

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Volume 13, Number 3

Table of Contents

Features

Find Your Users!

Universal Design for Universal Access:

Making the Internet More Accessible for People with Disabilities

Sheryl Burgstahler, Dan Comden, Beth Fraser, University of Washington

Distance Learning:

Opportunities and Challenges

Karen Diller, Washington State University and Nancy Huling, University of Washington

Seattle High-Schoolers Get a Virtual Running Start,

Public-private cooperation allows teens to pursue college-level coursework

Jean Kent, North Seattle Community College

Reaching Out to Small Business,

Seattle Public Library makes connections

Sally Wermcrantz, Seattle Public Library

A Day in Detention

Linda Carlson, Spokane Public Library District

Bilingual Story Times in North Central Washington

Marilyn Neumiller, North Central Regional Library

See You at the Senior Fair

Colleen Brazil and Pamela LaBorde, King County Library System

Columns

Upfront - The WLA President speaks - "ISABLE" Your Library Users

Joan Weber, Yakima Valley Community College

From the Editor - *WSL shows they're not afraid of leadership*

Vince Kueter, *Alki* Editor

WLA Communiqué - *Everything you ever wanted to know about the Legislative Planning Committee (but were afraid to ask)*

The Vertical File - *News from around Libraryland*

Personal Profile - *Revisiting the Career of Carma Russell (Zimmerman) Leigh, Washington State Librarian, 1945-1951*

Cindy Mediavilla, UCLA doctoral student

Who's On First - *After ACLU v. Reno: What Next?*

Tom Reynolds, Sno-Isle Library System

Ne Plus Ultra - *Put a Good Librarian, Not Software, in Driver's Seat*

Edward J. Valauskas, free-lance writer

**Universal Design for Universal Access:
Making the Internet More Accessible
for People with Disabilities**

by Sheryl Burgstahler, Dan Comden and Beth Fraser

The Internet can provide many new opportunities for people with disabilities if barriers to access are overcome. Access to the Internet for people with disabilities involves two issues: access to the computers themselves and access to the electronic resources and tools that make up the Internet. This article focuses on helping libraries to prepare to enable both staff and patrons with disabilities to use the resources of the Internet by addressing these two issues.

In preparing to make your library and Internet resources accessible to people with disabilities, it is helpful to use a *universal design* methodology when approaching the challenges of access. What is universal design? Typically, organizations design their facilities, resources and services for the average user. Universal design means that you design them for people with a broad range of abilities and disabilities. Using this method will save the library time and money as it enables planning for access right from the start. If library facilities and resources are planned without taking into consideration universal access needs, staff will have to scramble to solve access problems and create special accommodations for people who fall outside the range of the "average user." There will always be situations which require special accommodations, however, a universal design approach will minimize these.

Let's begin by discussing how to improve access to the hardware—that is, the computers themselves. When planning for a library computer lab or computer workstations, it is desirable to provide options which will address the needs of a variety of users. This is the most cost-effective way to ensure that people with disabilities, along with many other users, can utilize your computer equipment.

DO-IT, which stands for Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology, recommends the following list of adaptive technology for computers to get your library started. You should also have procedures in place to deal with specific needs that these general solutions cannot address. Also, make it a point to include the patron or staff member in the problem-solving process when these situations arise to come up with creative, simple solutions:

- At least one adjustable table for your Internet workstations provides access to patrons who use wheelchairs, and allows flexibility in reconfiguring the workstation.
- Large print key labels assist patrons with low vision.
- Software to enlarge screen images provides access to patrons with low vision and learning disabilities.
- Large monitors of at least 17 inches assist patrons with low vision and learning disabilities.
- A speech output system can be used by patrons with low vision, blindness and learning disabilities.
- Braille conversion software and a Braille printer can provide Braille output for patrons who are blind.
- Trackballs provide an alternative for those who have difficulty controlling a mouse. Wrist rests and keyguards assist patrons with limited fine motor skills.

It is helpful to remember at this point that you don't have to do everything at once. Start small and add to your collection of adaptive technology as you receive requests and as library staff gain skills in providing training and services for them.

There are many resources to assist you in your planning, purchasing, and implementing adaptive computer technology for the library. Several are listed at the end of this article.

The second type of barrier people with disabilities face in using the Internet is the design of the electronic resources and tools that comprise it. Character-based programs such as the text-based Web browser, Lynx, and e-mail, listserv and newsgroup readers such as PINE are highly compatible with current adaptive technology. Try to provide access to these types of tools in your library.

The Web, by nature, can raise barriers. Remember, some visitors cannot see graphics because of visual impairments or cannot hear audio because of hearing impairments. Some users have difficulty when screens are unorganized, inconsistent and cluttered and when descriptions and instructions are unclear. These difficulties may occur because they have learning disabilities, speak English as a second language, or are younger than the average user. Other visitors use older equipment or slow connections or modems that limit their access to multimedia features. But barriers that these people face can be overcome if Web designers use universal design principles, and consider all possible users, when creating their sites.

Following are guidelines for creating accessible Web pages according to universal design principles:

- Maintain a simple, consistent page layout. This is a standard precept of Web page design that will help all visitors navigate through your site. It will especially help

visitors with learning disabilities and have difficulty with disorganized displays of information. Keep backgrounds simple, and make sure there is enough contrast to help people with low vision who need high contrast between text and backgrounds to read.

- Use standard HTML. The Web was created to be an open environment with compatibility among platforms to encourage communication. Non-standard HTML limits use to those who have the browser that supports that feature. Text-based browsers, such as Lynx, do not support non-standard tags such as BLINK and FRAMES. As commercial interests push to make Internet resources platform-specific or browser-specific, it is increasingly important for libraries to provide resources that can be reached and displayed by many browsers.
- Include a note about accessibility. Notify your visitors that you want to ensure that your pages are accessible.
- Provide text alternatives (ALT attributes, captions, alternative menus, transcriptions) for graphical features (photos, graphics, video, sound, manuscript images) so that people using text-based browsers and people with visual impairments can still use their content.
- Use tables sparingly, or provide the information in alternative formats. Most screen reader programs read from left to right, jumbling the meaning of information in tables.
- Test and use special features, such as forms, with care. Avoid using features that require plug-ins or additional software programs, or duplicate the materials in alternative formats.
- Test your Web pages with a variety of browsers—and at least one text-based browser. Browsers and terminals display your pages with an amazing amount of variety. This is a good way to see how others are viewing your site. This is especially important if you use a Web page editor program to create your site. Many of these programs do not follow universal design guidelines and will not automatically include ALT attributes or use other techniques described in this article.
- In designing your Web site, use our mantra: content, content, content and redundancy, redundancy, redundancy! Make sure your site has value and not just flash. Duplicate information in text, graphics and sound so that people can use a variety of modes to get to your content. For an exhaustive list of Web resources on accessible Web design, visit <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~bamf/UA/DEMO/res.html>

Following these suggestions will help ensure that both your computers and your Internet resources are accessible to patrons and staff with disabilities.

Dan Comden is adaptive technology consultant for DO-IT, Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology, a National Science Foundation-funded project at the University of Washington directed by Dr. Sheryl Burgstahler. Beth Fraser is a librarian at the University of Washington Libraries. They are authors of Universal Access: Electronic Resources in Libraries, a training guide covering adaptive technology and universal design.

Copies of the guide are available for \$50 from DO-IT. E-mail doit@u.washington.edu to order. The materials may also be viewed at <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/UA>.

Here are several resources to explore for additional information:

- EASI's
(Equal Access to Software and Information)
<http://www.isc.rit.edu/~easi>
provides many resources related to serving patrons with disabilities. A section called "Libraries without Walls" shares information on making libraries accessible. EASI also produces an electronic journal that regularly includes library-related articles.
- DO-IT
(Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology)
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit>
produces publications and videos that help librarians and educators learn about issues related to people with disabilities and computer technology. Listings of Web resources for accessible Web design, adaptive technology, and other disability-related issues are available at the site and in their new libraries section, <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/UA>.
- Closing The Gap
<http://www.closingthegap.com> is an internationally recognized source for information on innovative applications of microcomputer technology for people with disabilities and special needs. The organization sponsors an annual conference, produces an annual resource directory of commercially available hardware and software products, and publishes a bi-monthly newspaper.
- The 1988 Technology-related Assistance Act
and its 1993 amendments provides federal funding to help states establish programs to promote the provision of technology-related assistance. The purpose of the Tech Act programs is to serve as statewide resources that will increase awareness of the need for adaptive technology, disseminate information about adaptive technology, and facilitate the availability of adaptive technology. For more information about the Tech Act program in your state, visit RESNA's Web site at <http://www.resna.org/resna/abstract.htm>.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Distance Learning: Opportunities and Challenges

by Karen Diller and Nancy Huling

Distance learning, also known as distance education or distributed learning, has existed in the state of Washington for many years. First implemented as a way to offer continuing education to people in remote areas, it now encompasses students working on bachelor's and master's degrees. It also provides a scheduling option to traditional, campus-based students where "remote" takes on a whole new meaning: students may be in the same city as the instructor, but not in the same classroom. The delivery methods have also changed, reflecting the rapid growth of technological applications to instruction. Early distance learning involved correspondence and self-paced workbooks. The advent of television introduced another medium. In 1982, Washington State University implemented WHETS, the Washington Higher Education Telecommunication System, a statewide and nationally recognized medium for delivering distance education via real-time, interactive video. The World Wide Web now features prominently in any discussion of instructional delivery, as do desktop videoconferencing and other synchronous and asynchronous modes.

A recent report written by Ann Suter of the Communications Technology Center for Washington Community and Technical Colleges provides an excellent overview of distance education in the state (see http://web.ctc.edu/CTC_cust_svcs/et&t/index.htm for the full report). She notes the rise of the Western Governors University as an effort to make education more accessible to a wide population through distance learning. Opportunities for Washington citizens to enroll in classes are growing rapidly. Many of the community colleges are developing AA degree programs for distance learners, resulting in an increase in the number of registrations over the last four years. Several of the community colleges are now marketing their courses beyond their districts through such national and international consortia as the League for Innovation and the World Community College. Washington State University offers degree completion programs for upper-division students through their learning centers and in other locations, and is working closely with community colleges. The University of Washington offers a new Professional Master's in Computer Science and Engineering in which half of the curriculum is through distance learning. Other state universities also have an array of programs. A major goal of all campuses is to "mainstream" distance learning into higher education rather than treating it as a separate entity. There is a much higher degree of cooperation and collaboration among agencies within an institution and between K-20 schools

than was previously the case.

Recent events in the state of Washington have propelled distance learning into the forefront and create both opportunities and challenges for libraries. A session at the WLA/OLA Conference in Portland last April addressed current legislative initiatives related to distance learning in Washington State. Leslie Wykoff, Director of Information Services at WSU's Vancouver campus, provided an overview of the K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network, established by the legislature through a law passed in 1996. The K-20 network, now in the implementation process, is intended to be "an integrated and interoperable educational technology network serving kindergarten through higher education and promoting access for Washington citizens." (Laws 1997, ch. 137). It requires collaboration between public and private elementary and secondary education, higher education, government, and the private sector to provide distance learning opportunities. The K-20 network will support Internet and intranet services, real-time videoconferencing, and full-motion video distribution via satellite technology, thereby increasing the functionality of WHETS. Ms. Wykoff noted most libraries in the state will be affected as citizens across the state could enroll in classes offered at any state institution regardless of location. "Public library users in your small town will be taking classes at a nearby community college from instructors at colleges across the state," said Ms. Wykoff. "If libraries are going to be considered serious players in this new era of expanded access to educational opportunities, we need to react now and work collaboratively to devise an information delivery system which responds effectively to this hopeful, visionary K-20 plan."

Therein lies the challenge to libraries across the state. Collaborative efforts and partnerships must be mounted in order to provide effective and reasonable library service to the state's citizenry. But this is not an inexpensive endeavor. The funding base for each library system varies depending on the primary clientele. Universities, for example, are funded to serve matriculated students and faculty at their campuses; other users of services and resources are add-ons. Public libraries have a mandate to serve the basic needs of their immediate community and cannot be expected to carry high-level research materials, just as university libraries typically do not hold much in the way of popular or general consumer literature.

Under the leadership of Harvey Gover of the WSU Tri-Cities campus, the ALA/ACRL Extended Campus Library Services Section is revising the guidelines for service to distance learners, which are expected to be approved in 1998. These guidelines clearly stipulate that the responsibility for providing service falls to the "home" institution, and that distance learners should be provided equitable service to that provided to students on campus. In theory, this is fine, but in practice, most distance learners will attempt to use their closest library before utilizing the services provided by their home campus. This can be quite frustrating for that library, since often it doesn't collect in the area in which the student is working. And frequently, the student needs more attention than the librarian is able to provide, especially navigating through unfamiliar computer systems and trying to track down esoteric information to support research. It must also be noted that services to distance learners are highly

mediated, with greater—and therefore more costly—staff involvement than in a traditional on-site setting.

