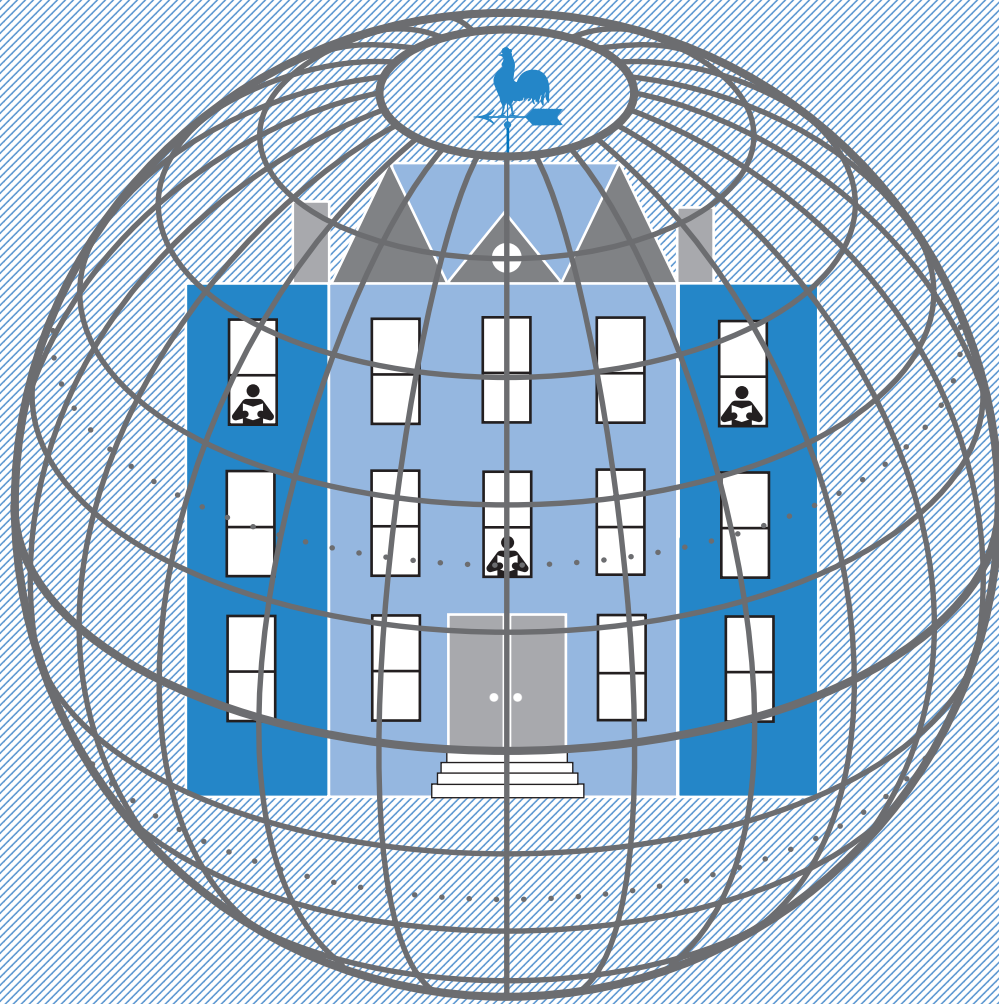


Alki



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OUTREACH AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The WLA President speaks

Outreach: One of Our Core Values, and A Farewell and Call to Arms

by Cindy Cunningham



Outreach and Distance Education:

This issue focuses on outreach, the services libraries provide to make sure they are reaching all library patrons, regardless of language, geography, age, or income level. Outreach can take many forms: delivering materials to isolated patrons or to institutions; developing an appropriate PR campaign to draw a particular community into the library and to let them know they're welcome; or creating an appropriate virtual library presence, through the Internet, so that all patrons can reach the library whenever they need to. Outreach is one of the challenges of libraries. It's often costly, for it focuses on particular audiences, and can be particularly costly on a per-patron basis when an outreach effort is first beginning. When I talk about the differences between for-profit companies (believe it or not—despite all the ribbing I get—that's what I would call my company, Amazon.com) and a publicly funded library, I point out that when my company assesses its core goals, bottom-line revenue generation is a major determining factor. It has to be, in order for any business to stay viable.

But a library defines its core values in a different way: it must address its community's needs, even if doing so isn't particularly cost-effective or revenue-generating. Of course, from that assessment comes the determination of how to provide core services most economically; and there are choices and trade-offs that libraries must make. But the process of determining core values can be and often is very different from the business world. One challenge of outreach services, I believe, is to be clear about what the goals are and what the library's priorities are. Once that has been established, then the challenge is to be creative about providing services. I hope this issue will inspire other libraries with ideas they can use.

Farewell:

This issue of *Alki* is the last for which I will be providing a presidential column. In April, at the Annual Conference in Spokane, I will be handing the gavel to the VP, Carol Schuyler. Carol and I, with the help of the conference committee, are planning a gala presidential party on Friday night,

April 6, to mark the official changing of the guard; and we hope you will all plan to stay in town and come celebrate with us.

