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Success with Online Learning
– a FREE webinar by Pat Wagner on getting the most out of online training – will be offered January 28, 3:30-4:30 PM (school libraries) & February 22, 2:00-3:00 PM (public & academic libraries).
Visit the TLA CE page to register.

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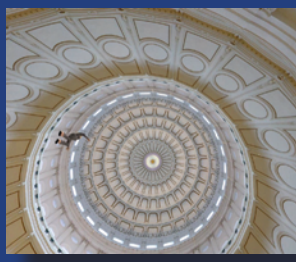
front covers



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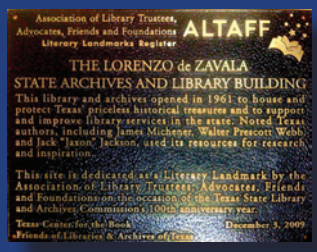

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President's Perspective

You Can't Go Home Again

(Except with Considerable Effort)

BY PATRICK HEATH

What a difference a half-century makes or, to be more exact, 44 years. It was that long ago when my wife and I – newly married – sailed to Germany for a year of study (1965-66) and cultural experience. This October we went back to Goettingen, a city of 100,000 people, to visit long-time friends.

We had seen our friends there in December of 1983 with our daughters in tow, before they became "too old" to travel with parents. But on that trip, Carla and I had not had the opportunity to revisit the places and relive the experiences of our student days. When we were there as students, it did not occur to us that it was just 20 years after the end of World War II; but that reality came back to us in full force on this trip.

As young, innocent, frightened Americans, we traveled during a semester break in 1966 to West Berlin. In those days, there were only two corridors into West Berlin, and our train went from Goettingen to the border station east of Hannover to be attached to other trains for the trip across East Germany to West Berlin. For the first time in our lives, we saw soldiers with machine guns and rifles with bayonets . . . and they were speaking a foreign language! On that trip, we went (with difficulty) through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin and saw the completely leveled German Cathedral, French Cathedral, and Concert Hall on one of the main squares. On ***this*** trip, we had coffee and pastry in the café of the Concert Hall – completely rebuilt, just like the two cathedrals and now completely accessible.

Back in Goettingen, I asked our hosts to go with me to the new Staats-und-Universitaets Bibliothek (State and University Library) and to the Theological Library, in a separate building.

When I had entered the old buildings – now used only for special collections – I had faced a bewildering experience.

In the university library, I had had to do some unusual searching to secure a book. It was necessary to know the publication date. If the book was published after 1930, I would find its call number in a card catalogue. If it was published before 1930, I would find the number written by hand, in German script, in the appropriately dated ledger book. Then, for a pfennig, I would buy a call sheet, put in the number, drop it in the box, and come back the next day to see if the book had been found. (By the way, the library in Goettingen is cited as the developer of the modern catalogue in William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*.)

In those days, the theological institute was housed in four small rooms. When I had a book on reserve, I had to show up at the time I had requested, and I had one hour for access to the book.

All has changed. The university library is all glass and open stacks and Internet access computers (and slouching students). And, the Theologicum is housed in a three-story building with an extensive book and journal collection, as well as computers.

Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to check on one academic custom I fondly remember from those days. When we saw a poster for a lecture or concert then, the time would always be shown with the letters C.T or S.T. after. C.T. meant the Latin phrase "cum tempore, or "with time." In other words, the event would actually start 15 minutes after the announced time. S.T. of course meant "sine tempore," or "without time," and so would start at the announced time. Why?

Other changes that were new experiences for us were the removal of West-East German borders – no need to show passports at every border – and the formation of the European Union and the use of the Euro as a common currency. Alas, the sight of soldiers and police with machine guns is still common because of the daily threat of terrorism.

I'm trying to assimilate my observations of "going home again" with cultural experiences in America in the last 30 years. I see that many people these days, in the face of so much uncertainty and discomfort, might want to use institutions like libraries as refuges from the storms of cultural change. What better place to escape into a world that we can control by choosing what we will read and what we will reject, what we will hear and what we will shut out, perhaps without any thought.

We *do* need to filter carefully for ourselves what we will accept as factual and as helpful in our personal and professional lives. But libraries are not refuges; they are windows into what we must now face and understand. The borders have disappeared. We must confront all the possibilities for knowledge across a broad array of cultures by searching the library's resources and then come outside again to see what else has changed in the meanwhile.

It was a scary but a great time we had the first year we were married and lived in Germany. But we don't need to do it again. Now, we need to find some new experiences, fitted to the world we know now. We can't go home again more than once!

Editorial

TOP 10

BY GLORIA MERAZ

Events & Developments for Libraries in the First Decade of the 21st Century

10

Hurricanes – Rita, Katrina, & Ike

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast. By August 31, 2005, over three-quarters of New Orleans was underwater and in days, thousands upon thousands of evacuees arrived in Texas and other parts of the country.

Hurricane Rita, which was actually stronger than Hurricane Katrina, made landfall on October 2, 2005. Preparations for Hurricane Rita's arrival were based to a large extent on the hard lessons – and horrors – of Hurricane Katrina. The result was a mass exodus of people from the Texas Gulf Coast.

On September 1, 2008, the largest hurricane ever observed in the Atlantic basin came ashore onto the Gulf Coast. Hurricane Ike crippled Southeast Texas for weeks as the damaging effect of hurricane winds knocked out power lines – and hence the whole electrical infrastructure – for weeks in the most populated area in the state.

These storms left vast damage in their wake and hundreds of thousands of people scrambling for shelter, assistance, and comfort. Libraries offered essential services throughout these crises – from providing desperately needed access to Internet resources to providing comfort and assistance. Before these hurricanes, no one really thought of librarians as first responders. Libraries were among the most universally praised institutions during these turbulent events and solidified their critical role in emergency situations.

Following Hurricane Katrina, Houston Public Library opened a branch library at the George R. Brown Convention Center on a day's notice. With the help of staff and supporters, 10,000 books, 28 computers with Internet access, and 12 computers for children were quickly made available; and the impromptu facility operated 67 hours a week.

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Children's Internet Protection Act

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was signed into law in December of 2000. This federal piece of legislation was the first sweeping federal mandate requiring libraries receiving certain federal funds to filter Internet access on federally-supported computer access. The American Library Association challenged the constitutionality of the law, but the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on June 23, 2003 essentially upheld (albeit, with some narrowing of interpretation) the federal government's position to condition the receipt of certain federal funds on the required use of Internet filters. While the lawsuit allowed for unfiltered adult access, the law fundamentally changed the operating and philosophical framework for libraries.

While the professional commitment to intellectual freedom remained strong, librarians across the country had to make a choice (sometimes there was no choice at all) between accepting those federal funds and living with the filtering mandate or doing without some desperately needed funds.

Through the years, librarians have worked hard to provide as much unfettered Internet access as possible, even with federal – and increasingly, local – requirements. The simple fact is that many libraries now offer filtered access to some degree. While many concerns remain about the effectiveness of such technology measures and the more urgent question about government supervision over free speech, libraries have adapted to the growing challenges of technology, public expectations, and growing safety issues.

Libraries as we know them did not stop being libraries because of the filtering mandate. As with almost every other challenge, the library community rolled up its collective sleeve and went on with the work of providing the best services possible, continuing to be the voice for intellectual freedom, and experimenting with strategies to provide the most robust (and informed) Internet access as possible.

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"Transforming Libraries" Movement

Something about the start of a new century has everyone thinking about the future – and about what is now or may soon be irrelevant. For several years leading up to the 21st century (with all the talk about the paperless society), librarians had kept a watchful eye on technology. What we knew (that perhaps others didn't see immediately) was that along with the technological revolution came "information independence." Increasingly, people were bypassing

traditional libraries and relying solely on what they could find via the Internet.

For those of us who value, use, and live in the world of libraries, the knowledge of the unique contribution libraries make is so strong and concrete that it was (and is) still difficult for us to accept that anyone else might have trouble seeing the same. Doesn't everyone understand the need for authoritative information? That librarians can help people find quality information more directly? Apparently not. The first decade of the 21st century has brought into clear focus that people want and assume greater independence in fulfilling their information needs.

Librarians have been, if not so quick to respond, certainly passionate in their desire to see libraries remain vital institutions into the coming years. And, they are always passionate about wanting to serve their customers. But, the question emerged: How do we get from here to where our customers want us to be? The answer to this question is a paradigm-shifting realization: libraries need to transform in fundamental ways.

Energizing to some, controversial to others, the notion of transforming libraries into the next generation of libraries has taken hold. Increasingly, the library community is thinking about its own evolution. Like Darwin's theory of fits and starts, the transforming libraries movement has been uneven, but it is underway. The seed of possibility, growth, and innovation is being planted now. What remains to be seen is the quality and size of that harvest. Our future depends on that effort.

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The USA PATRIOT Act

Introduced just a few days after September 11, The "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism" Act (USA PATRIOT Act) was signed into law on October 26, 2001. The legislation expanded law enforcement's investigative and surveillance authority. Several key components of the bill are set for sunset on December 31, 2009. (At the time of printing), several legislative measures are active to try to amend key provisions, including the "library provision," which allows law enforcement to gather information about patrons' reading choices and Internet access.

Many librarians rallied hard against key provisions in the bill. But (as with the case with CIPA), public opinion was strong in favor of increasing the government's power in this area. The psychological effects of 9/11 cannot be minimized in understanding the public's mood after the events of that day. Then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair reflected that the whole of the American population seemed "traumatized" by the events, and the damage to our collective sense of security fundamentally shifted national attitudes about what constituted national defense.

For librarians who were again caught between the rhetoric of patriotism and the unenviable role of serving as protectors of people's right to privacy, the legislation drew fiery criticism from us and against us. The complications caused by the inability to understand the full extent of the law's use over the last few years in now only being fully understood. While more than one attorney general indicated that the library community was reacting without cause (I believe the word "hysterical" was applied), the fact is that law enforcement used the provisions of the PATRIOT ACT hundreds of times without much public transparency. ***Mind you, the challenges raised by the library community were not that the government couldn't or shouldn't have access to any needed or credible information; it was that the procedure for doing so should be open to accountability and meet minimal standards of legitimacy.***

We now know the Act was used to obtain library records and that a gag order was issued to prevent public disclosure of the action. While a great deal of support remains for the Act, the fact remains that it was the library community, along with the ACLU, that fought then and fights now – however unpopular – for the public's right to know. In my book, it just doesn't get any more patriotic than that.

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Hand-held devices, portable thingamajigs, and wireless

Library on the go, access on the fly, answers wherever you are – that is the mantra of any self-respecting information outfit these days. And all of this is possible through the multitudes of small devices that, through wireless telecommunications, lets the world of information come to us. The handheld world became part of everyday life before we really knew it. As Robert Cringely said, we tend to overestimate the time it takes for big change and underestimate the time needed for small change. In a matter of years, we went from those clunky cordless phones we had at home in the 1990s to iPhones with thousands of applications.

As librarians, we want and need our services to travel, to be at home in these devices. But, as with physical architecture, form should follow function. What is the function of these new devices? Are people using them the same way they use computers? The same way they use books? The answer is yes and no. We're still figuring that out, but what we do know right now is that information must be redeployed in ways that maximize this technology.

From small screen size to interoperability with a whole lot of other functions, information of all types – connections of all types – should be facilitated by information providers. That means us! One might bemoan the loss of literacy, of 140-character messages, but the world (especially the under 20 crowd that seems to own more of these devices than their more-gainfully-employed adult counterparts) is marching forward without tripping. So should we.

