whether pets are allowed, quiet or noisy, type of neighbourhood, and so on. If you can't get your bicycle up the stairs and you'd have to swap the pooch for a goldfish, it doesn't matter what the rent is.

Next, think about what the association offers, compared to your needs.

As I kid, I was taken regularly to watch hot-air balloons set off from the top of a local hill – big, beautiful, colourful balloons with baskets underneath, that float up and away, coming down out of sight in some undetermined village a few miles off.

Associations are like hot-air balloons – there's a basket part and a balloon part.

The basket is the programs and services you need to start your career and do your job. Courses and magazines and newsletters and job postings and local networking. Some people need that part of the balloon for only a short time in their careers, others may be happy to stay with the basket for most of their working lives.

The balloon is the part of the association that takes you up and away – over the hedge into the next field, into another province or country, or another type of library, to network with library professionals in other villages and on other hilltops. Some people join associations just for the balloon; others take advantage of the balloon only after the basket has delivered the support and tools to establish a career. (And a few people join just for the hot air!)

As your career gets going, there are further associations to consider. Perhaps one that gives you a better understanding of the type of library you work in, or one that offers training in a professional activity such as fund-raising, or one that gives you closer ties to your client community, or one where you can learn an associated discipline such as market research, or one which encourages personal development such as public speaking skills. A different balloon, with a different basket of services,

and a balloon taking you in a different career direction.

Later still, when you're established, the basket and balloon become less important to you, and the need to give back those skills and those networks becomes more important. That's when you join associations for what they stand for, such as advocacy; for what they promote, such as literacy; for what they need from you, such as time or experience or money. Now, you are helping someone else into a hot-air balloon.

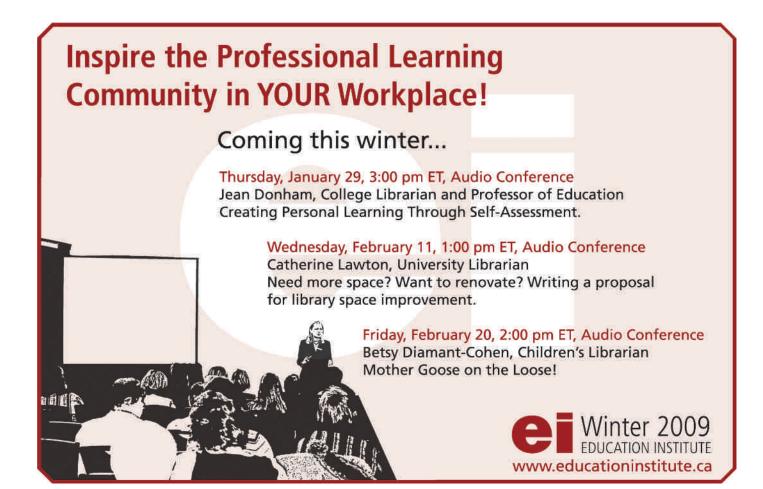
So, you may not stay in the same association all your life, just as you wouldn't rent the same place all your life. Like accommodation, associations are a human necessity – a way to connect with colleagues, make friends, and develop as a professional.

But beware – associations may be habit-forming!

Maggie Weaver is with Shaftesbury Associates (kweaver5478@rogers.com).

SOME PEOPLE JOIN ASSOCIATIONS JUST FOR THE BALLOON.





the last

Entrepreneur, visionary, trendsetter. On the surface perhaps not qualities you would attribute to someone who has been with the same organization for 19 years. But that's just it - OLA has not been the "same" organization for 19 years. And Jefferson Gilbert has been a big part of the reason for that. Highlights include his inspiration, work, and leadership on the Forest of Reading Program in which more than 250.000 readers from across the province now participate annually, producing the annual Super Conference, including Canada's largest trade show for the library sector, and the creation of the OLA Book Store, Canada's leading resource of professional literature for libraries. While this is the "Last Word" for Jefferson Gilbert, Deputy Director, OLA, it is the great start for many other initiatives: the launch of his non-profit consulting business Gap. Point. Reach. Inc. (GPR); his new role as Executive Director, Canadian Urban Libraries Council; continued involvement with OLA's conference and vendors: and other interesting opportunities to which he will apply his innovative and strategic approach.













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