Most of the literature and discussion in the field of education surrounding distance learning focuses on the relationship between instructor and student and the delivery methods for the instruction. Libraries have not generally been perceived as a key part of the planning that must occur for successful distance learning programs; consequently the ability of the distance student to do the type of research typically done on a campus is seriously compromised and the quality of the educational experience can be questioned. Issues involved in the organization, management, and delivery of library services to distance learners must be addressed to ensure a quality education.

If the goal in these distance education programs is to provide off-campus students with the same educational opportunities and the same quality of courses which they would get by attending a traditional campus, then it is imperative that the full range of library services be available to these students. For example, a recent declaration by the Washington State University Faculty Senate states that "WSU students should be able to ... conduct self-directed or independent learning projects ... demonstrate research and information retrieval skills in the library [and] on the Internet." If off-campus students are to be held to the same standard as on-campus students, quality library services and instruction will need to be a requirement for quality distance education programs, and so, librarians have begun confronting problems relating to the provision of remote services.

These issues may be grouped into three areas: access issues, service issues and administrative issues. Issues of access go to the heart of basic library services. How do we provide access to the library's catalog and licensed databases and how do we get library materials to off-campus students? Although these problems can get quite complicated, libraries have been struggling with them long enough, and the technology has developed well enough, that these problems are the ones which are being solved the most quickly for students in distance education programs. There are, however, some remaining issues worth discussing.

One is the way in which students gain access to the library's catalog and databases. The easiest way to provide access to these resources is via the World Wide Web. Students living in rural areas and economically-depressed areas, however, may not have access to the Web. Even if they have a computer and modem, it is likely to be an older model with which text-based access to the Internet is all that is possible. As systems and companies try to move everyone to Web-based access to information, librarians must keep these situations in mind and make sure that we offer viable alternatives for students who only have text-based access. In addition, with licensed databases, we also have the problem of authentication; how do we provide access to these databases to students who have the right to use them without also providing access to the entire world? There are solutions, but they take time and technological expertise to implement. Do we have the personnel on our campuses to set up an authentication process? If so, do they understand the world of licensed databases and network-based programming to

develop a process which is easy enough for the novice user to understand yet does not compromise the necessary security?

Once our off-campus patrons are able to access catalogs and databases, they will need a way to request the materials they want and the library will need a way of tracking any loaned materials. Libraries already have well-established procedures for getting items from one library to another. Many hesitate, however, when sending items directly to patrons. Who will take responsibility for the item if it is lost or damaged in route? If the item needs to be borrowed from another library (ILL) will it get to the patron quickly enough if delivered to the patron's home library and then put in the mail to the patron? In addition, many students enrolled in off-campus programs are only tangentially related to the institution in which they have enrolled. Their records may take a long time to show up in the library's circulation system or they may not be aware of the procedure necessary for identifying themselves as students of a particular institution. We may underestimate how much word-of-mouth and on-campus communication methods play a role in communicating key data to our patrons and thus we neglect to directly distribute basic information to off-campus students.

Finally, access issues crop up in the basic availability of reserve readings. Electronic reserves is now being used in some libraries and it seems certain this trend will continue in the future. But how many libraries currently have the staff time or expertise, technological or legal, to navigate the waters of electronic reserves, not to mention server space needed to store the files? In addition, how many distance education students will have the computer power needed to access these files?

Libraries are, or soon will be, working out solutions to these access problems. Some of these problems will be solved by careful planning, better communications and more computer power. Others, however, may need to be solved by talking with the administrators and developers of distance education programs to ensure that students enrolled in these programs will have access to a prerequisite level of technology and the expertise to use it, thus enabling them to access important information.

Once beyond basic access questions, issues of service begin moving to the forefront of library-related distance education issues. These issues include providing reference and library instruction to off-campus students. Not only are librarians struggling to solve the problems of finding a way to provide reference and library instruction services to remote students, but they also want and need to maintain the quality of these services so that off-campus students receive the same opportunities to develop critical thinking and research skills as those with direct access to resources and services. How will reference services be provided to students in remote locations and how will we fit these additional services into presently overextended reference services? Of course, the answer that off-campus students most often want to hear is that they will receive service through their local library regardless of its institutional identity, i. e., a public, community college or university library. We know that this does not often work. Many off-campus students are in remote communities with small libraries. These libraries and

librarians do not generally have access to the variety of databases or other resources which the students do through the students' home institution's library. With resources at a premium, the extent of services which a local library is able to provide a student who is not connected with that library will not be as broad as the services offered to students at the home institution.

Another issue is the attitude of the students themselves. They may see the institution as the provider of all materials which they will need in order to complete the course in which they are enrolled. In some cases, this is certainly true. However, in others they will, and should be, asked to develop the skills to find additional research materials. It is important that librarians maintain the goals that they have for on-campus services—those goals which encourage students to develop independent research and critical-thinking skills and simultaneously maintain our libraries as places of teaching and learning and not merely places of information provision. Typically, librarians will guide students through the process of developing individual research skills. This process becomes much more difficult in an off-campus setting which lacks face-to-face interaction between librarian and student.

So how can we provide reference services to these students? Fortunately, the technology which spawned the problem also offers new opportunities to solve it. This is not to say that traditional methods should be neglected, however. Traditional technology like phone service is still a viable alternative. Conducting a reference interview over the phone is fairly easy to do and we have been providing this service for a long time. We need to make sure, however, that long distance phone bills do not become a deterrent to students using this service. Developing an 800 number may be an absolute necessity for an institution.

In addition, we now have the option of using e-mail. E-mail, when a reference question is clearly articulated and has a definitive answer, can be very helpful. Its weakness, however, is that in many instances, a detailed reference interview is necessary to determine what a patron needs and then direct that patron to the correct sources. When communicating via e-mail, this may turn into a very long process because students may only have access to e-mail once or twice a week and the question-and-answer process may thus take several weeks to come to a successful conclusion. For this reason, e-mail, though useful, has a limited utility.

Web-based tutorials provide an ever-growing utility. Some librarians in our state have done an excellent job at providing these tutorials for their students. (For examples, see: <http://www.sccd.ctc.edu/~jwu/webli.html>) This is a method that has enormous potential in helping answer commonly-asked reference questions. We must remember, however, that this method does require students to have access to a computer capable of accessing the Web. Web-based tutorials, although highly instructive when completed, can require quite extensive programming knowledge, time and energy to develop. It is important to plan for the availability of resources needed to support the development of web-based tutorials.

Finally, there is desktop videoconferencing. Although it would be fairly easy and not terribly

expensive to equip our reference desk workstations for frame-relay videoconferencing, once again, the problem is at the other end. Does the student have access to a site which provides the connection and the hardware and software necessary to support desktop videoconferencing? This may be a method of conducting reference interviews which will become a more viable alternative in the future as the technology advances and it gets distributed throughout the state.

With any of these methods of providing reference assistance, another problem quickly surfaces. How do we provide reference help that is instructive and encourages independent research if we cannot directly refer students to resources in the library? Do we provide answers or do we try to develop an extensive electronic collection so that students can be referred to sources to which they will actually have access? Finally, are we taking the provision of library services to distance education programs into consideration when we make collection development decisions? One can see how questions of formats may have the greatest impact on our remote students.

Now we come to library instruction—an even more complicated service to provide in an off-campus setting. Some institutions have addressed this issue by sending librarians out to remote sites to meet with students or by requiring students to come to campus for marathon research and instruction sessions. This may well be impractical for most institutions, however. As students become increasingly scattered throughout a state, region or country, it will not be possible to continue supporting this type of face-to-face contact.

Other institutions have developed online or video-based courses which students may opt to take in order to learn research strategies. (For an example see University 300, a WSU course created by Jane Scales and Jim Elmborg, <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/univ300/univ300.htm>) Web-based tutorials and videoconferencing can also be used for this purpose. In contrast to the frame-relay type of videoconferencing system, a classroom instruction setting would benefit from continuous-stream videoconferencing. For the near term, however, many institutions will no doubt lack the resources necessary to implement this expensive technology.

Finally, there is WHETS in which a series of scattered but interconnected classrooms form the interactive audience for a librarian teaching via two-way television. The advantage that WHETS offers is that the librarian can demonstrate paper resources on hand in the studio and have access, along with the students, to online resources. The disadvantage is that many sites are still waiting to be connected to WHETS.

Computer, television and video technologies will enable librarians to help develop students who are independent and accomplished researchers. This brings up a final problem which must be conquered in order for any solution to work—technology training. If we are going to look to technology to help us solve the problems created by distance education, then we must design a way to teach off-campus students the necessary skills to use this technology. Should

we lobby to have required technology training be a prerequisite to enrolling in a distance education program, try to improve access to technology training in all of our communities, provide taped tutorials or develop other ways to insure a basic comfort level with computers and a basic knowledge of how to access information through their use? The ability of off-campus students to operate the technology used to deliver services to them will need to be developed.

Then there are the administrative issues involved in providing library services to off-campus students. In many instances, when an institution is planning to provide educational opportunities to distant sites, librarians are not at the planning table. These sites may be established and classes held before librarians are included in the planning. If the staff hired to coordinate distance education, whether at a distant site or at the home institution, does not include a librarian, the staff can be ill-equipped to deal with such issues as the intricacies of database licensing, tracking books on loan and teaching students research skills. In such circumstances, implementing an effective distance education program can require the additional time-consuming step of equipping the faculty and staff to deal with these issues. Unfortunately, while the staff gets up to speed, the students must wait.

There are other staffing issues. One that is almost always forgotten is the demand made on the staff of libraries local to the distant education site. These libraries, no matter how careful the planning, are inevitably affected by the distance education opportunity now in their community. It is not only wise, but simply courteous to consider this. The institution providing the educational opportunity should help in any way that it can to minimize the demands on these local library services. Opportunities for joint database licensing, training and communication should be further explored.

The other obvious staffing issue is at the library of the home institution. Librarians must make a very strong case for added staffing if their libraries are to be able to support distant sites. These requests for staffing can be hard to justify in a way that administrators of the institution understand. Needing more staff because you receive a high level of phone and e-mail questions in addition to face-to-face questions or because you need to redesign your access to databases, so that remote users can have access, may be hard to sell. In addition, it can be hard to convince administrators that preparing lessons for a "virtual" class which is taking place on the web is much more time-consuming than preparing for a traditional class. Finally, in the case of academic settings where librarians are faculty, it is important for the institution to recognize that development of web-based tutorials and other virtual projects should be counted along with the more traditional activities in the tenure process. Without this, there is no institutional encouragement for faculty to work on such projects.

Libraries and librarians are traditionally viewed as filling a certain role within their institutions. As these institutions grow and alter their form, but not their fundamental function, libraries and librarians need to take an active role in shaping that new form. Part of this, for lack of a better term, involves a certain amount of positive (and proactive) public relations.

First, librarians must insure their seat at the planning table for distance education programs. Second, librarians need to develop the skills to bring all of these issues to the planning process without being seen as roadblocks to the building of distance education sites. We need to clearly articulate the staffing needs and costs inherent in providing solid library services to off-campus students and to show how these services are integral to the institution's academic goals. We also need to be building more cooperative alliances with area and state libraries so that there is more uniform access to information throughout the state. When there is wider and more uniform access to information, individual students will have a much easier time navigating the electronic world to find what they need and we will have a less arduous task of teaching them how to do so. Finally, we do need to educate our patrons, administrators and faculty on the complexities of providing library services so that, as we build quality library services to support distance education opportunities, the processes and problems are understood and not just seen as difficulties constructed by librarians to inhibit access to resources.

The authors wish to thank Jennifer Wu, North Seattle Community College, for her assistance with this article.

Karen R. Diller is Assistant Campus Librarian, Washington State University-Vancouver.

Nancy Huling is Head of Reference and Research Services for the Suzzallo and Allen Libraries, University of Washington.

Driving Forces Behind Distance Education

- Technology (personal computing, telecommunications, Internet/Web) and the need for technological updating for the work force
- Access for all: interest in ensuring that "disenfranchised" populations could avail themselves of higher education opportunities
- Economic development: states want to have a high percentage of

residents holding advanced and specialized knowledge, degrees, and certificates to attract business and industry.

- Cost containment: states don't want to build new campuses with every increase in population or geo-demographic shift.
- Baby-boom echo: states are concerned about meeting the needs of an increasing population group.
- Worker training and retraining: businesses want "qualified" employees on a timely basis and look to public education to provide those services and programs.
- Welfare training: states and the federal government want to move citizens off welfare rolls and into paid employment.
- Distributed education: many institutions want to enhance education or transfer student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions by using technology and telecommunications.

---Ann Suter, Communications Technology Center, Washington Community and Technical Colleges.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Seattle High-Schoolers Get a Virtual Running Start

*Public-private cooperation
allows teens to pursue college-level coursework*

by Jean Kent

Community-based learning has a nice ring to it, and the Seattle Community Colleges are trying to make it a reality through the Virtual Running Start Program. Funded by a grant from US West, VRS is putting together the necessary pieces to enable students to attend college without regularly setting foot on campus. In this new model, students can attend college classes from their public library, from their home, from their high school, or even from their workplace. Students log in when their schedule permits—in the evening, on weekends, even during the wee hours of the night.