TOP 10 CONTINUED ON PAGE 142

Creating Library Staff 2.0: Learning + Fun = iHCPL

by Linda Stevens
and Grace Lillevig

Technology, including Web 2.0, has quickly changed the way that libraries do business. In order to best serve our customers, library staff have to keep up with the latest trends in technology – which is not always easy to do. That was the challenge that Harris County Public Library (HCPL) found itself in several years ago when our customers began asking about new Internet technologies and coming into the library with MP3 players and other devices. What could we do to help all staff – both the early adopters and the late bloomers – learn about Web 2.0 and new technologies in a fun, easy, and rewarding way?

iHCPL

Back in late 2006, we at HCPL started to notice the buzz on library blogs about the 23 Things program - http://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.com/ - at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (PLCMC) in North Carolina and wondered if we could adapt this program for our staff. Thus began a year-long journey to develop, implement, and run our own version of the program. To begin the process, our Leadership Innovation Team discussed the program and formed a subcommittee of staff from a variety of positions and locations to decide how we could best offer the program.

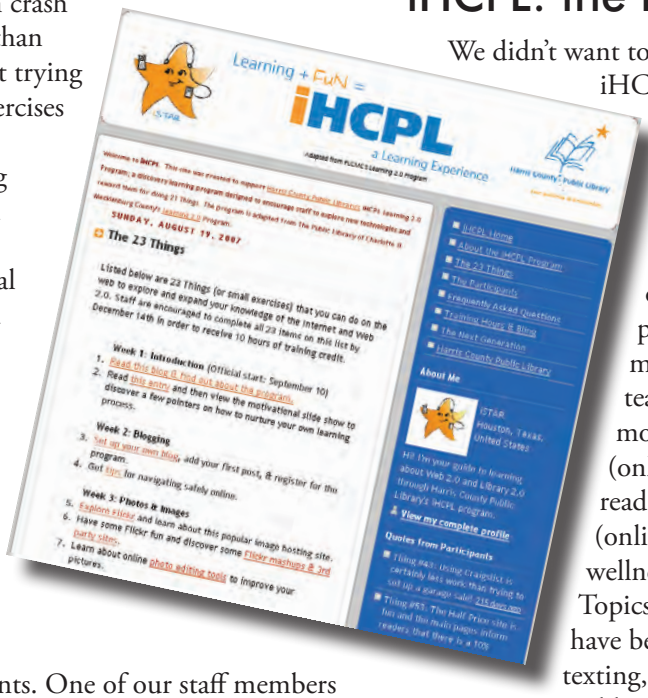
The original PLCMC program had 23 exercises about Web 2.0 technology including blogging, podcasts, RSS, tagging, and wikis to be taken over a nine-week period. At our initial meeting in April 2007, we looked at PLCMC's program to decide what we wanted to use from it. Some of the topics we discussed were what incentives to offer, how to provide assistance, and how to market the program. Out of this meeting and several others, we developed the following strategy:

- Modify the program to meet HCPL's needs. While we used much of PLCMC's original program, we took out several topics that we didn't feel met our staff's needs and added in new things such as Internet safety, social networking, and photo editing. We particularly wanted to emphasize blogging, online photo tools, and video as these were technologies we were already using or about to use for the system. We also named our program iHCPL: Learning + Fun and developed a mascot – iStar – to go with the program.
- Offer incentives. One of the features many of the 23 Things programs had was some type of incentive. Due to county restrictions, we were not able to give away MP3 players or raffle off a computer but wanted to offer something. We decided to offer two things: training hours (CE credit) and bling (our vision of bling was a combination merit badge and decoration). Our full time staff is required to get 20 training hours per year; part time staff needs 10. So, as an incentive, people who completed all 23 things would get 10 training hours. We still wanted something tangible and found that Allen County Public Library in Indiana had developed some bling for their staff program. With their permission, we adapted their bling for our use. Upon registering for the program, staff received a star lanyard and then, with each week completed, they received "bling" to add to it, which were custom zipper pulls.
- Develop a marketing strategy. Our strategy included using the iStar mascot in promotional materials and on the blog, teasing the program via emails and at system-wide meetings prior to launch, and using word-of-mouth, bling enticements, and emails while we conducted the program. Overall, this approach worked well, especially word-of-mouth after the program began.
- Offer the program to the public as well as staff. Since we were already putting a lot of work into the program for staff, we decided to offer the same option to the public but on a different blog and delayed three weeks behind the staff program.
- Offer in-person tutorial sessions around the system. Many of the other 23 Things programs we looked at were completely self-paced. We knew that some of our staff would need help with the program, so we offered in-person help sessions throughout the county during the program. While most only had a few people show up, it offered a level of comfort for staff new to technology. Overall, most people helped each other out at their own locations.

So, with our strategy in place, we launched the iHCPL: A Learning Experience - http://ihcpl.blogspot.com - on September 10, 2007. Over the course of the nine weeks, we had 328 (of 460) staff register for the program with 261, or

71%, completing all 23 things. Key things we learned during the program:

- Be flexible. Around week eight of the program, we experienced a major system crash of our ILS system. Rather than having staff stress out about trying to complete the iHCPL exercises for that week, we extended the deadline for completing the program by a week and put iStar on vacation and introduced two fun optional exercises if people needed a break from the stress of the system crash. Because the "Create an Avatar" exercise was so popular in week five, one of the optional exercises was a "Parade of Avatars" - http://ihcpl.blogspot.com/2007/11/parade-of-avatars.html.



- Use your staff's hidden talents. One of our staff members enjoys making videos. We tapped her to create an introductory video to each week's theme. This was a fun, enjoyable way of making the program our own.
- Make the program voluntary. This was not a required activity for staff; we think because of this, we had more participation. In addition, as people got involved in the program and found how enjoyable it was, they encouraged their co-workers to join in the fun.
- Get upper-level staff to buy-in. Because key upper-management was supportive of the program, we were able to encourage managers to let staff work on iHCPL during work time. While some staff chose to do exercises at home, most were able to do it at work.

The program far exceeded our expectations. We had hoped to have a program where staff learned about interesting Web 2.0 technologies. What we ended up with was a FUN program where staff learned about cool Web 2.0 technologies and built a community. A quote from one of the participants summed this up well, "At this branch, we have all bonded through these exercises." We heard this from a variety of participants throughout the program. Because of the response to the program from within and outside HCPL, we applied for a TLA Public Relations Branding Iron Award and were selected as the winner in the Non-Traditional Media category in 2008.

People also had fun. We saw staff working together who rarely talked – all because of this common experience. People who were not normally in a position to lead were put into new roles. One participant said "A new role for me-computer guru and advisor to the…masses. I'm so pleased with myself."

iHCPL: the Next Generation

We didn't want to lose the momentum from the success of iHCPL, so the group went to work and had iHCPL: The Next Generation - http://ihcplnextgen.blogspot.com/ - launched in February, 2008. Since The Next Generation would offer completely original content, we decided to try offering a themed module with several posts each month (planning at least six months in advance) and having different teams of people writing the posts for each month. Early subjects included sound (online music and podcasts), maps (creating, reading, and geocaching), games and gaming (online role playing and console games), and wellness (nutrition, fitness, and going green). Topics that were decided to be essential skills have become mandatory exercises, such as texting, which was found to be the only way staff could easily communicate after Hurricane Ike,

and spring cleaning for email and files, which was designed to help with our ongoing file storage problem.

Having the individual modules rather than one huge program also allowed staff members to use The Next Generation content as a basis for doing classroom training for the public in their branch libraries. They were able to choose topics of interest for their community and had a ready-made set of instructions and exercises for their class.

Although the quality of the program didn't diminish, we've found that it takes work to keep staff participation and interest engaged. Some of the things we've learned about supporting an ongoing technology training program are:

- Always be ready to experiment. If part of the program isn't working, try something else. We have tried to have a balance in our program between work skills and fun and are still experimenting with ways to make the balance work for everyone. Our upcoming modules will shift from topical interests and take us back to a focus on cutting-edge technology.
- Get as many staff members involved with the planning and training as you possibly can. Not only do you benefit from their talents, but you spread interest through different areas of the library.
- Never stop promoting. If staff members don't make your program a habit, they will forget about it. Talk about it as much as you can in a variety of formats to keep it fresh and exciting. The bribe of training hours is also helpful.
- Keep human interest as part of the program. Initially, we did not include a list of staff blogs in The Next Generation, which was a mistake. People liked being able to go to one spot and read their co-workers blog posts and learn more about them personally, so a list was added during the second year of the program. In addition, while we couldn't do physical bling for this program, we do offer virtual bling on our Intranet.
- Supplement the online program with hands-on staff technology training on relevant topics.

Downloadable Media

One of the most relevant topics for our staff training is downloadable media. We've found that the greatest tool for success of the HCPL Digital Media Catalog is word-of-mouth. Since the service was launched in late 2006 through OverDrive, Inc., circulation has increased by 10 times, making it between the circulation of a small and medium library branch. To make sure that staff members are able to assist customers with this service that features constant updates and requires certain technical abilities, Mike Saperstein, the multimedia materials selection librarian, offers training sessions quarterly. He makes sure that staff members understand what is available through the service for eBooks, eAudio, and downloadable video, how it can be used by the customer, and how to transfer materials to different consumer devices. MP3 players were provided for all branches to allow them to practice after they return to their location.

Video Training

Making videos for online use is another area that the library wanted to expand, but we needed to develop staff skills across the system. Several branch locations already had successful video projects, such as the La Porte Branch Library's annual Film Committee project, which pairs staff talent with local kids and teens to write and produce a video supporting the Summer Reading Program. How do you help other staff members to feel comfortable enough to try this sort of creative programming?

Two HCPL librarians were willing to write an iHCPL: The Next Generation module, teach several class sessions for staff, and serve as advisors for those who might have difficulties. Beth Krippel, branch librarian, had produced short films for the iHCPL program and the Summer Reading Program, and Jim Johnson, assistant branch librarian, put together a series of customer book reviews for his location, called "Check it Out." Together, they showed staff basic filming techniques, how to upload their video, how to add music, and how to edit. Their classroom session had attendees bring an item with them to review on film, and they practiced filming and editing each other's reviews as a training exercise. Finished products were used on the library's YouTube channel.

Flickr Tutorial

HCPL uses Flickr as a storage and organizational tool for all library photos. Since 27 different locations are uploading, editing, and tagging these photos for use on the library's website and for promotional purposes, it is essential to have staff trained to use the service. For this purpose, an online tutorial was produced and made available on the HCPL Intranet to be accessed at staff convenience. It shows not only how to use the Flickr service but how to use the service following HCPL guidelines.

Technology Petting Zoo

If library staff members are going to be able to assist the public with technology questions, they have to have some understanding of the devices that people are using in conjunction with online tools. Using grant funding, HCPL was able to purchase a "zoo" of items to use for staff and public training. These include a Kindle, a Sony Reader, an iPod Touch, a Nintendo DS Lite, a Playstation Portable (PSP), podcasting microphones, digital picture frames, and a Chumby. These items can be checked out by staff members to use in a program or just to learn how to use it for themselves.

Blogging for Branches and Books

One of the most valuable skills taught to library staff through any of our technology training efforts is the ability to blog. Most importantly, because the new HCPL website is blog-based and requires a large number of staff members to make regular posts, each library branch page on the site is centered around that branch's blog, which is used to promote branch and community activities in that location and serves as the home page for customers using branch PACs. In addition, library bloggers post on book, movie, audio, and website related topics for all age groups. Prior to launching the site, enough staff members had to be trained to cover all of these areas, making a minimum of one post per week to keep content fresh.

Since most staff members had been introduced to keeping a blog during iHCPL, we were able to concentrate on helping them identify what makes a good blog post, where to find sources for inspiration, and how to start a conversation in the first part of the class. The second part of the class provided them with the necessary technical skills of adding artwork, adding links, and responding to comments. We were able to train 83 people during this series of classes, making sure that a wide variety of voices are available to make the website compelling for library customers.

What's Next?