Before describing VRS, it might help to review the regular (non-virtual) Running Start program. A state law passed in 1990 allows eligible high school juniors and seniors to attend college classes for free. These students take the same placement tests that incoming freshmen take and must meet the same performance standards that other college students meet. Once enrolled, the classes they take count towards both high school graduation and college completion.

Since its inception, the Running Start program has been very popular and the number of Running Start students continues to grow each year. During Fall quarter 1997, 140 Running Start students were registered for classes at North Seattle Community College. Parents and students alike see the benefits, economic and otherwise for getting a head start on a college degree.

Now, high school (and other) students without easy physical access to college, can attend classes over the World Wide Web. Course materials including lectures, assignments, and communications are delivered through the Virtual Running Start web site (<http://www.virtualcollege.org>). Students turn in their work by e-mailing it to their instructor. Course discussions are posted to web pages using threaded conferencing software and virtual office hours are held using chat rooms.

The virtual classroom has an easy-to-use student interface as evidenced by the figure below:

Even students without computers in their homes can participate fully in these courses by using computers in their local public libraries or in their high school computer labs. That's what is meant by community-based learning. Three Seattle Public branch libraries, Lake City, Douglas Truth, and High Point have partnered with Seattle Community College in providing access to the Virtual Running Start web site from their computer labs. Garfield, Nathan Hale, and West Seattle are the high schools who are participating in the program.

Faculty at North Seattle Community College and Garfield High School have re-designed two existing courses and created a new course for the VRS program. Health and Human Sexuality and American Government, both required for high school graduation, were completely reworked for online delivery. The third course, Internet and Computer Skills for Online Learners became a blend of a standard introduction to computing course, an Internet course, and a computer applications course. It was designed to be linked to the American Government class so that students without the necessary skills for taking an online course could gain them in a structured setting.

All three courses, while meeting various high school graduation requirements, are college-level classes with as much rigor (or more) as traditional face-to-face classes. Though there may be problems associated with this type of learning environment, rigor isn't one of them. Visitors are invited to preview the courses and see first hand the materials and activities incorporated into each class.

I hope this brief overview will help provide a context for the comments that follow. As one who has been in the trenches, creating and teaching one of the courses and helping redesign another, I have four perspectives I'd like to share.

Perspective #1:

For some students, this method of learning is very effective. Students who are highly-motivated and self-disciplined do very well. They appreciate the flexibility of the online environment and are willing to take more responsibility for their learning than do many students enrolled in classes where the course content is delivered traditionally.

A corollary to this perspective is that some faculty are more suited to teaching in the online environment than are others. Self discipline, attention to detail, and good technical skills are all important factors in the success of an online instructor.

Perspective #2:

Developing courses for online delivery is very hard work. Determining the learning outcomes and creating materials and activities that will achieve them is more difficult in this mode than teaching in a traditional classroom. Those spontaneous teachable moments disappear, and

while they can be somewhat replaced by e-mail, listserv, and web-based discussions, the online equivalent of spontaneity is definitely a new teaching skill.

Perspective #3:

Online instruction represents the paradigm shift being discussed in education today. It is a shift away from the instructor being primarily responsible for student learning. Students are no longer viewed as empty vessels in need of filling. Teachers don't have to know everything there is to know about their subject matter. Co-learning can take place and the teacher becomes much more of a coach, promoting inquisitiveness and critical thinking rather than delivering the "truth".

Perspective #4:

Librarians will see more and more of these distance learning activities take place on the computers in their libraries. While, it's difficult to predict whether virtual classrooms and Web-based instruction will last for the long term, it is safe to say that these types of educational opportunities are growing in number and popularity right now.

Before this century is over, citizens in the State of Washington will be able to earn an Associate of Arts degree without ever setting foot on a community or technical college campus. Access to higher education in this state will improve dramatically and libraries will have a role to play in making this work.

As librarians working in wired libraries, we will need to meet this challenge by helping a whole new type of student succeed. Online learners need support with tasks we may not feel comfortable with yet ourselves. Questions about e-mail attachments, file formats, HTML, threaded conferencing software, video capture, scanning, and graphics manipulation are likely to be asked in the future by this new crop of students.

We will all need more training and our libraries will need more equipment. Both of these demands will require wise planning and better funding and they will impact the traditional services and resources we provide. Those are among our greatest challenges.

On the other hand, this seems like a golden opportunity to extend the definition of libraries as well as to strengthen our mission to support life-long learning for our patrons. This is one ride I don't want to miss and I'll do everything I can to make it as smooth as possible.

The lessons we are learning from our VRS students should help smooth the path for those who will follow. Another thing the Virtual Running Start Project is proving is that colleges, high schools, and libraries can work together to better serve students of the twenty-first century.

Jean Kent is Electronic Communications Coordinator at North Seattle Community College.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Reaching Out to Small Businesses *Seattle Public Library makes connections*

by Sally Wermcrantz

Small businesses began to grow dramatically in Seattle in the 1980s, as it did in most cities in the United States. In response, Seattle Public Library began to enrich its small business collection to support these new businesses and developed a Small Business Center composed of books, magazines and some videos and audio tapes in its Business and Technology Department. In-depth reference books on auditing small businesses, incorporation procedures, marketing and other subjects were purchased. By the early 1990s, when I came to the Business and Technology Department of the library and took on the primary responsibility of the collection, the department was beginning to develop outreach programs for small businesses and working hard to make its collection well known to Seattle's citizens and more convenient to use. What follows is an account of the department's programming and service successes.

Networking with the other Small Business Agencies

The department had established a relationship with the Small Business Administration (SBA) in the late 1980s and SPL staff members felt fortunate to have the opportunity to be included as guest speakers in its primary small business workshop, which was held monthly. We knew that this exposure was valuable and that the referrals SBA was making to us were even more valuable. We decided we wanted more contact with other agencies.

The head of our department had been actively networking for some time with the downtown business community, which proved valuable. We began to let small business organizations know that we were available to give brief talks on using the library to research markets and companies and any other type of information small businesses might need. We made it a point to attend as many local small business conferences and awards ceremonies as we could. We hosted booths at the small business trade shows, as much to meet small business owners as to know the other small business advisory groups in Seattle. The small business counselors and centers we contacted were receptive to our services and agreed to include our pamphlets with their literature. Once they knew our services, they made many more referrals. The large and rich collections we had developed could not be duplicated by them and our trained business reference librarians, experienced with in-depth business reference in the downtown

environment, could answer amazingly complex and difficult questions.

Today, as the staff member most responsible for the small business collection, I speak regularly at the classes and workshops of the Small Business Development Center at South Seattle Community College, the University of Washington's Entrepreneur program, the small business classes at the Seattle Art Institute and the SBA's beginning entrepreneur program. We have found talks on how to do market research in the library and how to identify reliable companies as potential clients especially popular. We also distribute pamphlets on "New Small Business Books," on how to do small business research, and on books we own on specific business types. The department receives Internet and telephone requests for market statistics, company research and other small business information that have been referred from these agencies. We also make referrals to them and display their literature.

Getting Out To the Neighborhoods

In the early 1990s, we began to assist branch libraries in developing basic small business collections. We believed we needed to make more small business reference books available at branches, so that the first step of a small business person's use of the library research could be done in their neighborhood. We accepted the idea that a trip downtown would be necessary for in-depth research which required more expensive and specialized business reference tools. After consulting with five of our 22 branches, we purchased five sets of reference books on small business accounting, import/export basics, incorporation, legal forms and guides, budgeting, business plans, financing, and trademark. We developed a brochure titled "Small Business Research at a Library Near You," where we listed the books in these collections with call numbers, as well as Internet sources and directions for the use of the Magazine Index ASAP available through our on-line catalog QUEST. In this brochure we also listed common subject headings for small business books and the most popular downtown library business resources. This brochure was distributed through all the branches, at all trade shows we attended and in any other outreach efforts we conducted. We always introduced this program as "small business information at a location convenient to you."

To make other services more convenient to small business clients, we began to offer programs in the branches. We conducted small business research workshops there from 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. to catch people on their way home from work to dinner. Combined with these we taught "Business Information on the Internet" classes from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. We publicized these classes with letters to the neighborhood chambers of commerce and notices to the local newspapers.

Our Web Presence

The World Wide Web offered us new ways to reach Seattle library users in their homes and at our branches. We decided that we wanted to offer more than links to other Internet sites on our

small business page (<http://www.spl.lib.wa.us/collec/smallbus/sbcollec.html>) and use it to post information. Since the Web was particularly rich in government information, we used the page to help direct the staff in branches and the public to these resources in small business, in hopes of saving everyone time and bettering service. I reached out to the small business agencies with whom we had developed relationships and obtained a multi-page business plan outline from SCORE/SBA and received help from all of them to develop a list of local non-bank finance sources for small business, and these were mounted on the page. We were especially glad to post the business plan because we had such a hard time keeping business plan books on the shelf. The finance source list has been very popular. The staff of the local IRS small business tax workshops allowed me to post their classes and I wrote a short "One Minute Small Business Research" guide, which invited small business to submit reference questions via e-mail. Like all Web pages, ours offered useful Internet links. We publicized our page through a bookmark advertising its features, which was available as a handout and mailed to all our sister small business agencies. We also included it in any articles we published on business information. We began offering a small business Internet class, based on the Web page and its links.

A Little Help from the Press

Through Seattle Public Library's newsletters, we advertised our new programs and then decided to try to receive publicity outside. I wrote three articles and submitted them to the Seattle business magazine *Puget Sound Business Journal*, which has a small business section. One article dealt with how to do small business research at no cost at your library, including how to develop mailing/sales lists, research companies as competitors and customers, and how to research product and market trends. The others dealt with how to use the Internet for business research and publicized our Web page and its links. In all cases, we mentioned brochures available for mailing, telephone reference and our book collections. Our Web page was designed to link to the first article.

Trade Show/Local Government Connections

The Business and Technology Department has participated in many trade shows, including two small business fairs each year. At the small business fairs, our booth has been kept very simple, with the library's name boldly displayed. We have usually displayed six sets of brochures, including the small business brochures discussed above and brochures on how to research a company and obtain standards through the library. We have displayed our Web page, demonstrated how to make mailing lists with American Business Disk, accepted reference questions, and placed reserves on books. We have also been privileged to speak at a number of conferences, including the October 1997 Minority and Women's Small Business Conference, where I presented a workshop titled "Marketing Research Using the Internet."

Our ties with Seattle city government's Office of Economic Development and the Mayor's

Small business Task Force have been strong and hold more possibilities for us to network through the neighborhood centers. We have advertise our workshops through the Office of Economic Development and helped them develop their small business telephone directory, which gave the library a prominent position. We have always agreed to speak with members of the Small Business Task Force to community groups, and plan to do more.

A Few Last Words

In conclusion, we can say that our department has done much to publicize and make accessible our small business collection. In this article, our successes have been outlined, but we have also had frustrating moments. Although many of our articles were accepted by publishers, we had almost as many rejected. Many business groups did not presume that the library could help them. and we had to approach them two or three times at conferences, trade shows or award dinners to catch their attention. However, because we did attend certain events regularly, we began to be regarded as serious participants. As many of our small business sales books advised, we had to work long and hard to establish credibility and rapport. Just as salesmen expect that many of their potential customers will not be interested on first contact, we had to approach our outreach efforts with this attitude.

Our outreach has been successful due to many individuals as well. The Small Business Administration staff in Seattle has recommended us to their clients and the agencies with whom they regularly work. The collection development staff at Seattle Public Library has funded the small business book collection generously. The Business and Technology Department staff has contributed time and labor; and their solid reference skills have backed our claims for quality service. The head of the department when these programs were developed contributed her strong networking skills; and the Seattle Public Library administration has shown unusual dedication to outreach programs. The most difficult part of networking is making the "initial contact," and we have already made many of these. We hope to continue the outreach programs listed above and develop further the relationships we have established.

Sally Wermcrantz is the librarian with primary responsibility for the small business collections of the Business and Technology Department of Seattle Public Library. She can be reached via e-mail at bst@spl.lib.wa.us

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

A Day In Detention

by Linda Carlson

"Whoa, Library's here!"

We always seem to be a welcome surprise. We arrive about 11:30 and, as usual, interrupt class. The teachers are young and wired. They are open, positive and non-judgmental. They enhance interests or create them and use our materials to do it. It's a joy to behold. The teachers either keep teaching or let the kids come see what we've brought this time. We bring two boxes of about 45 or 50 items and leave them there. The teachers have let us know what they will be working on with the kids for the next two weeks. When we come, every first and third Thursday, we bring special materials for them to use. They run an open, organized program called SAC (Structured Alternative Confinement) for youth on home monitoring devices. The teens go to school at the Spokane County Detention facility in the morning and then do supervised community service in the afternoon. We've been visiting this part of Detention for just over a year now.

We spread our enticements on the tables and hang out. The kids in SAC tend to be a little wary. They don't want to be pushed into anything. Unlike the teens in the other part of the facility, they are not locked up. They don't depend on us to entertain them. But we bring good stuff, popular paperbacks, videos, books on tape, CDs, and picture books about cars and sharks and the X-Files. The teachers hang out with us and go through the material we've brought. A book or CD will spark a discussion between us, and the kids will eavesdrop or join in. Pretty soon they are checking out a paperback or video. We stay until the kids leave to do their community service, then pack up.