Over the past three years, we have learned to never stop asking "What's next?" both for training and for what's new on the horizon. Through various committees and individuals, we have an ongoing conversation about looking forward and developing tools, techniques, and training to meet the ongoing and future needs of our staff and customers. It may seem overwhelming, especially for a small library, to take on a huge ongoing project such as this. However, we hope that we have reassured any librarian looking to do this type of training that this journey has been a series of small steps, any of which could be adapted to meet the needs of any library. ✪

Linda Stevens is coordinator of marketing and programming and Grace Lillevig is eBranch librarian for Harris County Public Library.

It's all about the Kids: *Public and School Libraries Collaborate for Kids*

by Leigh Ann Jones and Mayra Díaz

Leigh Ann Jones (left) and Mayra Díaz (above)

It's a chilly Friday morning in October. After months of planning, the Lone Star Storytelling Festival study trip is here. Scores of yellow school buses arrive at the plaza in front of the Frisco Public Library bringing the 2900 fourth graders in Frisco ISD, along with their teachers and librarians.

Volunteers escort groups to the large white tents erected for the festival. Nationally-recognized storytellers, such as Grammy-winning David Holt, captivate students and staff with lively, funny stories. Although the skies are dark and the grass soggy, the rain holds off, and the sixth annual storytelling study trip goes off without a hitch. Smiling fourth graders are the best barometers of the study trip's success.

A few weeks later, the planning begins for next year. From an outsider's perspective, the event runs so smoothly that the logistics look simple. Behind the scenes, a giant initiative from Frisco Public Library (FPL) and collaborative planning with Frisco ISD Library Services (FISD) paved the way.

A Growing Partnership

The public and school libraries in Frisco have enjoyed working together for more than a decade. Both entities have a commitment to service, and in the last few years, the need for meeting the needs of the community has been heightened by the city's expansion.

Frisco is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and nation. In 2000, the population was 33,714, and Frisco ISD had one high school, two middle schools, and five elementary schools. By 2005, the population reached 48,789, and the district had tripled with 25 campuses. Less than five years later in 2009, the city has more than doubled again with 103,000 residents. FISD now has 47 campuses, with five more under construction. And with 1,510 current seniors and 3,272 kindergarteners, FISD building programs will be underway for the foreseeable future.

With this phenomenal growth, the physical libraries in Frisco have kept pace well. Frisco ISD strongly supports its libraries, and each new campus opens with a beautiful library, a strong collection of materials, and a full-time, certified librarian. The City of Frisco is equally supportive, and in September 2006, the Frisco Public Library moved from its small building in a strip shopping center to a beautiful new four-story facility with a robust collection.

A Shared Philosophy

Providing services and information access can be challenging. Providing services and information access in a community where population has doubled in five years is a challenge best accomplished with a partner. Fortunately FPL and FISD embrace this challenge, both in philosophy and practice.

Recognizing that both entities are needed for success, a shared philosophy has emerged based on commitment to the following:

- Meeting the needs of students
- Meeting the needs of an educated community
- Expansion of community resources
- 24/7 access to information
- Equal access to information

The Festival – Year One

The most effective joint initiatives between FPL and FISD are the ones that draw on this shared philosophy and actively involve students. The Lone Star Storytelling study trip is such an example. Shelly Holley, now director of FPL, approached FISD about this venture in 2003. Was the district interested in sending entire grade levels to the proposed storytelling festival as a study trip? It was a big idea requiring time, planning, organization, and funding. But district administrators recognized that the idea benefitted kids, and a new partnership was forged.

The next fall, every fourth and sixth grader in the district attended the Festival. Prior to the study trip, teachers prepared students for the experience. Some heard a professional storyteller at their campus. Many students themselves auditioned and practiced to be student tellers. Classes delved into the importance of oral traditions in many cultures. Audience etiquette was discussed.

Meanwhile, planning ensued. FPL and FISD folks met several times to work out aspects of transporting the students to the Festival, chaperones, volunteers, and logistics such as the schedule, a standardized permission slip, and accommodations for special needs students.

FISD librarians served as liaisons between FPL and their campuses. Librarians communicated with campus administrators, disseminated information to students and parents, answered a myriad of questions, collected permission slips, and reserved special needs buses. To prepare librarians for this role, FPL managers attended FISD library meetings in advance to provide information about the day, discuss plans, and answer questions.

The first-annual study trip was a huge success, and parents, teachers, and administrators felt the event was worthwhile. Most important, the students were hooked. FISD and FPL held debriefings after the Festival, discussing what worked and what needed to be tweaked for the following year. Six years later, the partnership is so streamlined that meetings have been replaced by a few emails and phone calls.

Expanding a Good Thing

Because this joint venture between Frisco Public Library and Frisco ISD Library Services worked so well, both parties were confident in forging into new territory. In 2006 FISD approached FPL about a potential partnership to provide a new book to every baby born in Frisco. Both libraries embraced the idea and soon approached administrators of the newly-opened Centennial Medical Center. Not only did CMC welcome the plan, but it also provided the funding for the books, an unexpected bonus. The Books for Babies program was born.

As soon as the idea had been accepted, FISD and FPL got to work in carrying out the details. Rosemary Wells' *Read to Your Bunny* was selected as the board book that each baby would receive. Since 80 to 100 babies are born at CMC each month, the 1000 copies that were initially ordered would last almost a year. A logo was designed and cloth bags ordered with funds donated from the local Rotary organization. The public library created "Baby's First Library Card" along a resource list of recommended board books for babies and reading for parents. FISD Library Services selected the format of the informational brochure from many entries designed by local high school students. FISD also compiled the brochure's content, which highlights the importance of reading to newborns and offers tips to parents.

In June of 2006, Books for Babies was officially launched to mark Centennial Medical Center's one-year anniversary. A brunch was held attended by the mayor, Centennial Medical Center CEOs, and administrators from FPL and FISD. The first Books for Babies bag was given to a young family, and they were thrilled to have their newborn honored as the program's initial recipient.

Last year, both FPL and FISD Library Services were honored to receive the Highsmith Award for library service to the

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RIGHT: Fourth graders walking toward the concert tent

BELOW: David Holt with the students

community in separate categories for the Books for Babies initiative. In the three years since the inception of Books for Babies, almost 2500 families have been reached by the program. The shared philosophy of nurturing readers is alive and well.

An Ongoing Relationship

Encouraged by success and the ease of working together, Frisco Public Library and Frisco ISD Library Services now join forces regularly on a variety of projects. Major initiatives include collaboration to provide for collection development, curriculum support, special programs and services, and support of local and state reading lists.

A few of the most successful initiatives are highlighted below.

- ***Collection Development***

  FPL regularly seeks the input of students, teachers, and parents concerning materials to purchase. FISD routinely shares curriculum sequences and information on assigned projects. Specific collection development at FPL is affected in the following ways:
  - Biographies – historical persons covered in the curriculum
  - J and YA fiction – support for outside reading requirements and independent reading requests
  - J and YA nonfiction – specific subjects to support research
  - Picture books – requests for themes and subjects, author studies by grade, holiday books, folk and fairy tales, and Caldecott books
  - Purchase of multiple copies
- ***Curriculum Support***

  In an ongoing effort to meet the needs of students and staff outside the school day, FPL extends resources and services. FISD and FPL communicate to ensure that these are well executed and on target. FPL programs that are particularly well received include the following:
  - 24/7 online homework help – including an after school TAKS writing workshop by an area children's author
  - Online Resources, including databases, ebooks, and audiobooks

Special Programs and Services

While the Lone Star Storytelling Festival and Books for Babies are possibly the most visible of our special programs, many others exist. Each year, FISD sponsors a community-wide reading festival in which FPL participates. Other active programs by FPL include:

- Read to Rover, in which students read aloud to trained service dogs
- Summer reading programs
- Middle school book club
- Book talks
- Children's Book Week activities
- Poetry contest

Support of Local and State Reading Lists

FISD shares the district literature list and required summer reading with FPL and area bookstores each year. FPL makes every effort to meet student requests for these lists as well as the Texas 2 x 2, Bluebonnet, Lone Star, and Tayshas lists. Strategies employed by FPL include the following:

- Purchase and process multiple copies in a timely manner.
- Special lists are searchable in the online catalog.
- Featured books may be highlighted by display posters, by being shelved in a special section, and with distinctive spine labels.
- In order to reach more students, books on local and state reading lists may have a shorter loan period, and they are given top priority when books are reshelved.

Filling the Gap

The relationship between the public library and school districts is a unique one; and, at first glance, it may seem one-sided. Schools have needs, and public libraries strive to meet them. While school libraries provide 24/7 database access and some access to print materials outside the school day, public libraries are needed to fill the gaps. And what can schools offer in return? Input from school librarians can help inform collection development and programming decisions so that public libraries may best provide for the needs of students. As a result, circulation may increase and a greater level of patron satisfaction may be recognized.

When public and school libraries have regular, open dialogue and effective collaboration, both entities win. Shared resources mean that budgets are stretched in lean economic times. Programs that are most effective continue. Access is improved. The commitment to create an educated community of readers and learners is honored. And most importantly, the needs of children are met. Because when it comes down to it, it's all about the kids. ✪

Leigh Ann Jones is coordinator of library services at Frisco ISD. Mayra Díaz is a youth services manager at Frisco Public Library.

A webinar on March 1 continues this discussion and will provide practical ideas for promoting and offering basic library services, building collections, supporting curriculum activities, and enhancing communication strategies. Learn about some fun and innovative projects and discover how to build a successful partnership in spite of growing populations, administrative hurdles, and decreased budgets. Visit the TLA website for more details: www.txla.org/CE.

Librarians and Faculty Working Together at the University of Houston

by Alexandra Simons

"I had no idea you had these resources!"

"I'm so glad the library finally has this database."

"Thanks for emailing me these reports – they're just what I need for my research."

The University of Houston (UH) Libraries has been diligently working on a number of ongoing projects and new initiatives to make sure we are successfully connecting with our faculty, so these are the kinds of comments we really like to hear! We are keenly aware that we can't expect our busy faculty to always come to us, so we are reaching out to them physically and electronically. In doing so, we have become much more involved with the greater university community.

Two reports highlight the challenges facing not only the University of Houston Libraries but other academic libraries as well. Our internal document, *Strategic Directions, 2006-2010,* outlines many of the library's outreach initiatives, stressing the need to "partner more fully with faculty to provide course-integrated information literacy efforts, collection development, and web services."[1] The other report, the *Ithaka's 2006 Studies of Key Stakeholders in the Digital Transformation in Higher Education,* states:

> An important lesson is that the library is in many ways falling off the radar screens of faculty. Although scholars report general respect for libraries and librarians…many researchers circumvent the library in doing their research, preferring to access resources directly. Researchers no longer use the library as a gateway to information and no longer feel a significant dependence on the library in their research process. In short, although librarians may still be providing significant value to their constituency, the value of the brand is decreasing.[2]

Because we plan to stay on the "radar screens" of faculty members, UH Libraries are doing a lot of informative – and even fun – initiatives and incorporating them into our long-range plans.

Getting the word out

Liaison librarians and faculty. UH librarians feel it's important that we reach out to faculty by being strong advocates for library resources and, in turn, be much more aware of the ongoing research needs of faculty. We also want faculty to feel confident that we are knowledgeable about their particular interests. Liaisons often attend faculty meetings, usually at the beginning of the semester as this is a good time to meet new faculty members and reaffirm ties with the department. Usually, a contact in the department is assigned to work directly with the subject librarian. We have found that having established relationships between the librarians and the departments they serve is very helpful to both parties (of course, the role of liaison is strengthened the longer the same subject librarian works with the department). For example, by working closely with departments, librarians can make sure the collection reflects current needs. Requests for electronic resources, such as databases and online journals, especially in the general and social sciences, has led librarians to work closely with faculty to look at access and funding issues and new collection opportunities. If many faculty are using for-profit or free websites, the liaison can recommend that these be added to the library's catalog. Faculty are also included in testing databases the library is considering for purchase. Through their participation, we are able to get really informative feedback about what does and does not work, and faculty have a much more vested interest in the outcome. We help set up hands-on training sessions for new resources, too, either in the department, the library, or through webinars.

"Lunch and Learn." In fall of 2008, the library was invited to partner with the *Learning through Discovery* program,[3] a campus initiative designed to provide research-related skills training and undergraduate research opportunities on and off campus. During the event, each librarian is given a few minutes to present what they are currently doing for faculty, including setting up virtual class guides, helping create assignments, embedding content in Blackboard (the university's course management system), etc. Feedback has been very positive, and we often hear back that: 1) they had no idea we provided these services and 2) when can we start working together? It's a great way to create opportunities for mutual collaboration, especially with interdisciplinary studies.

QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan). We participate in and support this campus-wide program, also sponsored by the *Learning through Discovery* program. We can help faculty incorporate information literacy skills into assignments,

train on specific resources, such as Web of Science and new databases, work with faculty to craft QEP grant requests, and attend campus-wide QEP meetings. As this program expands, we hope to align library resources more closely to the needs of the university.

New Faculty Orientation Day. UH librarians set up a table with our business cards and library information at this event that takes place before the start of each semester. For librarians who can't attend, new faculty contact information is provided, so we can meet with them and show what the libraries have to offer. We have gotten lots of positive feedback from these efforts, and new faculty members have asked if we can hold regular information sessions. Many of us also participate in "Grad Camps," which are day-long introductions for graduate students to their own departments and to university services.

Marketing Committee. We actively market the libraries to faculty and students through advertising library events and services in the campus newspaper, participating in faculty and student-oriented resource fairs, and developing other outreach projects, including a virtual tour of the library.

Physical presence in the department. Several subject librarians also keep office hours in departments for both students and faculty. It is a great way to connect with users; when I walk through the business college with our business librarian, everyone knows who she is!

We are also excited about new library resources such as the expanded *Learning Commons*, an area in the library with equipment and services for collaborative work and multimedia projects and our recently uploaded *digital collections*, many of which come from the Special Collections Department in the library. One of our ongoing initiatives is to work with faculty to digitize dissertations and theses, build a secure institutional repository of faculty research done at UH, and upload these collections to the Texas Digital Library.

Innovative tools for library instruction

Each UH subject librarian sets up and maintains electronic guides for the departments they serve. For example, I have pages set up for history, political science, Latin American studies, and government documents with links to essential databases, websites, citation guides, RSS feeds, the library's catalog, and other relevant resources. These guides have really evolved since we began to create them in 2008. We have the opportunity to include, among other things, graphics, a spotlight on new resources, and an online chat window. Along with class guides set up specifically for individual courses, we use our subject guides in conjunction with teaching library instruction classes. As a result, we rarely need to provide paper handouts. I work closely with faculty on these guides, using the syllabi they provide.

Once the guides are created, links are emailed to faculty for their approval or for any changes. For added convenience, students can bookmark these guides for easy access after the library session.

Faculty members have told me that students find these guides very helpful and use them often. In addition to being available from the library's home page, all of the virtual libraries are also accessible through the libraries online catalog.[4] Other academic institutions are using similar subject guides, so it's easy to go online and see the databases, websites, and other resources they've chosen to highlight.

We assist faculty in creating library-related class assignments. By working with faculty on creating assignments for library instruction sessions, specific resources within a discipline are targeted. This has been especially helpful in introductory courses for English and psychology. Several librarians at UH are also co-teaching semester-long courses with faculty, while others are helping to evaluate assignments and grade student presentations. Some of these projects are in conjunction with the QEP program mentioned previously.

Embedding library resources and other information into distance learning. Many courses are now being taught exclusively online or as a hybrid of face-to-face and online. At UH, librarians are working with faculty and Web services to embed library resources into Blackboard. This allows students and faculty access to resources and tutorials without having to go through the library or university websites.

Conclusion

Realistically, we know we'll never be able to reach every faculty member, and not everyone will want to work with us, but through innovation, marketing, and re-evaluating our role(s), the librarians of the University of Houston feel that we continue to be a strong partner with the academic community. More and more faculty members have been very responsive to our outreach efforts. By being more visible at faculty events, working with department representatives and other campus organizations, keeping office hours in academic departments, and creating effective and efficient online resources, we are steadily increasing our "brand." Subject librarians are also working much more collaboratively – humanities, social sciences, and sciences librarians at UH meet regularly to discuss outreach to faculty, collection development, research, and other issues. Participating in these outreach initiatives has been very rewarding for me as requests for help and collaboration with faculty and students continue to grow.

As academic librarians, we are being asked to wear many hats and to rise to the challenge of working effectively with our core constituencies – our faculty and students. It isn't always easy, but it sure is a lot more fun to be an active participant in the greater campus community than to sit in my office and wonder why I don't have more to do.

Alexandra Simons is the history/political science/ government documents librarian at the M.D. Anderson Library at the University of Houston.

Endnotes

1. University of Houston Libraries, *Strategic Directions, 2006-2010* (2006), 11.
2. Ross Housewright and Roger Schonfeld, *Ithaka Report: Ithaka's 2006 Studies of Key Stakeholders in the Digital Transformation in Higher Education* (2008), 30.
3. "Learning through Discovery," www.uh.edu/features/expanding-minds/learning-discovery/index.php.
4. University of Houston Libraries, Virtual Subject Libraries, http://info.lib.uh.edu/virtual_libraries.html.

References

Housewright, Ross and Roger Schonfeld. 2008. *Ithaka Report: Ithaka's 2006 Studies of Key Stakeholders in the Digital Transformation of Higher Education*. Accessed October 30, 2009, www.ithaka.org. University of Houston. 2006.

UH Libraries Strategic Directions, 2006-2010. Published in-house by the University of Houston Libraries. ✪

Join Alex Simons and Jeremy Donald (article begins on following page) for a continuing education webinar on February 16 to expand on the topic of academic librarian and faculty collaboration. Alexandra Simons discusses the special nature of faculty collaboration and shares examples of activities at UH. She will also address strategies for overcoming challenges (procedures and attitudes) and assessment of efforts. Jeremy Donald will provide additional details about his instructional design model for creating assignments that meet instructors' needs, address course requirements, maximize library services and resources, and facilitate the learning process. Visit the TLA website for more details: www.txla.org/CE.

Using Technology to Support Faculty and Enhance Coursework in Academic Institutions

by Jeremy Donald

Academic librarians have been working their way into the college classroom for decades, moving from the collection-centered "bibliographic instruction" of the '70s and '80s into the student-centered, outcomes-based information literacy instruction of today. The current expectations on the part of higher education administrators for academic library professionals and staff to "more intensively focus on alignments and partnerships with faculty in supporting the curriculum" are clear (Walton, *Texas Library Journal*, Fall 2009, p. 90). Yet it remains up to librarians at all levels of an organization to determine what this means in terms of how best to spend limited time, energy, and resources.

The absence of a gap between technology and information characterizes library work as we approach the post-digital age, and still the challenge of how to support curricular needs regarding to both information *and* technology persists. This calls for creating new positions with hybrid skills which can bridge technology and information literacy and for models of further-reaching kinds of collaboration between library staff and teaching faculty.

At Trinity University, the Coates Library initiated a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) called *Expanding Horizons: Using Information in the 21st Century*, designed to promote, deliver, and assess key information literacy goals across disciplines and throughout the four years of undergraduate study. Essential to the plan is the role of the library in promoting and supporting the use of information technology in the classroom and in course assignments. Quoting from the *Expanding Horizons* plan, a new position called the faculty technology liaison is to "work with teaching faculty to develop courses and/or class assignments and with library faculty to develop interactive teaching models, learning objects, and tutorials that introduce information literacy concepts, resources, and tools" (*Expanding Horizons*, p. 5).

The Trinity QEP has provided an opportunity for large-scale curricular support on the part of library staff. Included in the *Expanding Horizons* plan are incentives for faculty to re-think their course syllabi and assignments, while various grants, workshops, and forums have provided the outreach and professional development necessary to make the services of the library technology liaisons known to, understood by, and attractive to teaching faculty. What follows is a formula based on the academic support provided by the faculty technology liaison when collaborating with members of the teaching faculty and librarians to design and implement course assignments and projects. The goal is to explain both the components of the support model and the reasoning behind them in order to give others the greatest flexibility in adapting them for their own institutions, where differing conditions may obviate parts of this model. Indeed, the spirit of effective support involves sensitivity to individual teaching styles and course requirements, as well as to shifting attitudes and perceptions on the part of teaching faculty. Flexibility in the details and a commitment to core values are essential to successful collaborations, and thus the formula below is arranged as a list of essential "ingredients" presented as prescriptive steps.

> It has been surprising for me to learn that students so often do perfunctory work not because they prefer to, but rather, because many assignments are — in their eyes — composed and presented perfunctorily, with predictable and uninspiring criteria for success.

Step One: Communication and Trust-Building

An initial meeting with a faculty collaborator should be devoted to cueing that person as to the nature of the collaboration: as a support person, you will be listening to their ideas and doing your best to understand and then re-articulate their vision before considering the challenges of implementing it. Often this will be a brainstorming session in which the faculty member will discuss the "old" assignment first and then ask you to propose alternatives. They are likely to wait to hear your ideas before introducing their own, and they may re-state an idea of yours *as* one of their own. This is to be encouraged, as it signals their investment in the collaboration and its outcome.

It is likewise important to indicate that you are willing to work with any level of responsibility – and to find out how much responsibility the faculty member plans to retain during the collaboration. While you may end up providing much of the actual effort required to implement the assignment, the faculty member must retain investment throughout the collaboration in order to verify that what you are doing is consistent with their needs and comfort level and to work with you to re-direct things as they deem necessary. The faculty

member's perception of the tone of their interaction with you will be remembered longer than any of the actual details of the discussion, and it matters much more than the actual success of the project. If a faculty member feels truly supported and empowered, they will return to you for future collaborations regardless of whether the project at hand turns out to be an unqualified success, an instructive failure, or somewhere in between.

Step Two: Establishing Learning Outcomes

After establishing a trusting and flexible basis for communication, it is essential to determine what learning goals the faculty member has in mind for the assignment or project at hand. It can often be surprisingly hard to elicit clearly-articulated learning goals and outcomes from many teaching faculty. This is not because their course content fails to address goals and outcomes. Rather, teaching faculty often is simply not used to stating them as such. It is your job to detect learning goals and outcomes as the conversation unfolds and to then state them aloud and ask the faculty member if they sound right and if any are missing. Once they see how the goals you have articulated match what they had in mind, they will quickly become more adept at articulating them themselves.

This is your chance to see whether information literacy goals are represented by what has been articulated and to ask if an instruction librarian is to be included in the collaboration. Since a faculty member might be focused on technology at this stage, they may be concerned about their own ability or the ability of their students to handle challenges the technology will present. As a result, they may not be fully aware of the need for information literacy instruction, however obvious it is to you. If they seem uninterested in including an instruction librarian in the planning of the assignment now, you will have other opportunities to secure the inclusion of information literacy instruction (see Building a Prototyping below).

Step Three: Determining Parameters

Before proposing an assignment and/or technology application to the faculty member, you must determine the parameters and limitations of the project at hand. How much credit will be awarded for the assignment? How much time are students expected to spend on it? Where does it fit in the semester, and how much will their prior work have prepared them for this project? To what extent is the application of technology itself part of the stated learning outcomes? Are there requirements in play related to course housekeeping or the assignment's place in a larger process (e.g., are student groups prohibited from viewing each others' work before the due date but must later participate in a virtual peer review of completed work?)? Does the faculty member have a particular technology tool firmly in mind for this assignment? These considerations must be noted before the design phase begins. This is also the right place to assess the faculty member's commitment to the project. If their level of engagement is low and/or the responsibility they are placing on you is high, you must adjust your time and attention budget accordingly to ensure that you provide the necessary work to ensure the project's (and the students') success. Likewise, if the faculty member is highly invested and involved in the details of the project, you may tailor your role to provide more moral support, encouragement, and trouble-shooting, and less direct development of the assignment in order to allow the faculty member the full range of engagement they seek.