After SAC, we weave our way through locked doors and the scrutiny of video cameras to the classroom area of the Juvenile Detention facility itself. Here, students with varying sentences come and go—sometimes returning in a matter of days, sometimes weeks—an incredible challenge to their teachers. Since we arrive around noon, the teachers generally have to interrupt their lunch to see what we've brought them, and let us know what they could use next time. Sometimes we're lucky and get in on a staff potluck. Whether or not we score lunch, we are always glad to make the connection with these teachers. It has enhanced both our service and the educational programs at Detention to establish this cooperative partnership between

the library and the teaching staff. The best part is that it's the kids who benefit.

We have been bringing library programs to the juvenile detention facility on a limited basis since 1994. Some of our programs are the same as those we offer teens in our libraries, others we've arranged just for this audience. The first program we ever offered was an author visit from Spokane's own Chris Crutcher, who read from his works and patiently answered questions from the kids, including how much money he makes. Other programs have given the kids a chance to talk comics with a comic book expert, written poetry with a creative writing teacher, made masks with a ceramic artist and performed with actors doing Shakespeare.

We generally bring related materials to the classrooms prior to a program. The students had time to learn about ocean life and sea creatures before an area diver brought "The Magic of Dolphins and Other Sea Friends". This summer in a program called "Knights and Ladies Read" the teens learned about medieval life from a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. Books and videos we brought on the Middle Ages helped teens get a feel for the time period before they met "Sir Guy".

After our visit with the detention teachers, we make our way back through the same locked doors and cameras to the "outside" and a fast-food lunch. We come back at 1:30 to provide library service to the residents. The Spokane County Library District (SCLD) has been providing this service since 1979. The inmate population normally hovers right around sixty. We spend the next two hours seeing groups of ten to twelve teens for about fifteen minutes each. A couple of teen library helpers set out materials for us. They are on what is called the "honor level", which means they've earned trust and can spend time out of their cells doing chores or activities. They like to help us because they get first pick of the goodies.

And so an intense two hours begins. We love it. According to a recent survey we did in Juvenile Detention, most of the residents didn't read books as children. The kids here are just as varied as their ages and their interests.

So are their needs. Some monopolize our time. They sit at the table with us, telling us what they read, what they liked, what they want. We have heavy readers who know exactly what they want. We take requests and try hard to fill them. We have young people who can barely read and are often too shy to ask for help. Garfield is always in demand. We keep the Garfield books on the table where we sit, because that gives us a chance to make connections. We also put out high interest materials on our table or what we think are high interest. When they just sit there, then we've had another lesson in collection development.

During summer (or winter) reading programs, we have teens coming to us with book reviews, poetry or drawings they've done themselves. Any ten of those items will earn them a T-shirt or hand-held game donated to us by local businesses. These reading programs have been a big hit. We like them because we get to see what the kids read and what they think about the

books. It also feels good to have the community involved in what we do for the teens.

When their time is up, the groups are reluctant to go back to their cells and have to be reminded by the staff. They linger if they can, making up excuses to look some more or talk some more. We linger too, but the staff reminds us all that the shift is changing and the Detention routine moves on. We leave the five flats of paperbacks we brought and pack up the ones we left last time to take back. A staff person unlocks the doors for us one last time. Our day there is done, but we get to keep coming back. The books make a difference. "I just got into reading and I LOVE IT." writes a sixteen "soon to be seventeen" year old male. We help make it possible. We want them to keep reading, reaching out, making a connection. We tell them to go to the library when they get out. We let them know they'll find people like us there.

Linda Carlson is an Outreach Assistant for the Spokane County Library District

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Bilingual Story Times in North Central Washington

by Marilyn Neumiller

The North Central Regional Library is a five-county rural library system, serving Chelan, Grant, Douglas, Okanogan and Ferry Counties. In four of those counties, the Spanish-speaking population has increased dramatically in the last ten years. Nine school districts in our service area reported Hispanic enrollment over 50% in 1996-97.

In response, we've beefed up our Spanish language collections, encouraged branch staff to learn Spanish, and begun to add "bilingual skills preferred" to the position descriptions for some public service openings. To their credit, a few staff members, most speaking little or no Spanish, have nonetheless been able to offer story times for Hispanic youngsters.

Paul Anderman, at the Peshastin Public Library, was the first of our staff members to learn Spanish in response to the changing demographics in our service area. He now visits English as a Second Language classes just to meet people, and to give a little speech about the resources available at the library. He particularly wants the teachers to know that the library has a range of things in Spanish.

A juggler and magician who brings the whole range of his talents to the library, Paul says he's used Spanish to teach several people how to juggle in Spanish, gone out to help start cars that won't run in the winter while communicating in Spanish, and helped fill out job applications and forms for credit cards in Spanish—not traditional library services, but much appreciated by his Hispanic patrons. His relative mastery of the language also makes it possible for him to include Spanish language stories in his programs when he feels the makeup of the group justifies such an offering. A particular favorite is *The Haunted House, La Casa Embrujada*, a pop-up book that is easy to read and surprising to see in either language. He's also used bilingual books on occasion, with English and Spanish printed side-by-side, but feels that, whichever language he's using, he loses half the audience—or gains half.

He's happier with his use of sign language. Proficient enough in sign to do some easy stories that way, he finds that kids from both language groups are attracted to the idea of talking with their hands.

During the summer of 1996, Esther Dalgas offered a series of bilingual programs at the Entiat Public Library. The idea grew out of her daughter's involvement in a school activity called the "Puentes Club" (puentes, translated, means bridges). She felt it would be enriching to children of both English and Spanish language backgrounds to have special literature based programs in both languages. Since Esther is not fluent in Spanish, she enlisted the help of the school district's Spanish and migrant ed teacher—a contact she feels was vital to this program's success—and asked members of the Puentes Club if they would volunteer.

The programs, intended to appeal to children from preschool through the elementary grades, incorporated a variety of storytelling styles and techniques. *Jack and the Beanstalk* was acted out with props, there were several puppet shows, participants sang songs in both languages, and the series ended with a party and a pinata.

At first, turnout was very low, but week by week the numbers grew. Children who had never before been to the library began to attend. The end of summer party drew approximately 40 children.

Despite the extra work involved, Esther found the activity very rewarding. Her volunteers seem to have agreed. Some were so excited about the programs that they wanted to do them every week of the year.

Although she was unable to duplicate the program this summer, Esther hopes to do it again in the future.

In celebration of Cinco de Mayo, the Omak Public Library hosted a Spanish-English story time for preschool children of Hispanic families and other interested parties. Smaller-than-hoped-for attendance did not prevent the staff from judging the program a wonderful success.

Omak's storyteller was their high school page, for whom the program also served as a Spanish class project.

The entire program was planned around a single bilingual book: *The Woman who Outshone the Sun*, by A. Cruz Martinez.

Each family and child was greeted when they arrived, shown to a seat, and helped to find a toy or book with which to occupy themselves for a few minutes of waiting. At the scheduled starting time, the group was welcomed in Spanish and English and the planned activities began.

First, the group sang "De Colores", a popular song about colors. Then, crayons and coloring pages were distributed and each child was invited to color and cut out a large picture of a butterfly (mariposa). After writing their names on their mariposas, the children held them in their hands while they listened to the story.

A large mural, showing the story's main character in a long flowing skirt, hung on the wall nearby. The storyteller shared each page of the book, first in Spanish and then in English. At the right time, the children came forward to tape their mariposas to the woman's skirt. This made the story interactive and added to the fun.

At the end of the story the children were served a snack and invited to take their mariposas home.

Publicity was done through the local newspapers, both English-language and Spanish, as well as the local Spanish radio station, but most effective were personal phone calls to individual Hispanic families who regularly use the library. Speaking in Spanish (however poorly), the staff offered a simple explanation of the program and invited each family to attend.

With two members of the staff currently enrolled in a local Spanish class, the Omak Library hopes to offer more bilingual programs in the future.

The Bridgeport Library presents a bilingual story time for the local EPIC preschool once a month. Marilyn Lynn generally chooses books with bilingual texts or those she's able to find in our collection in both languages, but occasionally asks someone to provide her with a translation of a book we own only in Spanish. She then shares the program with an EPIC translator, each of them reading a page at a time, first in English, then in Spanish.

Similarly, Linda Finkle, at the Cashmere Library, invited a translator from the local Head Start program to join her at story time. Instead of planning a completely bilingual program, Linda incorporated a Spanish-English presentation of one simple book, most often a concept book with very limited text—colors, numbers, etc.—into her regular English-language programming. The whole group got into the act, with both adults saying each word first in English and then in Spanish and the children repeating after them.

At NCRL, we hope to expand on these beginnings by offering bilingual programs in more communities and on a more regular schedule in libraries where they've been offered only occasionally. And we're always looking for new ideas.

Marilyn Neumiller is Assistant Director at the North Central Regional Library system.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

See You at the Senior Fair

by Colleen Brazil and Pamela LaBorde

In the back room of the Redmond Library, creative ideas bounce around daily, yet one idea was persistent. What could we do to reach out to our senior citizen population? With many inventive minds pondering the possibilities, we came up with a plan for what turned into one of our most successful all-day events.

We started planning for the April 1996 Senior Fair in November of 1995. Although this seven month planning process may seem excessive, it proved to be one of our best decisions. No one on the committee had an excess of time, so this long planning time allowed us to spend only a few hours per month on the project.

We recruited volunteers for the committee at an all staff meeting. Five brave souls signed up, not quite knowing what they were getting into, but ready to do something for the senior population. Our group consisted of 3 librarians and 2 library assistants.

We met once a month for an hour at lunch time. The objective for the first meeting was to define our purpose and goals, and to get a rough idea of the type of programming, displays and activities to include.

At our first meeting, we agreed on the following:

Purpose/Goals: The purpose of our day-long Senior Fair is to reach as many senior citizens in the Redmond area as possible and to show them the kinds of services offered at the Redmond Library and throughout the King County Library System (KCLS). We are taking this opportunity to demonstrate to our senior neighbors that we value their contributions to the community and their patronage at the library.

Content: Scheduled events for the Fair will include informational and entertaining workshops. We will also have informational booths and displays staffed by local agencies and organizations.

Tasks were divided among the five committee members:

Carol Davis (Library Assistant)

Contact Traveling Library Center (TLC) which serves retirement residences in King County about patron transportation to the library on Senior Fair day and about TLC's booth participation.

Contact our KCLS Buildings and Grounds department to arrange for tables, borrowed from a neighboring library, to arrive the day before the fair. Also, to hang a large banner on the library building.

Contact Washington Talking Book Library to invite them to participate by staffing a booth.

Penny Weimer (Library Assistant)

Set up and clean up.

Arrange for coffee and cookies by contacting local grocery stores for donations. Monitor coffee and cookies (to keep them available as long as supplies held out.)

Obtain a guest book.

Create a questionnaire for participant feedback.

Create a display in lobby case.

Pamela LaBorde (Librarian)

Present "Make a DreamCatcher" program.

Displays in Library.

Write grant proposal to the TLC to cover Expenses.

Coordinate "How to Place a Hold" mini-workshops.

Colleen Brazil (Librarian)

Chair the Committee.

Publicity.

Contact the Nokomis Club -- a group whose early members founded the Redmond Library.

Contact the Eastside Genealogical Society to staff a booth.

Contact AAA to present a program on senior travel.

Coordinate with a member of the Friends of the Redmond Library to teach an Internet class.

Plan and coordinate library tour and library resource workshop.

Ann Roush (Librarian)

Contact craftsperson for program

Contact the Redmond Senior Center

To fund the \$300 budget we wrote a grant proposal to the Library System's Traveling Library Center (\$250) and to the Friends of the Redmond Library for costs the grant wouldn't cover (\$50). The final budget:

Programs	\$110
Door prizes	\$100

Coffee, Decorations, Misc.	\$80
Materials for DreamCatchers	<u>\$10</u>
Total	\$300

We were able to keep costs down by drawing on the talents of Friends and staff to conduct programs, by recruiting local businesses and agencies who would provide free programs as a community service, and by soliciting local grocery stores for cookie donations.

Throughout our early meetings, we brainstormed ideas for programs and exhibitors that we thought would be of interest to seniors. We ended up dropping a few ideas such as a sing-along program (performers too expensive) and a paper-cutting craft program (techniques difficult for short program.)

We offered a variety of informational, educational and fun programs of interest to seniors. Much to our delight, we found people came to attend several of the programs or they would come to one and end up staying for programs later in the day. The following is a list of the programs to give you an idea of the types of programming offered:

Learn How to Weave a DreamCatcher—This program, usually presented to children, proved to be an excellent choice for seniors. Materials were inexpensive and the process is easy enough to complete a DreamCatcher within the hour.

Cooking for 1 or 2 with Judy Rainwater—This popular local home economist spoke to a full house as she focused on clever, easy ways for preparing and storing healthy food. She also handed out recipes.

Discover What the Library Can Do For You—This overview of library materials and services, including a tour, was well-received. It also helped us promote our ongoing library instruction classes.

Senior Dance Aerobics—Low impact aerobics instructor June Kanz of Tacoma had attendees of all ages moving to the beat of her recorded music. A lively program like this was perfect for the middle of the day. Attendees flooded us with questions on where they could do this type of aerobics in the area.

Internet for Everybody—A presentation on the Internet gave an overview of what the Internet is, what it is used for, and how to get connected. Using an LCD panel, the presenters were able to give an online demonstration. The ideal situation for this program would be to have a hands on workshop. This program was well attended and we saw a huge increase in the number of seniors signing up to take the library's ongoing Internet workshops.

Senior Travel Possibilities—AAA of Washington provided an informational booth and a presentation on travel and packing tricks. Although this was an excellent program, it was not well-attended because it occurred too late in the day.

Place a Hold Workshop—We had mini-workshops every hour on "How to Place a

Hold" or how to reserve library materials by using the online catalog. These were taught hourly by both librarians and library assistants.

Since we had limited space, we wanted to stick with booths that were library related or were somehow tied into one of the programs. For the most part, the booths were staffed the entire day. In the library we had TLC, Redmond Senior Center, Washington Talking Book Library, and the Nokomis Club. In the lobby, Eastside Genealogical Society, AARP, AAA of Washington, and Friends of the Redmond Library displayed their information.

Inexpensive, plain colored, plastic tablecloths helped the display area look very festive. The library was also decorated with colorful KCLS helium filled balloons. The booths were a great success not only in providing information to patrons, but also in creating the opportunity for booth representatives to meet each other.

In the weeks preceding the event, library staff made an extra effort to inform our patrons coming into the library. Flyers listing all events were handed out by TLC staff to the senior residences they visited. We also distributed fliers to all activity directors at local senior facilities, to the Redmond Senior Center, to local organizations and to all local papers. On the day of the event the KCLS "Open House" banner was displayed over the library entrance.

Drawings for prizes were held five times during the day. This proved to be a popular and exciting part of the day.

TLC offered to provide Metro transportation for anyone wanting to travel to the library that day. We had a sign-up sheet but no one signed up. We were surprised there was so little interest—perhaps better publicity of that option would have helped.

We provided coffee and QFC donated cookies so we were able to have these available in our meeting room all day. Our visitors commented on how much they enjoyed having this available.

Evaluation forms were available to gather feedback, but we found these weren't filled out unless we announced them, or handed them out in our programs. Perhaps combining the evaluation form with the drawing entry form would provide more feedback.

We measured the Fair's success in several ways. The day brought in the second largest number of people (2,950) for the month and well over 1,000 more for any other Friday in April. Fair attendees gave us positive feedback such as "I spent the nicest afternoon since moving here one-and-a-half years ago."; "So glad you made this possible. Thanks!"; and "Excellent!" Attendance at programs averaged 30 people with the exception of the travel program late in the day. By offering many library-related instructional classes as well as fun and informational workshops, we were able to showcase library services. The large increase in the number of

seniors attending our ongoing computer and Internet classes immediately following the Fair showed we had made an impact.

It has now been almost two years since our first fair and we are well into the planning of our third event. Our second fair was organized along similar lines. It, too, was successful and fun for everyone. However, this year we will do things a little differently. We'll be changing the name to Lifelong Learning Fair to celebrate Older Americans Month (May). Then, instead of having just one day of programs every hour, we will spread our programming out over the month. We'll have more daytime programming and feature more computer workshops. And, as always, we will reach out to our older community members and invite them to explore their library and continue to make learning a lifelong pursuit.

Colleen Brazil and Pamela LaBorde are librarians at the Redmond branch of the King County Library System.

Tips for Having a Successful Fair

- Visit someone else's Senior Fair for ideas and contact.
- Find a funding source – Friends Group, Grants.
- Recruit volunteers to greet attendees and answer questions about Fair.
- Contact participants the week before to confirm participation.
- Make a map of booths and place signs on tables to identify exhibitors.
- Create a festive atmosphere with colorful decorations.
- Provide cookies and coffee all day – solicit donations.
- Have staff available that day with no other responsibilities than the Fair.
- Designate one person to monitor flow of programs and room set up.

- End programming by 3pm – attendance dwindles after that.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Up Front - The WLA President speaks

"ISABLE" Your Library Users

by Joan Weber, WLA President

I recently had the distinct pleasure of hearing Lee Bussard, a nationally recognized, motivational speaker. Lee is the author of "More Alike Than Different, " lives in Bellevue with his wife and two daughters and has cerebral palsy. His life path proves his assertion: if you drop the beginning and ending "d's" of disabled, what remains is infinitely more accurate: ISABLE.

This enabling view should apply to all "Special Users." Whether we target user groups defined narrowly by age, ethnicity, geographical location, informational needs or physical attributes we could fail to recognize that all users desire services which are "isabling. " We could overshadow the value of library services to these populations. Every user is "special" and requires us to regularly examine:

- our beliefs (in what we do, and why we do it),
- attitudes (how we see the people we serve, and how that equates to providing service),
- habits (which of ours inhibit (or foster) the delivery of equitable service), and
- expectations (what do we expect of ourselves when we address the individual's library needs). (Note: Expectations are not, "what does the administration expect.")

Let us insure that service to all library users proves "isabling."

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

From the Editor

WSL shows they're not afraid of leadership

But will Washington libraries step up and join them?

by Vince Kueter, *Alki* Editor

It may be just a coincidence of timing, but it seems that the Washington State Library got a burst of energy and is not only articulating its vision of statewide library service, but is determined to make things happen on a variety of fronts, even if that's simply getting some serious discussions going. And discussions that conclude with everybody either deciding to do something or not to do it—not just with everyone agreeing that it's a difficult and complex problem with strong arguments on both sides. We don't benefit much from being well-informed about issues that no-one has the courage to be decisive and act upon.

Some example of projects and initiatives through which the State Library is demonstrating leadership include the WAGILS project, which has developed a search engine that provides access to all kinds of state government information in electronic form, and the project is also guiding the development of the "collection" itself. There's also the Internet Connectivity project, which has detailed packages of both hardware and consultation services for libraries that either want to connect to the Internet for the first time or that want to upgrade from text-based to graphics-based access. WSL has also been assertive in administering LSTA grants and the new "Universal Service" telecommunications discounts.

But these are gravy, really—"mom-and-apple-pie" programs no-one in the library community can argue with. Give us money? Sure, twist our arms! The *real* test for Washington libraries will be what emerges from the "Statewide Plan for Washington Libraries," developed by the Washington State Advisory Council on Libraries (WSACL) and the Washington State Library Commission.

The Statewide Plan is an ambitious document which calls for libraries to team up to ensure that library service is universally, uniformly, equitably and seamlessly provided to all citizens of the state, regardless of where they live. It is a bold proposal—one that is just non-specific enough at the moment that I don't think the full realization of what libraries are being asked to

do has quite sunk in with local jurisdictions yet.

What the Plan envisions is a web of statewide cooperation and resource-sharing that is expansive in that services and collections could be, in effect, "combined" into a greater whole, available to citizens throughout the state. In other words, someone seeking information on a topic has the resources of the state at their disposal, not just those of their individual library. It is also egalitarian, in that it sees statewide cooperation as a way to distribute services and collections throughout the state in such a way that a resident of Ferry County wouldn't experience significantly diminished library service compared to a resident of King County.

The Plan doesn't use examples as specific as I just did—it speaks of "coalitions" and "collaborative solutions" that "add value" and "address disparities" by "coordinating services", "sharing resources" and "minimizing jurisdictional boundaries." The over-arching phrase the Plan uses to encapsulate this vision is "universal access." They provide this definition: "...if a resident supports a library somewhere in Washington State, that individual should be entitled to comparable, reasonable access to libraries all over the state."

But don't assume that universal access will be universally embraced by local libraries with local needs, local desires and local politics. The Plan recognizes this: "Although the concept was heartily endorsed as a vision, the details of how to accomplish the vision, including funding, are complex and controversial." Allow me to translate for you: "It's a great idea as long as my library system doesn't have to give anything up."

The thinking among organizational and management theorists has evolved in recent years concerning what constitutes "leadership." Transactional leadership is the old model—you tell people what to do, reward them if they do it and punish them if they don't. It's about power over people and about being the font of all wisdom and knowledge. You say "go forth" and your followers go. The leader benefits from keeping things simple and getting what they want most of the time and the followers benefit from not having to think (which can be painful sometimes) or take responsibility for decisions. *Transformational* leadership is about creating visions of the future and doing what it takes, through inspiration or perspiration, to make that vision a reality. Instead of control over people, it's about control over ideas. Kuhnert and Lewis write, "Transformational leaders broaden and elevate the interests of others by generating awareness and acceptance of the purposes or mission of the group and by encouraging them to move beyond their own interests for the greater good."

This is the State Library's challenge. If the end result is "we proposed these wonderful ideas, but we could never get consensus on a course of action", it will be another lost opportunity and bitter disappointment and WSL will have failed in their bid to be a leader. But the leadership mantle is not just WSL's alone. I suggest that leadership over ideas means that everyone who participates must be prepared to demonstrate leadership. I'm talking about *shared* leadership and library directors across the state have the opportunity to either step up and contribute to

something special in Washington state or defend the status quo and abdicate leadership. This means some libraries with greater resources might find themselves committing a greater share of those resources to collaborative efforts than might seem "fair" compared to libraries with fewer resources. Here's my advice: get over it. If the concept becomes a reality, then every citizen of Washington will benefit from the pool of resources. Believe it or not, small libraries will occasionally have a thing or two that a patron at a larger library wants. It's not big versus small—it's (forgive me for stealing from the wobblies) ONE BIG LIBRARY.

Wouldn't it be great if years from now, when some asks who was the leader behind this incredible statewide library system, we could answer: "the libraries of Washington state."

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

WLA Communiqué

Everything you ever wanted to know about the Legislative Planning Committee (but were afraid to ask)

Of primary concern to WLA are state and federal legislative issues which may affect Washington libraries.

On the federal level, Nancy Zussy, Washington State Librarian, serves as the Federal Relations Coordinator for WLA. Nancy monitors emerging events and issues at the federal level, keeps the membership informed and recommends appropriate action. Nancy regularly posts federal legislative information to the WIIF listserv.

Within Washington State, the WLA Legislative Planning Committee (LPC), with the assistance of our Legislative Liaison, Steve Duncan, performs similar functions. Emerging legislative bills and issues are monitored for their potential impact. This task is more monumental than one might assume. Bills which may appear to have no connection to libraries, may, in fact, include sections which *are* connected.

Steve monitors issues and recommends what he believes would be appropriate responses. LPC's primary function is to examine the legislative issues and develop WLA's position on each. LPC then establishes a priority order. This order generally reflects the potential impact to libraries.

The LPC members are responsible for disseminating information to their various constituencies. They are also responsible for maintaining close contact with their local legislators, before, during and after the session, but the LPC activities are most visible during the actual session.

WLA's continual involvement with legislative issues is of paramount importance. Intellectual freedom, harmful to minors and taxing issues to name but a few, affect every library employee and patron. As we proceed into the 1998 session, be watchful of the issues being monitored by WLA by regularly looking at the WLA website (www.wla.org). The site is updated daily, if necessary, throughout the entire session. The site also lists LPC members.

With the guidance of Steve, LPC will alert WLA members when, and if, action beyond monitoring is needed. When a call to action is initiated, LPC strongly encourages your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me (509 574 4984) or any LPC member.

Joan Weber, WLA President

WLA election results

Two measures were submitted to the WLA membership for approval.

A proposal to implement the restructuring of duties among the WLA elected and appointed officers passed 181 to 8.

A proposal to remove the WLFTA representative as a voting member of the board in order to make WLFTA's status equivalent to other interest groups failed by seven votes 94 to 101.

CE grants available

The WLA Continuing Education Council has seed money available for continuing education workshops and events outside of the annual conference. These should be sponsored by a WLA Interest Group or Committee. Events are expected to be self-supporting and to meet the continuing education needs of WLA members. Contact Mary Campbell, Continuing Education Coordinator, for more information. Grant applications are available online at the WLA homepage (www.wla.org) or from the WLA Office. The next application deadline is October 15, 1997, for events projected to take place in the first quarter of 1998.

WLA committed to ADA compliance

Beginning in May 1997, WLA will collect a two dollar surcharge on workshops and conferences to make sure that accommodations are provided as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition to accommodations on request, such as sign language

interpreters, WLA will hold workshops, meetings and conferences at sites that are wheelchair-accessible.

Wanted: your irreproducible results!