Step Four: Building a Prototype

This step has two results: a draft of the assignment documentation (description and instructions) and a sample of a finished product. The sample should come first, as the experience of doing the assignment and using the technology will allow you to create thorough and effective documentation, and it will help you create an assessment tool (that will be Step Five).

When doing the assignment, you will have the opportunity to test one or more technology applications to see if they will serve the needs of the assignment. Requirements (such as groups editing a single document, keeping Web content private, or using only free, browser-based tools) can be challenging to meet, especially when combining more than one. Any particular technology is only as good as its ability to provide for all the essential learning outcomes *and* requirements.

The extent to which you apply information literacy skills not already addressed in the syllabus will determine if an information literacy librarian needs to be involved in the planning and support of the assignment. This experience will arm you to make such a case to the faculty member. Doing the assignment for the purposes of the prototype will also reveal unexpected opportunities to meet desirable learning goals or to further motivate and engage students in the project. Lastly, the prototype you create will serve to confirm to the faculty member that you have understood their vision, and it must be presented to them with the understanding that they can approve or reject any aspect of it that deviates from what they had in mind.

Step Five: Create an Assessment Tool

With completed assignment documentation and a prototype approved by the faculty member both in hand, it is time to create an assessment tool blending learning outcomes with appropriate use of technology and basic information literacy goals (particularly the ethical use of materials and the creation of thorough metadata for new digital content). A rubric often serves as the best assessment tool for collaboratively-designed projects, as it makes the expectations of the assignment explicit to the collaborators as well as to the students. Learning goals and outcomes should be clearly evident in the rows of

the rubric's matrix. A good rubric should resonate with the assignment documentation, serving to confirm the importance of the steps detailed in the instructions and cueing the student as to which components of the assignment require the most attention.

Step Six: Instructional Design

How will you teach students the skills they need to complete the assignment? I recommend the following approach: *First,* make a list of all the tasks students will need to undertake in the process of completing the assignment and then rank them from hardest to easiest. Select the two to three most difficult and design one or more hands-on activities which allow students to practice those tasks. Plan to give these activities 50% of the time of your classroom session and be prepared to offer floating help to students as they experiment with the tools and tasks you have placed before them.

Second: What do students need to know in order to do the activities above? Particularly, what criteria will students need to apply as they experiment with tools and resources during the activity portion? Design a pre-instruction content piece (for purely knowledge-type content), and/or a brief instructor-led discussion or activity to prepare them with background information. Examples of this could include links, brief readings, media, or quizzes placed on the courses content management system (CMS), or clicker-based games or quizzes in the classroom. The idea here is that more than the briefest lecture will likely go ignored, and it is better to use class time for active engagement and to stress that the information you've shared and reviewed with your students is essential to the hands-on work which will make up the bulk of their time with you.

Third: What do students need to learn from their experimentation during the activity? Design an interactive reflection activity centered on modeling preferred ways of interpreting the results of the hands-on time. Have students show each other how to apply the relevant criteria and use their mistakes and questions as brief opportunities to apply quick, relevant hits of knowledge-type information.

Fourth: Did students learn what they needed to learn from the session? Design a quick self-assessment for students to complete that will let both you and the students see what they need to work on in order to master the tasks required to complete the assignment. How can students get further help and instruction to address the remaining gaps in their skills and abilities? Include contact information and ways to get help in all of your course content and state that information clearly at the beginning and end of the class.

Lastly: What conditions need to be in place for the activity to take place? Does each student need to be seated at a computer? Is special software required? Is group work, access to other parts of the library, assistance from a library staff member, peer tutor, or faculty technology liaison desirable? Create a list of preferred conditions and use this list to choose and prepare a learning space. After all this, digest the goals of the session you have just planned into one or two sentences. This, along with your name and title and the location of your office, will serve as your introduction and will cue students immediately that their time with you will be well spent.

Step Seven: Reflection

After the assignments have been completed and graded, meet with your collaborator(s) to evaluate the positives and negatives of the collaboration. Did students achieve the outcomes? Were they the right outcomes? Was the technology appropriate for the assignment? What aspects of the implementation and instruction could have been improved? Did students get help when they needed it? There are any number of questions like these to ask, depending on your sense of the situation. What is important here is to cement the trust you established at the initial phases of the collaboration by continuing to listen. Ideally, you and your collaborators will maintain a spirit of experimentation throughout the process, and this will allow you all to fairly critique your work and to make improvements to future iterations of the assignment without bruising anyone's feelings or pride.

Closing thoughts

The key to successful support lies in the amount of energy each collaborator brings to the project. Ideally, the teaching faculty, technologist, and librarian are each inspired by the opportunity to apply their creativity to something new and effective, and *this creative energy is transmitted to the students*. Technology holds out the promise to make possible what was previously impractical and to connect what happens in the classroom with the venues to which students naturally direct their attention. It has been surprising for me to learn that students so often do perfunctory work not because they prefer to, but rather, because many assignments are – in their eyes – composed and presented perfunctorily, with predictable and uninspiring criteria for success. This same pattern is also surprisingly true for the teaching faculty who write these assignments. Once the support is available to go beyond routine assignments, faculty members more than rise to the occasion by championing new assignments, their results, and the library support that enabled them. Most important of all, they will express the value of the project by taking ownership of the effort's continued refinement and implementation in future iterations. ✪

Jeremy Donald is a faculty technology liaison at Coates Library, Trinity University (San Antonio).

See webinar information on page 128.

Seven Keys to Sustainable Digital Collaboratives

by Liz Bishoff

Digital content is playing an increasingly greater role in the lives of 21st-century Americans. At the 2009 Frankfurt Book Fair, there were major announcements about the newest book readers from Kindle, Barnes and Noble and Sony Reader. The newest of these devices, the Nook (available in early 2010), comes with dual screens, one for reading the book and the other for supporting access to the Internet allowing the user to find content related to the digital book the user is reading. Public libraries are testing the loaning of Kindles loaded with the newest best sellers. While at the same time, colleges and universities are testing electronic texts replacing traditional text books. The most dramatic announcement came from the Cushing Academy's headmaster, "When I look at books, I see an outdated technology, like scrolls before books," said James Tracy, headmaster of Cushing and chief promoter of the bookless campus. "This isn't *Fahrenheit 451* [the 1953 Ray Bradbury novel in which books are banned]. We're not discouraging students from reading. We see this as a natural way to shape emerging trends and optimize technology."

Have we reached a tipping point in adoption of digital content for teaching and learning? Is the economy forcing organizations to rethink approaches to information delivery, research, teaching, and recreational reading? Or has technology reached a point where broad-based adoption of digital content is now possible, both from ease of use and cost? AND maybe most importantly, is there now digital content available that supports the broadest needs of the consuming public?

Content is King

Library, archive, and museum professionals for nearly a quarter century have been imagining the day when, through digitization, our collections could be integrated into the daily lives of the people we serve – become the foundation of research, be utilized by K-12 teachers and their students, and be discovered by local leaders and community members. The earliest digitization initiatives of the 1980's, those supported by the likes of the Library of Congress, were based on increased access to content with distribution via videodiscs.

So, how are we doing now on making digital content available? Along with the announcements of new technology, there is a steady stream of announcements regarding digital content. Daily, we read the articles regarding the Google Book digitization project, which has created digital books from the collections of universities libraries in North America and Europe. The Internet Archive, working with other libraries and archives, is making available a variety of digital content, including books, audio, video, and text. These major repositories provide access to legacy content owned largely by libraries and archives. While these projects are generally funded by one or two organizations, they are collaborative in nature. The resulting project could not be created by one or two organizations. The Google Books collection can only be created through the collaboration of the participating libraries and Google. Similarly, the collection available through Internet Archive can only be created by the partners involved in that project, Internet Archive staff and management and funding partners.

These projects have garnered many of the headlines in the past several years. They are making millions of titles available in digital format. The Google Book Settlement (which is still to be decided) will determine access provisions for those that are not in the public domain. These projects also represent new collaborative efforts.

The second approach to creating digital content is through state and local projects. Digital projects got a boost in the late 1990's with the initiation of the Institute of Museum and Library Services's National Leadership Grant program (http://www.imls.gov). With the creation of the Institute, opportunities emerged that encouraged museums and libraries to innovate through grants. Since the earliest days of the National Leadership Grant program, the museum-library collaboration category has funded statewide digital collaborative and theme-based collaboration. Similarly, the Library Services and Technology Act funding has supported state, regional, and local collaboration. Through this funding, millions of digital resources have been created by hundreds of libraries, museums, and archives across the U.S. Funding to create these organizations has been relatively easy to come by. Many state library agencies have been willing to fund the planning, adoption of standards and best practices, initial training of staff, and in many cases, initial hardware/software investments. Some projects have been able to build on the foundation of state funding through federal grants, which have been used to create digital content, integration of digital content with secondary and higher education, use of digital content to advance the role of the library-museum in the community, and more recently, to implement digital preservation solutions.

Seven Keys to Sustain a Digital Collaborative

Nearly a decade into collaborative digitization, the collaborative initiatives are now faced with sustaining the initiative. What are the keys to successful sustainability of digital collaborative?

1 – Everyone must understand the vision/mission: It is critical that the mission/vision of the collaborative is understood by all and that the collaborative's mission advances the goals of the individual member organization as well as the collaborative. If the goals of the participating organizations aren't advanced, there is little reason for members to participate in the collaborative.

Many digitization initiatives begin as grants participated in by a few individuals from each partner organization. These projects can become siloed within the organization, with limited understanding or awareness by others. It is important that the collaborative convey to the partners how the project in specific and the collaborative in general will assist the partners in achieving their goals. Collaborative resources must be allocated to promote the benefits of the collaborative to the partner organizations, as well as the specific programs and projects it is undertaking.

The collaborative's management and leadership/board should regularly verify that the goals and objectives support the mission. As the collaborative matures, the policy-making body needs to review the goals and objectives of the collaborative to assure that it is still meeting the needs of the partners. Once the collaborative's initial goals of planning and pilot projects have been achieved, focus must then be turned to how the collaborative will grow and sustain. Will new partners be added? What new content will be acquired? Will target audiences change and how will that impact delivery needs? All these questions need to be addressed at regular intervals by the collaborative.

2 – It's the customer (or the user, or the client) – stupid! Is your collaborative's role and purpose understandable to your audience? During the early days of digital collaboratives, the primary audience may be the staff of the partner organizations, with the focus being development of skills and knowledge to build digital collections. As the digital library is built, the audience of the collaborative may shift from the digital library staff to the general public, researchers, K-12 community, as well as library and archival staff that support these users. Review of the collaborative's purpose goes hand in hand with the review of the goals and objectives. Understanding the audience for the collaborative's program as it matures allows the collaborative to develop the services the partners require.

3 – All partners must contribute: In a collaborative, all partners must contribute something; no partner can be a partner in name only. However, contributions do not have to be equal. The collaborative should look to capitalize on the unique attributes and capabilities that each partner brings, be that content, financial resources, people resources, community connections, or other contributions.

Since the earliest days of digital initiatives, funders – whether private or public – have recognized the importance of collaboration in digital projects. Collaboration virtually unifies content that is distributed across multiple owners, allows organizations to capitalize on strengths of diverse organizations, and takes advantage of economies of scale. As a result, many funders will give preference to collaborative to proposals where all other things are equal.

4 – Shared trust and responsibility: As the collaborative matures, there should be a demonstration of shared responsibility. Successful collaboratives have built trust across all the partners. This trust may be demonstrated through formal agreements, but many times successful collaboratives have statements of principles or value statements that convey the commitment among the partners.