It's time once again to submit your wacky, improbable research to the Society Gaius Julius Washingtonius Solinus. Since 1987, members of the Society have presented their startling (if groundless) results to kick off each WLA annual conference. Sterling examples of suspect scholarship have included Sandy Carlson on "Problems Associated with Naval Artifacts in the Children's Room", Claudia McCain on "Commonly-held Beliefs Among Library Employees", and David Remington on the "Optical Digital Fingernail." Entries will be screened for their complete absence of validity. Anyone attending the WLA Conference may submit a proposal by sending a draft to SGJWS c/o Jonathan Betz-Zall, Program Coordinator, Edmonds Library, 650 Main St., Edmonds, WA 98020. Entries are due March 1, 1998. For more information, call Jonathan at 425-771-1933.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

The Vertical File

News from around Libraryland

Late breaking news: Kelso Public Library escapes closure, survives another year

The Kelso Public Library dodged a bullet when the City of Kelso responded to public outcry and reversed a decision to close the library and instead found money in the budget to continue another year. Director Glenn Hartwell told *Alki* that the city was expected to budget \$300,000 for the continued operation of the library, a \$50,000 cut from last year, but an increase from the \$100,000 originally proposed by the city for the purpose of closing the library. The additional \$200,000 was to come from cuts in other city services, while the \$50,000 cut would result in shorter hours and a loss of two FTE in part-time staff, said Hartwell. The city was expected to approve the budget on December 16.

According to the *Longview Daily News*, more than 100 citizens converged on City Hall during a City Council meeting on December 2 to protest the proposed library closure. "So many people surged into the tiny council chambers that at one point, latecomers trailed out into the hallway all the way to the door at Allen Street and a sea of library supporters sat face-to-face across the bench from the City Council," wrote Christy McKerney of the *Daily News*. About 30 people spoke against the library closure, the paper reported. Hartwell made an emotional defense of the library before the council. "It has taken 80 years to get this library where it is today, and I urge you not to destroy it in a moment," he said. Christi Henson, a library board member, passed out a list of proposed cuts to other areas of the general fund that she believed could be made in place of cutting the library. "I would hang your head in shame if you choose to shut the doors on the public library," she told the council.

Hartwell acknowledged that city revenues were flat and anticipates a similar battle next year. And what about those programs that were cut to save the library? "There are some city departments that aren't too happy with the library right now," Hartwell told *Alki*.

Deborah Jacobs selected to head Seattle Public Library

The Seattle Library Board chose Deborah Jacobs, head of the Corvallis, OR library and a *Library Journal* "Librarian of the Year" to fill the City Librarian position vacated by Liz Stroup and held in the interim by Craig Buthod. Jacobs assumed the post on November 17. The position became vacant in August 1996 when Stroup was reportedly pressured by the Board to resign.

"The board was particularly impressed with Jacobs' leadership skills, abilities in consensus-building and articulating a vision for the Library," said Board President Betty Jane Narver. Indeed, while consensus-building proved to be a problem for Stroup, it appears to be the hallmark of Jacobs' career. "Her biggest skill is working with people and communicating," Oregon State Librarian Jim Scheppke told *Alki* in a telephone interview. As an example, Scheppke cited her success with an ambitious legislative agenda in 1993, which she facilitated in part by forging a partnership with then-Senate Minority Leader Cliff Trow. Jacobs faces several major challenges almost immediately, including a new site for the downtown library, debate over the extent of improvements needed to the neighborhood branch libraries and a wide-ranging bond issue scheduled for the fall 1998 ballot. While many have noted the height of the leap from Corvallis to Seattle, almost no-one doubts her ability to make the transition. "We have enough confidence in her ability and management style to think she can deal with it," said Board member John Mangels. Corvallis City Manager Jon Nelson concurs, "She has the skills to bring everyone together and forge a good project."

Jacobs was selected in a process that was praised for its openness and there was intense public involvement throughout. "I was surprised by the strength of views people expressed, and at times taken aback," said Mangels. Several public meetings were held and each of three finalists were made available for questions, and at least two of the candidates found themselves fielding difficult questions about their backgrounds and plans for SPL's future.

Jacobs was very active with the Oregon Library Association, including a stint as president, and Scheppke predicts that she'll become just as involved with WLA. "We now have a tremendous void to fill and we'll miss her," says Scheppke. "She's one of the most talented librarians I know."

Poll shows support for new Seattle library; \$1mil proposed to increase hours

A poll conducted by Evans/McDonough Co. and commissioned by the Friends of the Seattle Public Library showed strong support for a proposed bond issue that would pay for the construction of a new central library and fund improvements to neighborhood libraries.

Support for a \$145 million bond issue ranged between 60-65%, depending on what poll respondents were told about the measure. An even larger majority (81%) agreed with the statement that a better downtown main library with an improved branch system is important to Seattle's quality of life. The bond proposal is slated for the fall 1998 ballot.

In other Seattle library news, a budget increase over \$1mil was approved by the mayor and the city council to increase library hours. Throughout the system, this would be an increase of over 10,000 hours a year or about 197 hours a week. The downtown library would see a 48-hour increase. The proposal has yet to go before the Board of Trustees, which is expected to approve it.

Spokane approves Strategic Service Plan

A document which sets Spokane Public Library's direction through the year 2002 was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees in June. The plan stipulates four "primary service responses or areas of emphasis": reference, popular materials, youth services, and lifelong learning. Four secondary areas of emphasis included business information, government information, northwest history, and cultural awareness. In addition to designating service responses, the plan sets public service goals in response to issues that emerged from 20 focus groups that met earlier in the year. These goals will be used to develop work plans and evaluation methods. The Spokane Public Library expects to have all the work plans for the next five years developed by January 1998.

Copies of the 1997 Strategic Service Plan are available for public inspection at all Spokane Public Library branch locations and on the Web at <http://splnet.spokpl.lib.wa.us/plan/welcome.html>.

Libraries win, lose elections throughout the state

Several library-related issues were on local ballots across Washington in November and the success rate was close to an even split. Voters in Covington approved annexation to the rural library district. Entait residents approved annexation into the North Central Regional Library system. The creation and funding of the Poulsbo Library Capital Facility Area was approved in Kitsap county. Lynden voters agreed to annex to the Whatcom County Rural Library District. On the downside, a building bond in Longview didn't reach the 60% threshold necessary for passage. Olympia voters rejected a bond that would have funded a new downtown library. A proposal to create a Skagit County Rural Library District failed by 886 votes.

Library people

Former Seattle City Librarian **Liz Stroup** has accepted the post of Executive Director of Washington Literacy. "It's a job that, if I were rich, I would pay to have," said Stroup in the *Seattle Times*. **Helen Perry** is retiring as Director of the Neill Public Library in Pullman. **Andy Waters** was hired as Director of the Whatcom County Rural Library District, replacing **John Halliday**, who accepted a position in Virginia. **John Sheller** was promoted to manager of the Black Diamond branch of the King County Library System. **Jacquelyn Axness** was hired as Children's Services and Family Literacy Coordinator at the Fort Vancouver Regional Library system. **Connie Manson**, librarian at the Geology Division of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, will serve as President of the Geoscience Information Society in 1988. **Craig Buthod**, former Acting City Librarian in Seattle, was one of three finalists for the Executive Director position at the American Library Association before it was filled by another candidate. And **Tom Moak**, a librarian at the Kennewick branch of the Mid-Columbia Library system, was elected by a large margin to a seat on the Kennewick City Council. Tom believes his listening, interpretive and information retrieval skills will serve him well on the council, however, he vows not to give up his day job.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

Personal Profile

Revisiting the Career of Carma Russell (Zimmerman) Leigh, Washington State Librarian, 1945-1951

by *Cindy Mediavilla*

On May 13, 1996, I met with Carma Leigh, former State Librarian of both Washington (1945-1951) and California (1951-1972), for the first of several oral history interviews. She, along with over two hundred legislators and librarians, including former Washington State Librarian Maryan Reynolds, had just been honored the week before as a legislative "grass roots champion" during the American Library Association's fifty year anniversary celebration of the establishment of its Washington DC office. Much of this article is based on the May 1996 interview and subsequent conversations with Carma Leigh.

At age 92, Carma Leigh remains a role model to many. During the course of her forty-two year career as a librarian, she was largely responsible for putting into place legislation to enable the establishment of inter-county libraries throughout the state of Washington and then, two decades later, did a similar service for California, where she initiated a structure of public library systems which still exists today. She also took a very active role in the passage of the federal Library Services Act in 1956, as well as its reauthorization as the Library Services and Construction Act in 1964, and was instrumental in the setting of national public library standards during the 1950s and '60s.

Today, Carma lives in a two-bedroom condominium in San Diego, not too far from her daughter Rita and new great-grandchild Kate. Though Carma has been retired now for over twenty-five years, she maintains a keen interest in library affairs, keeping up, as best she can, with library literature and attending professional conferences when possible. In the early 1990s, she served on the California State Library Networking Task Force and, in 1995, was honored by the California Library Association as its longest continuing member.

Early Years

It seems ironic, but perhaps not completely coincidental, that one of the profession's foremost

leaders grew up in a town without library service.¹ Born in 1904, Carma Russell was raised on her father's homestead outside of McCloud, Oklahoma, where the family leased land to oil drilling companies and grew a variety of crops. It was not until she attended the Oklahoma College for Women in the 1920s that she came across her first library. There, she met library director Blanche Hawks who, despite a disposition that matched her name, inspired Carma to become a librarian. After investigating possible programs, Carma settled on the School of Librarianship at the University of California, Berkeley, and so, in the fall of 1929, boarded a train to the west coast. "I didn't bother to announce I was coming," she now recalls. "I just assumed they'd welcome me with open arms. Shows how naive a country girl I was!"

Without benefit of an application, Carma was accepted into the Berkeley program—from which she graduated the following June. A member of the last class to graduate before the full crush of the Great Depression, Carma was hired as a junior assistant in the circulation department of the Berkeley Public Library. Though largely clerical, the job gave her the exposure she needed to understand library work in general. And understand library work she did for, within a year and a half, she was appointed director of the Watsonville Public Library, a few miles north of Monterey county.

Despite widespread national economic crisis, the now-married Mrs. Carma Zimmerman was able to acquire, in 1933, \$14,500 in federal funding and local donations to double the size of the Watsonville library and increase its operating budget. As library board president Oda Redman later wrote, "Mrs. Zimmerman came to Watsonville when the library was being reconstructed and reorganized, and was of invaluable assistance during this difficult period."²

Other priorities soon arose, however, forcing Carma to resign her position in 1935 due to family obligations. Three years later, divorced and the single mother of an infant daughter, Carma began to seek employment once again.

County Librarian

In 1938, Carma Zimmerman was appointed director of the Orange County Free Library in Southern California. Though the county had been hit hard by the Depression, Carma nonetheless enjoyed her new responsibilities. "It was quite a different experience for me," she remembers now. "I didn't have any direct contact with the mayor and council in Watsonville because the library board was in between. But when I got down to Santa Ana I was dealing directly with the various supervisors from all the districts of the county and I found it very interesting and stimulating. They did not have time to occupy themselves with small details of the administration of the library."

During her four year tenure in Orange County, Carma oversaw several capital improvement projects, including the expansion of five facilities and the opening of two new branches. Because funds were limited due to the Depression and, then later, the start of World War II, staff worked closely with clubs, local city councils, and other leaders in the community to improve library services. By the time Carma left her position, circulation of library materials

had increased by 55% countywide.

Carma resigned from Orange County in 1942 to become director of the San Bernardino County Library, serving the geographically largest county library district in the US—equivalent in size to three New England states combined! There, she worked quickly to improve library operations by introducing children's services and by streamlining circulation procedures. Realizing early on that she would have to commandeer some sort of transportation, she purchased a used station wagon from the Sheriff's department and began taking regular trips out to the remote desert branches, despite the war and gas rationing. "I soon learned that almost as important as gasoline was having 'desert bags'--i.e., water bags," she now explains when describing those arduous trips out to Victorville, Twenty Nine Palms and beyond. Often Carma and her staff would get stuck behind long lines of trucks and tanks maneuvering out in the desert, where General Patton's troops trained for the invasion of Africa. Because Army libraries had not yet been organized, the San Bernardino County Library extended services to military bases and housing tracts. A free booklet called "How to Win on the Home Front" was distributed to every woman who visited a branch library.

Washington State Librarian

On May 19, 1945, San Bernardino County Librarian Carma R. Zimmerman received a letter from the Washington State Library Commission, informing her that, "Having received the resignation of the present State Librarian... the State Library Commission last Thursday voted unanimously to offer you the position of State Librarian."³ Carma's first reaction was disbelief: "I didn't even know the vacancy existed until I was notified I had been appointed." But after consulting with colleagues, she decided, "Well, it sounds interesting!" and booked passage on the train up to Olympia over the Fourth of July weekend.

While in Olympia, Washington State Librarian Gretchen Knief Schenk, who Carma knew from Gretchen's days as Kern County (CA) librarian, introduced her to all the key people she would need to know as State Librarian. At the end of the whirlwind tour, Library Commissioner Pearl Wanamaker asked when Carma could start. Carma was too much "under the spell of this beautiful place" to answer objectively, however, and so promised to reply as soon as she got back to California. Her response was not long in coming. "When I got back to San Bernardino, it was a typical 115 in the shade. I sent a telegram up saying I'd be there!"

Unlike what Carma was used to in California, by 1945 the Washington State Library had only just begun to achieve any sort of a commanding presence. In its first ninety years of existence, it had suffered several set-backs and was, in fact, almost completely dissolved in 1931. Desperate for action, local librarians formed, in 1935, the Washington Library Association, which soon proved a powerful force in securing funds and legislation for the State Library. As Carma admiringly recalls, the WLA "had a legislative committee; they had a lobbyist in Olympia; they had committees all over the county, all over the state."

What the librarians of Washington state did not have, however, was much experience in running county libraries. Though Washington did, by the time Carma arrived, have a county library law which enabled the establishment of county libraries, such as those in King and Pierce counties, the challenge was how to provide equitable service to the residents of the smaller and more remote communities. According to Carma, "Everybody knew that the next step had be larger units of service."

Therefore, with the cooperation of the WLA, the new State Librarian set about drafting the Inter-County Library Law in 1946, making it legally possible for two or more counties to jointly form a single library district. Though the bill quickly passed the House with little opposition before it went on to the Senate, it did so not without some heart-stopping moments, as a chagrined Carma explains. "About the time the bill was ready to be acted upon in the Senate, I read the Washington Taxpayers' analysis, which said that the Inter-County Library Law repealed the existing County Library Law! Well, I hadn't had any legislative experience in California and so I didn't know that in drafting a bill three dots ['...'] means 'repealed.' With at least a little indignation I called the state taxpayers' association in Olympia and said the bill didn't do any such thing. They insisted it did. So I went up to Assistant Attorney General Lyle Iverson's office--he had helped draft the bill--and he said, 'Yes, I thought that's the way you wanted the bill to read.' I then called Representative Martin Miller, the bill's sponsor and said, 'We've got to send it back through the House. Take it off the calendar in the Senate and reenact it in the House.' Well, that's exactly what they did. Anyway, we got it passed and we got to work on inter-county organization."

The battle was far from over, however. As Carma adds, "it was not possible for inter-county libraries to be established by resolution of the county commissioners. Therefore, we had to go to elections everywhere. It was a very aggressive program that the librarians of Washington carried on to cause the elections."

To coordinate efforts as strategically as possible, the WLA commissioned a study by Charles E. Bowerman to determine which areas of the state would make the best inter-county regions. His report, *A Proposed Library Plan for the State of Washington*, published in 1950, "divided the state into twelve regions based on county lines, market roads, and possible economic support. [He] also recommended that each library have a large center easily accessible to all parts of the region, that existing library facilities be utilized to the fullest, and that the general purpose of improving library efficiency and service be kept in mind."⁴ Not only did Washington librarians now have a plan of inter-county libraries to promote to the electorate, but the State Library also now had a blueprint for extending library services statewide.

Carma's commitment to better, more equitable library service did not stop here, however. In 1950, as president-elect of the Pacific Northwest Library Association and chair of the PNLA Library Development Committee, she helped draft a seven point report itemizing what was already known about public library service in the Pacific Northwest and what actions should be taken to improve it. Underlying the committee's recommendations was an emphasis on

"modern" library service that would ensure adequate stocks of books and other materials, access to reliable information, and the services of professionally-trained people. Not surprisingly, the report was unanimously accepted by the membership.

The following year, under Carma's leadership as president, the PNLA took its first steps toward achieving its long-range goal of developing quality library services in the Pacific Northwest by revising its own constitution and holding, in conjunction with the University of Washington School of Librarianship, a workshop for librarians to work together on resolving their own problems. State Librarian Carma Zimmerman and her future husband Robert D. Leigh, chair of the then recently completed national "Public Library Inquiry," were the workshop co-facilitators.

The Call to California

It was during the height of her accomplishments in Washington that Carma was recruited to replace the retiring California State Librarian. Though, as she told the recruitment committee, "I am about as happy in my present position as I believe anyone could be," the opportunity to effect far-reaching changes in California was much too attractive. "I have heard of considerable interest among California librarians," she explained, "in attempts to provide more and better library coverage there, and possible reorganizations to make better use of existing resources. It would be interesting to attempt to find solutions to such problems, if I were appointed your State Librarian."⁵ Two months later, having been named California State Librarian by Governor Earl Warren, she was on her way to Sacramento.

Imbued with a renewed sense of purpose, Carma returned to California in the fall of 1951 with a fresh pair of eyes. There she found a once-proud public library infrastructure plagued by inadequate facilities, ill-trained staff, and minimal funding. Immediately, she rolled up her sleeves and began working on a way to improve the statewide situation by moving toward a cooperative library framework much like the one she had left in Washington. However, instead of linking just county libraries, her new goal envisioned the creation of library "systems" made up of municipal, as well as county libraries, sharing joint responsibility for bringing quality service to every resident in the state.

One of her first actions was to ask the president of the California Library Association (CLA) to establish a new CLA Library Development Committee, similar to the one she had successfully chaired in PNLA. Her next step was to hold a six day workshop where forty-five librarians "sounded off" about the problems they all faced individually, while working together toward a common solution. The immediate outcome was the creation and adoption by CLA of "Minimum Public Library Standards." As Carma explains, "In general, the objective was to accomplish a statewide survey of California public libraries as soon as possible. But, before that could reasonably be undertaken, it was necessary to develop, understand, and adopt the most modern and achievable standards we could, against which to measure the then existing service. The whole picture of library service in California was too complex, uneven,

and not yet described in any coherent fashion in any one or more documents, to permit 'dashing off' in any direction, without these basic first steps."⁶

A California Public Library Commission was created by the Governor's office, in 1957, to measure existent public library services against the CLA minimum standards. The resulting document formed the basis for a *Master Plan for Public Libraries in California*. In time, statewide acceptance of the *Master Plan* led to the passage of the Public Library Services Act, which then allowed the creation of California public library systems.

National Influence

Besides her work at the state level, Carma also very actively campaigned for passage of the federal Library Services Act (LSA) in 1956 and its expanded reauthorized version, the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), in 1964. When the initial legislation was drafted as a "demonstration bill" in 1946, Carma was among a handful of state librarians invited to visit Congress. Paul Howard, director of the ALA Washington DC office, "drafted us to lobby as many as possible of the members of [the] all-important House Committee... We went over to the Hill and spread our persuasion as far as we could to that large Committee. Of course, as Washington State Librarian, I visited with the Washington State Representative. My mother, born in Texas, qualified me briefly to lobby the Texas member [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. I was assigned, also, to call on the California Congressman [Richard M. Nixon]... because I had been a California public librarian... He was the hardest to see, because he was holding the highly publicized hearings that later sent Alger Hiss to jail."

As chair of the American Library Association Legislation Committee, she also lobbied and testified several times on behalf of the LSCA. "It was useful for the state librarian to serve on the ALA Library Legislation Committee," she later noted, "helpful in being able to bring direct experience 'in the field' before the several committees and subcommittees of the Congress while they were formulating and considering national library legislation."⁸

Meanwhile, back in California, CLA's "Minimum Public Library Standards" were quickly becoming a model for ALA's own proposed nationwide public library standards, which were adopted in 1956. These new standards took a revolutionary approach to service, looking first, as Carma explained so simply, "at the individual man, woman, child and community to be served."⁹ All people, she believed then and still believes, "need ready access to any books and other library materials that may be needed at any time throughout their lives. Now that distance and time have been largely overcome by modern communication, this is possible."¹⁰

Living Legacy

"Professionally, there is no question but that Carma Zimmerman will be remembered as one of the leaders in American library service today," friend and colleague Gretchen Knief Schenk wrote in 1955. "Friends say, to tease her, that she can scarcely wish librarians 'Merry Christmas' without throwing in a wish for bigger and better libraries in the years to come!"¹¹

In a 1982 speech recognizing her generation's achievements on the national front, Carma admonished younger librarians to "Take pride, as we do, in what has been accomplished; be determined to accomplish far more. You are working always on the side of public interest. Above all, *persist, be stubborn, and be tough.*"¹² Truer words have never been spoken by and about a woman whose library career spanned five decades. Carma's tireless commitment to public library service for all will be felt for many years yet to come.

REFERENCES

¹After being served for many years by a bookmobile, the small town of McCloud, OK, finally got its own branch library in 1990. Carma Leigh, along with many others, contributed to the fundraising effort which resulted in the construction of the new facility.

²Redman, O. (1938, April 28). [Letter of recommendation to The Board of Supervisors of Orange County, Santa Ana, California]. Unpublished letter.

³Schenk, G.K. (1945, May 19). [Letter of job offer to Mrs. Carma R. Zimmerman, San Bernardino County Free Library, San Bernardino, California]. Unpublished letter.

⁴Johns, H. (1956). *Twenty-five years of the Washington Library Association*. Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, p.62.

⁵Zimmerman, C.R. (1951, July 10). [Letter to Mr. Harold Hamill, Chairman, Committee to Make Recommendations for State Librarian]. Unpublished letter.

⁶Dear Tom Fante. (1985, May 15). [Letter from Carma Leigh to Mr. Thomas Fante regarding a brief history he had written on the California State Library]. Unpublished letter.

⁷Leigh, C. (1982). Remembrances on the occasion of LSCA's 25th anniversary. In R. Wedgeworth (Ed.). *The ALA yearbook: A review of library events 1981* (p. 284). Chicago: American Library Association.

⁸Dear Tom Fante.

⁹Zimmerman, C. (1959). Creating a climate of acceptance for public library standards. In *Proceedings of the Institute on State Field Consultants Services, January 24-26, 1958, Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago, Illinois* (p.10). Chicago: American Library Association.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Schenk, G. K. (1955). Our frontispiece: Carma Russell Zimmerman. *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 21, 147.

¹²Leigh, C. (1982). Remembrances on the occasion of LSCA's 25th anniversary. In R. Wedgeworth (Ed.). *The ALA yearbook: A review of library events 1981* (p. 285). Chicago: American Library Association.

Cindy Mediavilla is currently a third-year doctoral student at the UCLA Department of Library and Information Science. Her dissertation will focus on the career of Carma Russell (Zimmerman) Leigh.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997

Vol 13 No 3

Who's On First?

Free speech, censorship and the library

After *ACLU v. Reno*: What Next?

by Tom Reynolds

As a matter of constitutional tradition...we presume that governmental regulation of the content of speech is more likely to interfere with the free exchange of ideas than to encourage it. The interest in encouraging freedom of expression in a democratic society outweighs any theoretical but unproven benefit of censorship.

John Paul Stevens (writing for the majority) *American Civil Liberties Union v. Reno*
("Excerpts...,1997)

The CDA decision

On June 26, the Supreme Court affirmed by a 9-0 vote the decision of a special three-judge Federal District Court declaring unconstitutional the Communications Decency Act in the combined cases of *ACLU v. Reno* and *ALA v. (the) U.S. Department of Justice*. In a forceful opinion, Justice John Paul Stevens, speaking for the majority, criticized the "vagueness" of the CDA's content-based restrictions which, in the Court's opinion, would have an "obvious chilling effect on free speech" ("Excerpts...", 1997). "In order to deny minors access to potentially harmful speech," wrote Stevens, "the CDA effectively suppresses a large amount of speech that adults have a constitutional right to receive and to address to one another" ("Excerpts from...", 1997). The ruling stressed that the statute would "reduce the adult population to reading only what is fit for children," and it found unconstitutional all provisions of the CDA as they apply to "indecent" or "patently offensive" speech ("Supreme Court...", 1997). A separate opinion by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Chief Justice William Rehnquist subscribed to much of the Court majority's rationale, but allowed that the CDA might be constitutional in the very limited circumstance where indecent material was knowingly transmitted to a group consisting solely of minors.

In rendering its decision, the Court held that speech on the Internet was "entitled to the highest level of First Amendment protection, similar to the protection the Court gives books and newspapers" (Greenhouse, 1997). Microsoft Chairman and CEO Bill Gates summed up the position of many CDA critics. "Technology, parental oversight and commonsense," he said, "

can provide much more effective safeguards than restrictions on the flow of ideas and opinions online." (Chan, 1997). The American Library Association and other members of the coalition of civil liberties and computer-user groups which challenged the CDA hailed the decision as "the First Amendment Manifesto of the 21st Century" (Editors of *LJ*, 1997).

Indeed, CDA supporters may find it nearly impossible to redraft such legislation because of the sweeping nature of the Court's decision. Even the White House, which supported the CDA, has moved away from supporting future federal Internet legislation and toward a private enterprise solution to the problem. *Note: Efforts by Washington Senator Patty Murray, a CDA critic, to advance a post-CDA legislative proposal that would have created incentives for web page providers to voluntarily rate their sites for sex and violence generated reactions ranging from skepticism to open hostility this summer* (Westneat, 1997).

The Internet battle moves back to libraries

But even as librarians met in early July at ALA's annual conference to celebrate their victory (and a similar victory in a New York state case, *ALA v. Pataki*), experts were predicting that the decision would "push Internet providers, schools and businesses into Internet filtering" (Chan, 1997). "The CDA is gone, but your troubles may not be" warned an article in *School Library Journal* (The CDA..., 1997), a direct reference to the increasing pressure on local libraries to filter the Internet content they provide to the public.