Sustainable collaboratives have developed infrastructure including working groups or task forces that facilitate the work of the collaborative. These may include metadata or technical architecture working groups, an executive committee, digital preservation task force, and other networking activities through which staff from the partner organizations works with the collaborative staff in the operation of the collaborative.

5 – Partner's senior managers must be leaders: All digital collaboratives require strong leadership at both the collaborative level and from the membership. Leadership is demonstrated through the commitment of time, staff resources, funding, and infrastructure. There are many different leadership models for digital collaboratives.

For long term success, advocacy for the collaborative by the partner library directors is critical for financial success of the collaborative. These are the individuals who can reach external stakeholders, be they legislators, city managers, university presidents and provosts, or private funders. Active engagement by senior management in the collaborative is critical for the long term sustainability of the collaborative.

6 – Strong committed digital collaborative manager: The manager of the digital collaborative must be someone whose job it is to make the program a success. The individual has to have a passion for both digitization and collaboration. The manager must be able to advocate for both the collaborative and the partners' rationale for belonging to the collaborative. This individual must focus 110% of their time on the collaborative. For the collaborative to have sustained success and to grow, the manager's duty cannot be part of another job. The ideal individual is someone who understands how to create teams, work with volunteers, and make the members feel great about their project and collaborating. If they also know all about metadata, digital preservation, funding, marketing, and promotions, that's great.

7 – Planning is a must: Most collaboratives had an initial plan. It was to get a grant to digitize some specific content. Then they had a plan to get another grant to digitize some more content. At some point, someone realized that cycle couldn't continue.

The planning documents for a collaborative are similar to documents for a library. They include a mission and vision statement, governance documents, collection policies, metadata best practices, digital imaging best practices, and digital preservation plans – all of which provide the underlying resources needed for an organization's continuity.

A multi-year strategic plan with its activities will guide the collaborative, including the funding requirements. Development of a business plan derived from the strategic plan can guide the collaborative's resource needs and allocation. A business plan is generally multi-year in nature, outlining programs and projects, financial requirements, staff and technology resources, operational issues, and sources of funding.

Bonus Tip (from Simon Tanner, Kings College London) – Celebrate success: Digital initiatives involve a lot of people and resources, so when you succeed, when you're done—celebrate. Tell everyone about your successes. Digital collaboration is a high-risk activity; we are undertaking new endeavors that few have tried. Collaboration allows us to share the risk, and as a result, we can share the reward. We need to celebrate the reward. Promote your success.

Sustainable Collaboratives: A Few Examples

Over the past dozen years, more than 40 states have initiated

statewide or regional digital collaboratives. Some have gone no further than the planning stage, while others have mature digital collaboratives. In addition to the geographically-based collaboratives, there are theme-based collaboratives. The theme-based initiative comes together for the purpose of creating a digital collection, and when that purpose is complete, they will disband. They may reconnect for another project in the future. Whereas, the geographically-based collaboratives are programmatically based, with goals and objectives that go beyond a specific project. The following are examples of programmatic based collaboratives. Each involves libraries, archives, and museums and serves diverse communities. Most have diverse funding sources.

Alabama Mosaic: The Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL) and Alabama cultural heritage organizations created Alabama Mosaic (http://www.alabamamosaic.org/) in early 2000's. NAAL is the administrative agent for Alabama Mosaic providing both fiscal and operational support for the collaborative. The major universities provide technical leadership hosting the organizations ContentDM software and servers. Volunteer leadership manages the collaborative through a series of working groups and task forces. In 2005, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded NAAL a grant to establish the Alabama Digital Preservation Network (ADPnet), creating the first state-based Private LOCKSS network implementing a digital preservation solution for Alabama libraries and cultural heritage organizations. Following the same model organizational and financial model as Alabama Mosaic, ADPnet is now an established preservation program under NAAL.

Hudson River Valley Heritage: Over the past decade the libraries and cultural heritage organization of the Hudson River Valley of New York have been working together to create a digital collection for their shared communities. Under the leadership of Southeastern New York Regional Library Council (SENYLRC), the partner institutions have adopted standards and best practices, and they implemented a shared content management system operated by SENYLRC. Hudson River Valley Heritage collaborative (http://www.hrvh.org/) partners must be members of SENYLRC, and for that membership, they receive training and consulting services from SENYLRC in digitization. They gain use of the CONTENTdm platform, promotion of their digital collections, and support of the digital community.

Missouri Digital Heritage: Missouri Digital Heritage was the third statewide digital collaborative, originally created as Virtually Missouri under the auspices of the Missouri Library Network Corporation (MLNC). Today Missouri Digital Heritage (http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/) is an offering of the Missouri State Library and the Missouri State Archive in collaboration with the libraries and cultural heritage organizations of Missouri.

NCEcho: The North Carolina State Library and North Carolina libraries, museums, and archives created the second statewide digital collaborative in 1999. NCEcho (http://www.ncecho.org/), through the leadership of the State Library, created an inventory of more than 1000 cultural resource in the state. This ambitious effort is a standout effort among statewide initiatives. Best practices and statewide training supporting digitization also are models from this early collaborative. In the most recent years, the administrative responsibility for NCEcho is being transferred from the State Library to other digital leaders in the state.

Texas Digital Heritage Initiative (TDHI): Under the leadership of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the Texas Digital Heritage Initiative received an IMLS National Leadership Grant in 2005 to provide support for THDI and to develop Texas Heritage Online, a search interface that allows users to search for photographs, maps, audio recordings, documents, images, and other digitized resources relating to Texas history and culture. The TDHI cooperative's purpose is to identify, describe, digitize, preserve, and make broadly accessible special collections of history and culture held by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other institutions in Texas.

For libraries and digital collaboratives looking for more information on digitization initiatives and collaboration, BCR's Collaborative Digital Program provides a variety of resources at http://www.bcr.org/dps/cdp/index.html. The CDP Dublin Core Best Practice and Digital Imaging Best Practice guidelines are available at this site, as well as guidelines for best practice for digital audio. A list of digital collaboratives from across the country can also be found at this website. Many digital collaboratives have adopted the CDP best practices, modifying them for their local needs. The CDP staff can be emailed for additional guidance as required.

Liz Bishoff is director of digital and preservation services at BCR (Bibliographical Center for Research).

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Endnote

[1] Able, David, "Welcome to the library, say good-bye to the book: Cushing Academy embraces a digital future," *Boston Globe*. September 4, 2009. Accessed December, 2009. http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/09/04/a_library_without_the_books/ ✪

Be sure to join Liz Bishoff for a webinar on digital collaboration projects on Friday, February12. She will expand her discussion by providing specific strategies and examples for developing initial and on-going work and business plans, as well as guidance on negotiating the complex process of continuing funding and energy. Learn how to make digital collaboratives an effective means of increasing user access to critical information. Visit the TLA website for more details: www.txla.org/CE.

EARNING YOUR WAY:
Customer Service in Special Libraries

by Constance Gatewood Matheny

Customer service in a for-profit special library environment is based on making money for the parent organization and helping your most important users first. Company libraries are measured in all economic climates by the critical information they can provide to the top decision makers within an organization. It is the key information that the library provides to the highest paying managers that makes the difference between the library prospering, maintaining the status quo, or closing. Generally, there are no laws or accrediting organizations that say that the company library must exist within an organization. This library exists because top management of the sponsoring organization truly values the services it provides. In today's competitive and high-risk business environment (with increasingly minimal profit levels), long gone are the days when a company will keep a library for the improvement of employee morale or for general staff development reasons.

It is rare for a special library to be valued for the size of its physical or electronic collections, its circulation levels, its comprehensive catalog, or even the number of users it serves. Company libraries should strive to provide high quality customer service to as many of its users as its staff and other resources will allow. A lower level employee may actually need more help or have a more important request than a top level executive. The vast majority of unhappy users will never complain directly to library staff. They will just not use the company library again. It is likely that the unhappy user will tell their co-workers or superiors about the negative experience they had with the company library. Business libraries typically serve the same employees or outside clients over and over again. Maintaining a positive relationship with as many people as possible in the company is vital. If a user at a high level within the organization has a negative experience with the library, it can have a devastating affect. Many managers view the library as an overhead expense that can be safely cut when economic times are lean.

The company library must earn its way by quickly providing the most current and accurate information to all users in the precise format that the user wants. The information provided must solve a problem or do something directly for the user. It must be obvious within a few seconds to the user that the information is what they need. This is accomplished through the reference interview process plus using examples of other requests that the user was pleased with in the past. It is best to have a face-to-face reference interview if possible. In my experience, e-mail is the least desirable way to find out what the business user wants. Telephone or video conference interviews are better than e-mail. Library staff may also have to ask the subordinates or other co-workers of the user what format of information this user prefers. Most busy managers want something brief because most business professionals are already bombarded with e-mails, voice mail, meetings, etc. If it is a book that is provided to the user, the appropriate pages must be tagged. An article must be highlighted. Many users do expect for company library staff to intuitively know what they want. This intuition can be accomplished through a careful observation and questioning of the user plus building a trusting relationship over time. Library staff will learn if a user has favorite sources or only wants information in spreadsheet or bulleted format.

The business library is always measured on its contributions to the profitability or increase in funding to the parent organization. A library manager must provide to his management solid proof of the return on investment of the library services. Here are some ways to prove the value of the library to the parent company:

- Customer interviews or surveys are highly used but must be valued by all levels of management. For years, I and other library staff conducted either weekly, monthly, or quarterly surveys of customers in the computer science library where I worked. The value of the surveys was viewed differently by the management I had at the time. Some saw the surveys as a vital tool to show the true benefit of the library, some saw the surveys as just another way to fund or not fund the library, and some used the surveys as a way to justly or unjustly evaluate staff. Customer surveys or interviews are the most beneficial when a top manager answers positively. If the president or director is pleased with its company library service, generally the future of the library is secure as long as this person stays in power. This is another reason to help your most important users first.
- The amount of time that library staff can save other employees by providing information in a more efficient or effective manner is another way to measure return on investment. The library must prove that it saves or makes money for the organization minus the amount of money the library spends for materials, staff, space, utilities, etc.

As a librarian for a consulting firm, the time I could bill directly to outside clients for my research services was always well received. I was expected to earn part of my salary and to keep meticulous records of all online searching and editing of information. My research services freed up the time of the higher-paid consultants so more clients could be helped which resulted in making more money for the company.

- Using interlibrary loans is an easy way to show that the library is saving the parent organization money through a decrease in book, journal, digital, or other purchases. Library staff must show its management that sharing non-confidential company library materials with other libraries is beneficial to the organization. There is little risk to the parent organization to lend routine and little used materials because the patron or organization borrowing is financially responsible for the materials. Helping other libraries usually means they are more likely to help the parent company library later. Management must be shown that sharing resources saves both institutions money. As library staff already knows, even today, not everything is on the Internet and much of it is still not free.
- Circulation statistics can also be used to show that the company library is saving the parent organization money. If one handbook can be circulated to 10 employees over a year rather than buying multiple copies of the same book, this amount of money saved in purchases can be quantified. Also the circulation of materials can be used as a specific way to save on training funds. If a user can obtain a certification by reading a company library book or using library purchased software, this can often save an organization thousands of dollars in training and travel expenses. Plus, the user does not need to miss work as he can read and teach himself at work or on his own time.
- The library can also prove its value by creating information that cannot be obtained from another source such as company directories, indexes, abstracts, translations, bibliographies, pathfinders, websites, and even the library catalog or other databases.
- The library can also provide information or services that avoid legal problems for the parent organization such as fact and source checking of company publications, background searches of job applicants or competitors, patent and trademark searching, etc.
- The company library can also provide non-traditional services to save the company money such as circulation of laptops and other audiovisual equipment or even serving as a back-up telephone receptionist. No service is off-limits to the company library. If management wants the library to do it, there needs to be found a way for the company library to help. Only by doing other tasks is the company library likely to gain more staff, space, and other funding.
- Another important component of customer service or providing value to the company is that the library staff must keep current with the developments in the field of the parent organization. If library staff works for a Texas petroleum company than they need to review each issue of the *Oil and Gas Journal*, read the Platt's e-mail alerts, and know the organization of the Texas Railroad Commission website. The workers at the company must have confidence in the background knowledge of the library staff. Library staff must speak the same lingo of the "oil patch." If the librarian has an undergraduate or graduate degree in petroleum engineering besides the library and information science master's degree, that is always very helpful. Careful consideration needs to be given to the staffing of the company library. Librarians who are agile business professionals are usually best.
- The company library must also make the parent organization look good to its clients and the public in as many situations as possible. Involvement in library and other appropriate professional organizations is helpful even if the company does not want to contribute to the costs or time involved. Library staff must be seen as influential, knowledgeable, and respected people at work and within the community.

The rewards of the special library environment can be numerous. Many times library staff is given more freedom to develop their services with a minimum of bureaucracy. Usually, the management above the library does not have a library background which can mean less micromanagement. The financial rewards may also be better in a for-profit special library environment as library staff can directly build the financial success of a company. ✪

Constance Gatewood Matheny
is a special librarian.

The business library is always measured on its contributions to the profitability of or increase in funding to the parent organization.

What's on your mind?

Did you know that TLA is on Facebook? How about YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and ALAConnect? As social media have grown, so have we; and we would love for you to connect with us on any (or all!) of our social media spaces. Engage in the casual (and sometimes serious) conversations happening on the TLA Facebook group; tweet about TLA events on Twitter; watch videos of past and upcoming events on our YouTube channel; network with others at TLA's LinkedIn group; and utilize ALAConnect to discuss library issues that concern you. Whether you're new to social media or have been a part of it since the start, check us out online and say hello.

One recent exchange on our Facebook page concerned those unusual reference questions librarians get asked. Here are some tidbits.

Shirley in San Antonio:

Question from the caller: Why is the Pentagon named the Pentagon? Why not Octagon?

Me: Well, the building has five sides, so they call it the Pentagon.

Caller: Really? Oh.

From Leslie in San Antonio:

I think my favorite is, "How old was Mary when Jesus was born?" What makes this even better is that we are a Texas history research library. The questions just got more and more strange from there, and the patron was eventually escorted away by our wonderful Alamo Rangers.

From Jack in San Antonio:

A student asked for information on how to make explosives. He stated it was for a science project. Several weeks later the school was evacuated – except the police forgot the library staff – because a live bomb was found in the science wing of the school (adjacent to the library). Guess which student was responsible for the bomb? Really scary. The bomb was wired incorrectly, or it would have exploded.

From Gillian in Waco:

I'll never forget a young couple who came into the public library holding hands and looking all lovey-dovey. They were probably in their early 20's. They looked at me very seriously and said they wanted a "manual for 'IT.'" I thought hard for a few seconds and then responded, "Do you mean something like The Joy of … and he responded, "Does it have positions in it?" And, I said "I think so…we have two to three books about 'IT' and at least one of them should help you." We never mentioned what "IT" was, but I knew, they knew, and we knew we each knew. It was an almost surreal conversation! I laughed over it for weeks.

If you want to read the story about the "Red BAG of Courage," you'll just have to check out TLA's Facebook page. We are also interested to hear your thoughts on the 10 most important events for libraries in the last 10 years.

Texas Book Festival

This year's Texas Book Festival (TBF) was held October 31 - November 1 on the grounds of the State Capitol in Austin. The annual literary extravaganza featured an eclectic mix of author readings and programs inside the Capitol and offered entertainment and book sales on the western grounds.

The Texas Bluebonnet Master List for 2010-2011 was announced at the Festival. Those lucky enough to be in the Read Me a Story Tent were the first to hear the titles selected for the newest Master List.

The TBF raises funds to support public libraries throughout the state. Hundreds of Texas public libraries have received grant funds to support local collections and high need areas. Since its inception, the TBF has awarded over $2.3 million to libraries. In recent years, the TBF has awarded technology and literacy grants in addition to book grants.

All public libraries are encouraged to apply for these grants. Information about the grants and the application process is available online.

Authors Jon Scieszka and Mac Barnett, the "strongest authors in Texas," showed up in muscleman suits to introduce the new titles.

Every Chance, Every Texan

The Every Chance, Every Texan website provides vital information to ensure the success of our children and the economic future of our state. It provides tools and resources that can help members identify potential careers and learn about many options to pay for college, including scholarships, grants, and student loans.

Educational programs and outreach efforts include many other resources linked from Every Chance, Every Texan, including the following:

- Texas Match the Promise Foundation, a program that solicits donations from individuals and companies to fund scholarships that will supplement the savings of participants in the Tuition Promise Fund.
- Every Chance Funds, which support specialized job and career training at the state's community colleges.
- Get a Life website, developed for Texas middle school students with input from students across Texas. It's a fun site that lets kids see how to match their skills and interests with potential careers.

Visit the EveryChance, Every Texan site for more information. www.everychanceeverytexan.org.

DisasterAssistance.gov

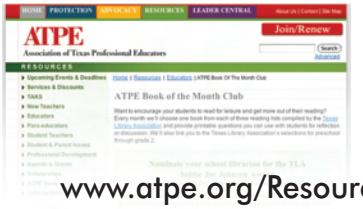
Created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), www.DisasterAssistance.gov is a U.S. government-operated website that consolidates disaster assistance information in one place. With the site available in both English and Spanish, the website provides direct information related to resources and allows individuals to check on the status of their applications. The site offers customizable searching, guides in multiple languages, and information in many areas of need. Flyers (pdf's) that can be disseminated to the public with information about the site's purpose and resources are on the TLA website.

ATPE Book of the Month Club

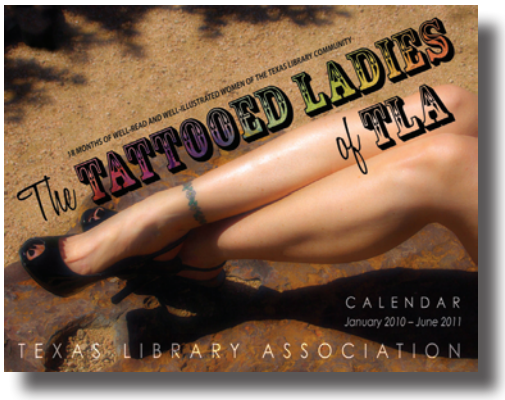
Want to encourage your students to read for leisure and get more out of their reading? The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) is working to help educators develop their students' reading and comprehension skills.

Every month ATPE will choose one book from each of three reading lists compiled by the Texas Library Association and provide printable questions you can use with students for reflection or discussion. Questions, posters, and certificates of participation can be downloaded.

Guest Readers take the ATPE Book of the Month Club to the next level! Selected ATPE member guest readers share an upcoming book selection and create discussion questions with their students.



www.atpe.org/Resources/Educators/bookClub.asp



Take the Tattooed Ladies with You through 2010

Actually, the calendar can help you plan your life and track the days and months all the way through June 2011 – a full 18 months. There are still a few copies left; and in addition to being illuminating and entertaining, the calendar serves a critical purpose – raising funds for TLA's library disaster relief grants.

The calendars make great gifts for colleagues and friends and may be purchased online. See www.txla.org/temp/tattoo.html for ordering information. 2009 had a calm hurricane season, but we need to rebuild our fund that helps Texas libraries rebuild following natural disasters.

CAUTION! Banned Books Ahead

The Chambers County Library System gave patrons fair warning with these colorful displays during Banned Books Week in September.

Photos courtesy of Valerie Jenson

State Library Declared a Literary Landmark

Laura W. Bush, former U.S. and Texas First Lady, dedicated the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building, the headquarters of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), as a national Literary Landmark on December 3. The landmark designation was issued by the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF).

"Today's dedication recognizes the inspiration that this building and the resources it houses, has provided for great writers for decades," said Mrs. Bush. "The Zavala building was the first central repository to house and protect Texas' priceless historical treasures and to support and improve library services in the state."

Gail Bialas, manager for the Texas Center for the Book, along with Mrs. Bush, presented the designation plaque to State Librarian Peggy D. Rudd, who thanked Mrs. Bush and the Texas Center for the Book for their work in the nomination and designation of the building.

The Lorenzo de Zavala building is the fourth structure in Texas to receive the national Literary Landmark designation. Other recipients include the O. Henry House and Museum in Austin (1999); the Menger Hotel in San Antonio (2000); and the Katherine Anne Porter Home in Kyle (2002).

The newly renovated lobby of the Lorenzo de Zavala building is currently exhibiting materials and works used by James Michener, Jack "Jaxon" Jackson, and Walter Prescott Webb. ALTAFF cited that each author used resources and materials that are now located in the building to create their works.

"Visitors from around the world can appreciate the treasures at the Texas State Library and Archives that have been made available here," said Mrs. Bush. "From the papers of Stephen F. Austin, the father of Texas, to Travis's letter from the Alamo, to Matamoros Battalion flag captured at the battle of San Jacinto, the archives provide a window into Texas history."

Former First Lady Laura W. Bush presents the Literary Landmark designation plaque to Peggy D. Rudd, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission director and state librarian.

The Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building located in Austin, just east of the Texas State Capitol, opened in 1961. The building is currently undergoing a major renovation thanks to a $15.5 million appropriation by the Texas Legislature and private funds raised by the Friends of Libraries and Archives of Texas. It is expected to be complete in the spring of 2010. Renovations have been completed on the ground, first, and second floors, which are now open to the public to give patrons new and modern research environments. Construction continues on the third and fourth floors and upper stacks.

"It is what is inside that is the real treasure," said Rudd.

"For decades researchers and students of Texas history have mined gold, historical gold, and they have found it in abundance."