In a recognition of this fact, the ALA Council on July 2 passed a resolution putting the association squarely in opposition "to the use of filtering software by librarians to block access to constitutionally protected speech..." (ALA Council, 1997). But this apparently strong statement in opposition to the filtering of Internet content leaves the door open just a crack for libraries who want to filter the Internet content they provide to children. What impact this ALA resolution will have on local library policy remains to be seen.

But one thing is clear. While the Supreme Court's CDA decision killed a frightening effort to federally mandate censorship of speech on the Information Highway, libraries still face the same basic questions about their role in providing Internet access that they did before the Court acted. Whether to filter or not remains a basically philosophical decision and nationally two divergent points of view have emerged on the question. Most state and national organizations, large library systems, and members of the national library intellectual freedom community have opposed the general installation of filters, while a small but vocal group of rebels are actively championing their use. (Those wishing to hear the particulars of this latter argument can read, "In Defense of Filtering," by David Burt in the August 1997 *American Libraries*.).

This said, the Court's CDA decision does provide support for libraries seeking to maintain a strong policy of unrestricted Internet access. The Court has clearly stated that legislation which effectively suppresses adults constitutionally-protected speech is unconstitutional, even

if the goal of such measures is to protect children from harmful materials. Library policies restricting Internet speech would undoubtedly face the same test, and libraries that choose to filter may have their policies challenged in court. Since the CDA decision, at least one Washington library has used it to support continuation of a no-filters policy. The Sno-Isle Regional Library System's Board of Trustees voted unanimously in late July to uphold its policy of providing unrestricted Internet access. The Board cited the Court ruling as playing "a significant role" in its decision ("Library Board won't..., " 1997).

One option which seems not specifically excluded by the CDA decision is the addition of filters on Internet terminals in public library children's rooms. The key here is that terminals in other areas of the library must remain unfiltered and juveniles must have access to all terminals if they or their parents wish. Without endorsing this option, Judith Krug, Executive Director of ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom, has called it the most prudent approach for libraries that still want to filter in the post-CDA environment. "Using the analogy of print collections, Krug said that in libraries with (a) children's room, young people usually are free to look at books elsewhere, as well. The success of a First Amendment suit could hinge on whether children have similar access to uncensored terminals" (The CDA is Gone....," 1997)

Kids have rights and information needs, too!

Something effectively missing from most of the media debate over the evils of the Internet has been a recognition that kids also have First Amendment rights. Although such rights are more limited than those of adults, they still exist. More critically for librarians, much of the Internet debate has lacked a thoughtful examination of how juveniles' valid information needs could be seriously abridged by the restrictions groups like Family Friendly Libraries would like to impose on their Internet access.

So I was happy to see in September's *American Libraries* an article by Robert S. Peck, former president of the Freedom to Read Foundation, and Ann K. Symons, ALA's president-elect, addressing just these subjects. Peck and Symons make two key arguments about the unacceptability of filters in the public library environment, one constitutional and one philosophical. Filters fail the test of constitutionality, they argue, because they would inevitably reduce the Internet content accessible by adults and older juveniles to that which would be "suitable for a sandbox," a result specifically rejected by the Court in its CDA decision (Peck and Symons, 1997). In terms of speech, one size (or set) of standards does not—in fact, cannot—fit all. In the case of minors, standards which can be used to limit a five-year-old's access to material are not applicable or appropriate when the minor in question is a high school student.

Philosophically, the issue is even more fundamental. The role of "gatekeeper" which libraries assume when they embrace filters or other types of Internet content restrictions is, as Peck and Symons point out, "anathema to both the professional training and First Amendment responsibilities" of public and academic librarians (Peck and Symons, 1997). Librarians cannot be placed in the role of "dispensing access to information by sizing up a patron and making the

determination about what ideas and information that individual ought to see or must be prohibited from seeing" (Peck and Symons, 1997). Although censors often deny this point, there is a clear difference between selection and the type of content restrictions they would like to impose on the Internet in public libraries. At its best, materials selection attempts to broaden library collections, making them more diverse and useful to more people. It emphasizes the need for a *growing variety* of information sources expressing *more* points-of-view, not less. In fact, most public library selection policies embrace the ideal that library users (including juveniles) have First Amendment rights and that librarians have a responsibility to respect and support those rights. This is why groups such as Family Friendly Libraries have moved from challenging individual library materials to attacking ALA and such influential policy statements as "The Library Bill of Rights" and "Free Access to Minors," while encouraging their members to challenge local library selection policies that include reference to these documents. FFL's September 1997 "Internet Guidelines and Recommendations" clearly capture the point-of-view of those who seek to see limits placed on Internet access in public libraries:

Free Internet access in public libraries is a privilege, not a right. Tax payers are not obliged to supply free cyberporn access, or any other cyber access, to their fellow citizens. Any citizen disappointed by the extent of filtering in their library system is entirely free to buy their own equipment for home use...A library system's decision to filter or block is a decision about responsible SPONSORSHIP, not CENSORSHIP.
(Gounaud, 1997)

FFL understands that the role of sponsorship (gatekeeper) it advocates for public librarians is fundamentally in opposition to our traditional role as information disseminator and advocate for patrons in meeting their information needs. Librarians need to understand this also and be willing to fight to retain our First Amendment role. "If free-speech principles anticipate a marketplace of ideas, as the Supreme Court has taught us," Peck and Symons conclude, "then it remains the special province of the nation's libraries to be the domain where that marketplace can be most fully realized for both adults and kids" (Peck and Symons, 1997).

Realizing the marketplace begins with training and advocacy

The opportunity presented by the current national debate over the role of online information in America's libraries is that it again provides us with a chance to tell our communities about the role of libraries as the institution where the marketplace of ideas can be most fully realized for all. ALA has done a wonderful job in this regard, but where such advocacy is most valuable is on the state and local level. In Washington, we are lucky to have a number of strong advocacy groups which fight against censorship and help promote a positive role for libraries as disseminators of information open and accessible to all. Such groups as WLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee and Intellectual Freedom Interest Group along with the Washington Coalition Against Censorship need the continuing active support of the library community.

Key to all this is the continual training and retraining of library staff on the front lines who answer materials challenges and explain to users why it is important to keep library materials and services open and accessible to all. Through next June, the Intellectual Freedom Interest Group will be sponsoring a series of censorship workshops statewide aimed at front line library staff. I would urge libraries to take advantage of this training opportunity. Interested? Contact Kathy Blinkwitz, IFIG Program Chair, at 425-778-2148 for more details.

First Amendment hero

Two days after the announcement of the Supreme Court's Communications Decency Act decision, Bruce J. Ellis, lead counsel for ALA and other plaintiffs in *ACLU v. Reno*, was awarded the Freedom to Read Foundation's Roll of Honor Award. This award is given to "those who have taken courageous personal stands against censorship or who have contributed substantially to the Freedom to Read Foundation's mission" ("Bruce J Ennis...", 1997).

Certainly, this was a fitting honor for Ennis who had just capped over ten years as chief counsel for the Foundation with a victory in what many consider the most important First Amendment case of the decade. So, in closing, here are some optimistic remarks by Bruce Ellis about the outlook for future court challenges to filtering:

Basically, nine justices of the Supreme Court have said minors have a First Amendment right to most of the material that's out there, even if it's indecent or offensive. So the problem is how do you come up with a filtering system which will filter out...access to material truly harmful to minors, and yet allow these same minors to have access to everything else? That's going to be very difficult to do...there is going to be a lot of litigation...this isn't going to be a slam dunk. But in the end, I think we're likely to...win 99 percent of those battles. But we're not going to win them all, and it's not going to be easy. On the other hand, this case [Reno v. ACLU] wasn't easy either. We just have to keep up the fight. ("Remarks by Bruce Ennis", 1997)

REFERENCES

ALA Council. (1997). "Resolution on the Use of Filtering Software in Libraries," *IFRT Report*, Summer/Fall.

"The CDA is Gone, But Your Troubles May Not Be." (1997). *School Library Journal*, August.

Chan, Y. (1997). "Ruling draws praise, but some still troubled," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 27.

"Excerpts from Ruling on Internet: 'Statute Abridges the Freedom of Speech.'"(1997). *New*

York Times, June 27.

Editors of LJ. (1997). "Free Speech Headlines San Francisco," *Library Journal*, August.

Gounaud, K. (1997) *Family Friendly Internet Guidelines and Recommendations*, September.

Greenhouse, L. (1997). "Decency Act Fails," *New York Times*, June 27.

"Library Board won't filter Internet access." (1997). *Snohomish Tribune*, August 6.

"Bruce J. Ennis to receive Freedom to Read Foundation's Roll of Honor Award."(1997). *ALA News Release*, June 12.

Peck, R. and Symons, A. (1997). "Kids Have First Amendment Rights, Too," *American Libraries*, September.

"Remarks by Bruce Ellis." (1997). *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, September.

"Supreme Court Victory." (1997). *IFRT Report*, Summer/Fall.

"Supreme Court Strikes Down Communications Decency Act." (1997). *American Libraries*, August.

Westneat, D. (1997). "Senator Murray's Internet Controls Draw Fire," *Seattle Times*, July 15.

ALKI: The Washington Library Association Journal

December 1997
Vol 13 No 3

Ne Plus Ultra

Put a Good Librarian, Not Software, in Driver's Seat

By Bonnie A. Nardi, Vicki O'Day, and Edward J. Valauskas

The following article won the Special Libraries Association Public Relations award for 1997. It is reprinted with the permission of the Christian Science Monitor.

The explosion of Internet resources, new software applications, and ever-faster, more-powerful computer systems has led many budget-cutters to replace people with technology. But could an "intelligent software agent" do what, say, a librarian can do? We conducted a study of corporate libraries at Apple Computer in Cupertino, Calif., and Hewlett-Packard Research Labs in Palo Alto, Calif., to find out. Our conclusion in this version of Kasporov versus computer chess: It would be virtually impossible for a software agent to replace librarians for several reasons not generally understood. First, librarians are more than technicians. They are, it seems, information therapists who analyze problems as well as find answers. At Hewlett-Packard, for example, a client wanted to be enlightened about "the presence of HP in Japan and Europe." The librarian pointed out the problems with this request: "Is the person thinking about market share or the number of units? Does he mean plant size or relative presence? Does he need something economic like conversion ratios?" A skilled librarian can focus the search and add other possible areas of interest to clients. This occurs through artful conversations that librarians modestly call "reference interviews," which would be impossible to duplicate or at least time consuming and incomplete if done through keyword searches.

Librarians can seek information even when their clients can't figure out just what they want. A management consultant described how he needed to get a feel for the size of a new industry: "... whether it's smaller than a bread box, bigger than a house - just size it." Perhaps someday software will exist that can evaluate such a request. But not today. Librarians understand that information wears all sorts of disguises - as financial data, scientific articles, analyst reports, news, product reviews, and patents, just to name a few. Unlike software programs, librarians can judge the reliability of sources (are they rumor or fact?), estimate costs, and find material with a particular slant or perspective. They also think of useful things clients wouldn't think of

themselves. For example, one librarian said whenever she receives a request for all of an author's technical papers she asks whether the client wants the author's patents as well. No wonder clients often become attached to a librarian who can personalize their searches. Once librarians have a client history, they can aim the search spotlight exactly where the client wants it, without a second round of questions. An invaluable service only a librarian could perform, particularly for clients in business or government, is to find and broker the release of proprietary material. Librarians are both discreet and nosy. In corporations and government departments, librarians make it their job to know what their colleagues are up to. When it comes to distributing proprietary material, they can often put the right people in touch, then let them decide if they want to share secrets. Another service that would be impossible for software to perform is to read, and weed out, what librarians call "false drops," citations that technically match search criteria but actually have nothing to do with the client's needs. Not having to slog through these is a blessing for busy people trying to compete in today's business climate. But perhaps the most valuable service librarians perform is to act as guides to the information riches in cyberspace. Librarians were among the earliest computer users, even creating some of the first international standards for databases so that bibliographic data could be transferred around the world. Because of their experience with technology and information searches, librarians can quickly adjust to the rapidly changing landscape of Internet resources and on-line databases. At the Apple Library, librarians were sometimes heard to mutter that a particular commercial database was "lame" or "pathetic."

Unlike your average cyberpilgrim, librarians understand when a database is returning lousy results because it has not been updated or the index terms have changed. They are able to save clients money by doing pre-searches, by using the most cost-effective databases, and by using the right combination of key words to focus but not over-constrain a search. The most critical and underestimated advantage librarians bring to bear is the most obvious - the human touch. A client who had been on-line across from the circulation desk of the Apple Library walked over and simply stood there - speechless and frowning. Recognizing his frustration, the librarian immediately responded by helping her client articulate his problem and accomplish the search. Try that with a software agent

Bonnie A. Nardi is an anthropologist in the Advanced Technology Group at Apple Computer. Her latest book is "Context and Consciousness: Activity Theory and Human-Computer Interaction." Vicki O'Day is a computer scientist at The Xerox Palo Alto Research Center. Edward J. Valauskas is a librarian and writer. He is co-editor of "Internet Initiative: Libraries Providing Internet Services and How They Plan, Pay and Manage."