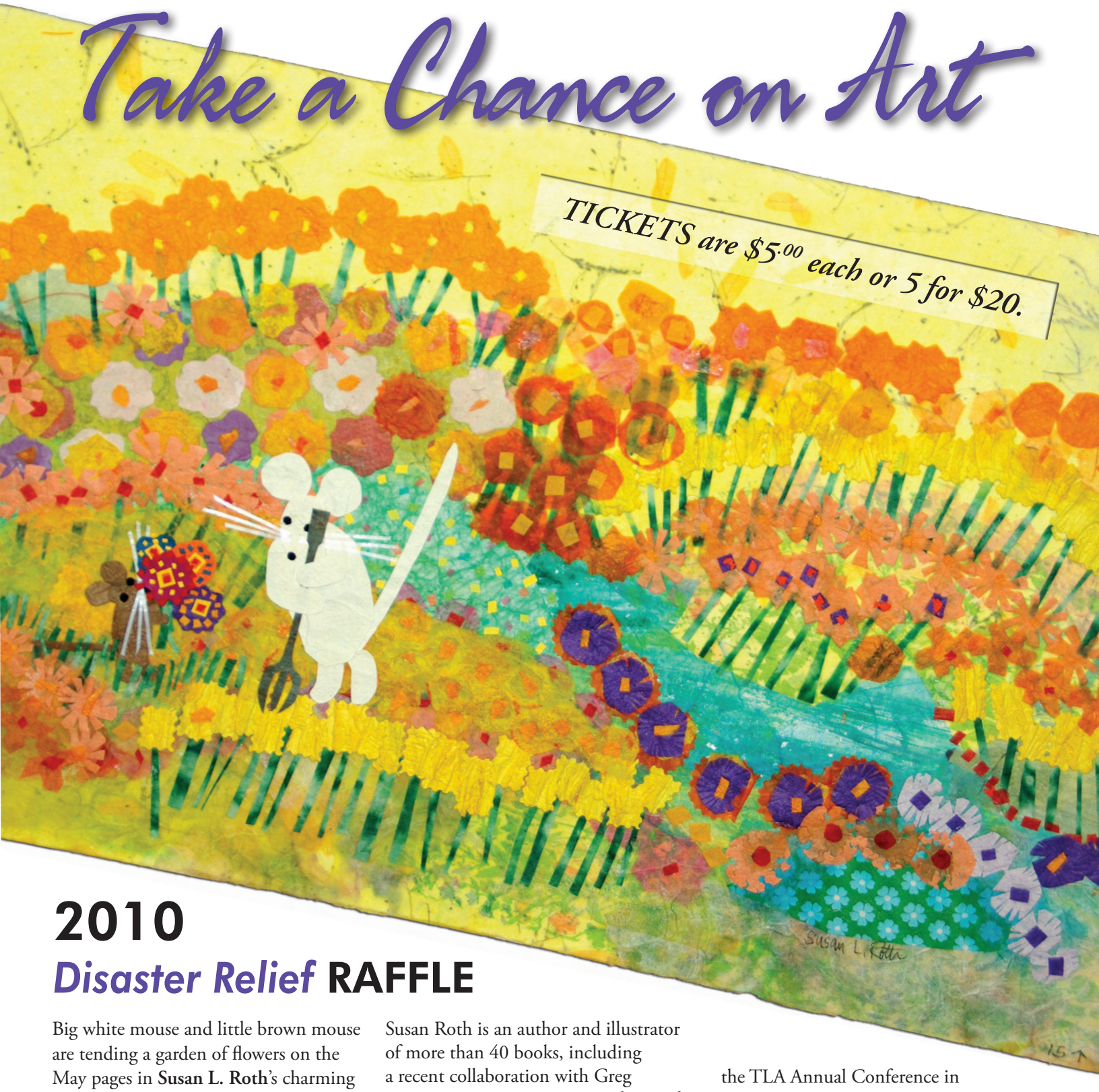
The ceremony opened with music from Erik Hokkanen, on the fiddle along with guitarist Jeremy Wheeless. The Scottie Singers, from Austin's Highland Park Elementary School performed Texas songs including "Texas Our Texas." The State Employee Choir performed during the reception after the ceremony.

This event was the culmination of a yearlong celebration recognizing the act creating the Texas Library and Historical Commission. On March 19, 1909, Governor Thomas M. Campbell signed the bill that created the agency. The bill directed the new agency to aid and encourage public libraries and collect materials related to Texas history. TSLAC selected "1909 – 2009: A Century of Service to Texas" as the slogan for its 100th anniversary. ✪

Laura W. Bush speaking at the dedication of the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building as a national Literary Landmark

PHOTOS BY PEGGY LEE OSTER / TSLAC

Take a Chance on Art



2010 *Disaster Relief* RAFFLE

Big white mouse and little brown mouse are tending a garden of flowers on the May pages in **Susan L. Roth**'s charming board book for preschoolers, *My Love for You All Year Round* (Dial, 2004). The original artwork for this spread, donated by the artist for the 2010 Texas Library Disaster Relief Raffle, is a multi-layered collage of colored and textured papers rich in color, shading, and detail.

Susan Roth is an author and illustrator of more than 40 books, including a recent collaboration with Greg Mortenson to create *Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr. Greg and Three Cups of Tea.* Through text and collages of paper and fabric from around the world, Roth and Mortenson share the story of his school-building initiatives in Pakistan.

The raffle will be held on Friday, April 16, during the second general session of the TLA Annual Conference in San Antonio. Tickets are available online (www.txla.org/html/wells/gallery.html) and will be sold onsite at the spring conference.

Take a chance on art and improve the chances that your library association can help Texas libraries recover from natural disasters.

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The Recession of 2008 and 2009 (and probably 2010)

We've had bad budget years before. Remember the blood-letting state legislative session of 2003? Nothing in our collective experience prepared us, however, for the recession that began in 2008. While Texas had some insulation against the recession (at least early on), the staggering losses of assets, credit, savings, and jobs is taking a toll on almost every economic sector. And, as librarians have always known, when times are lean, libraries are among the first to sustain cuts.

The range of proposed budget cuts to libraries is staggering. We (at least in our lifetime) have never experienced such a widespread shrinkage of library funding. Whether it's a city council cutting 18% of department budgets or a school district trying to meet a $20 million shortfall, programs and services are in danger. Library supporters have rallied in support of their libraries. Local library supporters are often most vocal with cuts are proposed. The TLA survey of public opinion among Texas registered voters confirmed the overwhelming support for increased library budget—even in hard economic times. While the severity of the economic crisis has made it near impossible to stave off all proposed cuts, library supporters have rallied to minimize the cuts to the extent possible. Regardless, reduced hours and staffing seem to be a normal occurrence these days—and ironic condition considering the need.

Not surprisingly (at least not to us), record numbers of visitors are flocking to libraries. More people than ever are using libraries. In tough times, people turn to who and what they can trust. Libraries are symbols of opportunity and, thus, of hope. From crafting resumès to improving jobs skills, from looking for jobs to studying for exams, people are going to libraries for help. And, it not just the resources they seek; in some ways, the people – the librarians themselves – are the most valued asset. If we've learned anything through this recession, it's that people depend on public services and that our measure, as a responsive society, is to offer the chance and means for people to help themselves. Whatever worries we may have about professional obsolescence, no other institution can come remotely close to providing the support, resources, and HOPE of libraries.

4

The Rise of Google

Now, getting to the heart of changes for libraries… Competitors – every industry has them. Now, we have absolute confirmation that we are no different. We may still be cloaked in our mantel of public good, but it does seem that that cloak makes it pretty hard to move fast sometimes. Google, as a search engine (and increasingly as a forum for sharing information in other ways), is not perfect, but it is getting better. And, here's the rub: it works easily, and it is POPULAR.

Leaving aside the various intellectual property issues now being tested with Google, to the vast public, Google (or any similar search engine) is the new library, wherein access – not necessarily ownership – is key. While we (stewards of traditional libraries) boast our own electronic content and search protocols, people are now accustomed to a one-box searching query – or, at the least, something almost as easy. Library searching, while definitely a sharper, more scalable tool, tends to require more familiarity with resources and procedures. When we can search all of our library catalogs and our electronic databases in one simple search, then we'll be more along the lines of "industry standards." We have a long road to go.

On the plus side, the extraordinary metadata and taxonomy schemes created by the field offer an impressive framework for delivering highly calibrated information. And, of course, libraries provide access to authoritative information, not the potluck millions of credible and non-credible sources available through commercial search engines. Now, libraries need to continue "de-siloing" resources through truly easy and intuitive searching that competes effectively with industry norms.

Having said all of this, librarians have been among the biggest proponents of the technology Google has pioneered. By incorporating the options of search engines, learning from the commercial sector's successes, we are learning leaps and bounds and improving our services in the process. The task for the next decade is how to operate on the same playing field cooperatively and successfully.

3

On Demand – Everything

I'm sad to say the world has surpassed interlibrary loan. Don't get me wrong, ILL is still an invaluable service libraries provide. We still want access to the books and materials not in our home libraries. In the bigger universe of commercial and informational transactions, though, instant access (or near instant access) is setting the model. Even Netflix's business (which so successfully launched the "we'll mail you your movies in two days model) is now increasingly relying on instant watching through personal computers. Scores, tickets, purchases, recipes, almost anything is available on demand. Ebooks are downloadable in moments.

With a substantive amount of library content available electronically as well as online access to library catalogs through library websites, the move to provide constant access to library resources has been easier to achieve than access to actual services. Ever-industrious, though, librarians have jumped into the fray.

Virtual 24/7 reference services is gaining momentum. While the feasibility of providing uninterrupted and mobile reference service is daunting, librarians are finding new ways to satisfy the personal "value-added" component of traditional library services. Virtual reference is only one example of the unique and highly-skilled professional services available

through libraries. Through interactive instruction modules and countless other applications, librarians have the means to deliver information and services more directly and immediately to customers. The question we now face is, "how much of what we do can be delivered more directly?"

2

Social Media

Blogs, wikis, Twitter, Linked-In, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Second Life, and on and on. The lines between information and communication have disappeared forever. Beyond the novelty of social media is the absolute evolutionary change in how people connect, learn, relate, and inform.

The fallout of social media has been (for good and bad) the aggrandizement of an individual's opinion. Whether something is true, false, calm, or heated, it is published instantly. Everyone's opinion matters. Have you read blog rants recently? The notion of transparency and responsibility weigh heavily on us as individuals and certainly as librarians, who teach the ethical use of technology. Beyond this, social media is facilitating access to information generally provided by content producers. The newspaper industry's dire straights is only one example of the shifting dissemination of news and information.

For libraries, social media is a transformational development. The 21century library is not so much a place or a repository; it a social nexus for the exchange of ideas and information in all formats through all technologies. Social media had redefined communities and, by extension, who libraries can and should serve. Service populations or student populations are no longer workable boundaries.

Libraries are learning to exploit this new frontier, and many librarians are doing impressive work in and with social media. From providing instruction in Second Life to blogging about the latest book club selections, librarians (albeit a smaller number than we need) are participating in this extensive and already well-developed arena. The trouble is that we are just at the beginning—both professionally and in the world of social media itself.

Many librarians expertly navigate the world of social media; unfortunately, many more do not. While some libraries have truly seized the opportunity to reach out in new ways, the fact remains that many librarians are not yet engaged. Perhaps more than any other area, social media is setting a real benchmark for "before and after" thinking. While next year, current social media applications may well be replaced with all new ones, the notion of redefining community through social media is here to stay.

In some cases, librarians are not able to participate in social media. The vast majority of schools, for instance, maintain strict prohibitions on campus access to such sites. How then do librarians venture into this arena? How do they instruct kids in safe and useful ways to engage that universe? The challenges for libraries are complex, and they speak to the very types of issues we must address if we are to keep libraries relevant in the years to come. Social media is still, I believe, in its infancy; so, we have time to learn and grow with it.

1

"We're still here"

The reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated. The threatened closure of the John Steinbeck Public Library in Salinas, California and the Bedford Public Library here in Texas in 2005 were sobering moments for the library community. Supporters rallied in both instances, and both libraries are thriving today. Libraries, as an ideal, clearly still mean something. But beyond the symbol of the library, the library as an enterprise has persisted and, in its own way (some described above), thrived.

Despite all the changes in technology, economic woes, rising competition, and perceptions that libraries may be singing their swan song, libraries not only survived into the 21st century, they served more people than ever before. Given the plethora of service options and information sources, it is indeed telling that our customer base grew.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, national library usage is up—way up. Between 1990 and 1999, visits to public libraries were calculated at 8,849,159,896. Over the last 10 years (using average figures for as-yet unreported years), I estimate library visits 12,908,612,500. For academic libraries, between 1990 and 1999, a total of 8,749,861,811 in-person visits to academic libraries was reported. Using again averages for as-yet unreported years, from 2000 to 2009, the number of in-person visits to academic libraries was 9,297,309,710. Given the lack of national and state data collected on school libraries and non-existent public data on special libraries, aggregate numbers for these library types are near-impossible to determine. However, simply following the trends, it's not a difficult leap to conclude that library usage is simply up.

If you add the figures for public and academic libraries, you get a grand total of over 22 billion visits! And, that excludes the vast counts from school libraries and counts from special libraries as well as all the virtual visits to libraries. The number is flabbergasting. Despite the challenges we face, in terms of customer base, we are alive, thriving, and poised to develop and deliver needed and innovative services for the next 10 years.

Conclusion (Finally – it only took 10 years!)

It will be interesting to look at this list 10 years from now and see where we stand and what we have achieved (or not). I'm curious to know your thoughts on the past 10 years. What is on your top 10 list? Join me on TLA's Facebook page to share your thoughts. ✪

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