One of my fantasies over the past two years has been to imagine running WLA without having such a demanding full-time job. The privilege and opportunity to represent library interests from around the state is enormous; but the effort of trying to bring about change through a series of quarterly board meetings and scattered committee meetings, all run by dedicated people with other full-time jobs, is also enormous. One of the greatest aspects of this organization is the dedication of the people who have donated generously of their time to keep it running. It is awe-inspiring. I have appreciated everyone's dedication very much. I am particularly glad that I have been able to bring some new faces to the board and to the committees—we need to attract library staff from all over the state and from all kinds of libraries to make this organization relevant and effective.

Over the past two years the WLA Board and Interest Groups managed to bring about changes in membership, reaching out to students and library staff; hosted our first Friends Forum; contracted for a conference manual that will make future conferences easier to run and offer long-needed continuity; started a members-only email list; embarked on the challenging task of creating a statement about intellectual freedom that we can all endorse; offered numerous continuing education workshops and provocative conference programming; saw the development of an interest group dedicated to legislative advocacy; and managed to keep some library legislative issues, such as mandatory filtering, at bay. We have explored ways to have better relationships with our corporate supporters and affiliate organizations, and we are trying to think creatively about our conferences. We need to hear from our membership about all these issues; and we need to see you at our conferences and workshops, so we know we are still working for you.

I hope to see you all at the Spokane conference, April 4-7. The committee has put together an incredible program. The conference marks a return to a former practice: we will have two business meetings, in order to discuss the proposed Intellectual Freedom Statement that I hope can be ratified at the end of the conference. Holding two business meetings marks, I hope, a return to a viable, active organization that wants to tackle challenging issues and interact passionately. Many thanks to Laura Boyes, of the King Country Library System, and her committee who will be bringing this statement to the membership for its consideration. Hope to see you all there.

Thank you so much for allowing me to be your president for the past two years. It has been an honor.



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From the Editor

Outreach By Bookmobile And Byte

Carolynne Myall



Connecting people with the information, reading, and opportunities for self-education that they seek has been the primary function of U.S. libraries for a long time. But what about the people who can't easily come to the library, or who don't know that the library offers anything for them, or who doubt that they would be welcome? To connect these people with the library's resources and services, there's outreach.

For the past century, libraries have used many methods of outreach—sending mini-collections by “travelling library” or bookmobile, devising services for targeted audiences, taking programs to neighborhoods and institutions, getting involved in community organizations, placing ads and programs in broadcast media, setting up books-by-mail and phone reference services. The digital revolution has opened new means, including online collections and electronic reference service, of reaching patrons within and beyond the library facility. Distance education—a new service area for libraries, and sometimes a form of educational outreach—offers the library profession the benefit of expanding the opportunities for place-bound individuals to enter our profession through enrolling in accredited distance-education library school programs. What are the implications for the profession of this shift to electronic forms of outreach? What is gained, and what might be lost? What forms of traditional library outreach remain relevant and important? How can traditional and electronic outreach methods be usefully combined?

The theme of this issue is “Outreach and Distance Education.” In the issue you will find descriptions and analyses of a variety of outreach and distance education programs. Also included is a group interview of faculty members at the University of Washington iSchool held over from the last issue, “Education, Training, and Professionalism.” The *Alki* Committee and I hope you will find the contents of this issue stimulating and provocative.

Draft Intellectual Freedom Statement

Opposite this editorial is the new draft Intellectual Freedom Statement. WLA members will consider this document for adoption at the 2001 Annual Conference in Spokane. Since this statement defines many of our professional standards and values, few items in an Association business meeting could be more important. Please take the time to review the draft and the letters accompanying it.

Mistakes, Mistakes!

Alas, the December 2000 issue had two errors in people's names. Marilyn Sheck was the contributor of the handsome Carnegie then-and-now photographs. There was a typo in the name of John Veblen, one of Washington's National Advocacy Honor Roll members. My apologies to these important members of the Washington library community!

Coming Issues

The July 2001 issue, following *Alki's* tradition, will cover the 2001 Annual Conference. Prior to the conference, the *Alki* Committee will select themes for the December 2001 and March 2002 issues. We'll announce these in the July issue and on the WLA member listserv.

(Continued from page 5)

Letter from Cameron A. Johnson

Dear WLA members,

I am a member of the committee charged with rewriting the Association's Intellectual Freedom Statement. The committee has achieved substantial agreement on nearly all of the statements, but has not been able to come to consensus on one paragraph, which I call the “community involvement paragraph.” While I would prefer to emphasize the committee's broad areas of consensus on the IF Statement rather than its one area of division, President Cunningham asked for amplifying comments on the paragraph in question. Here, briefly, are my reservations about the “community involvement paragraph,” which follows:

“The Association supports local community involvement in developing policies which uphold the United States and Washington State constitutional guarantees of free speech and intellectual freedom.”

My reservations are not necessarily in order, and not necessarily related.

I don't think this statement of process belongs in what is essentially a statement of our professional principles.

I believe inclusion of such a community involvement statement to be unique for a state library association; thus it requires more and fuller justification than I have heard.

I believe the statement dilutes our ethical stance of support for intellectual freedom. Suppose a local process were to pass a restrictive policy. Would that be okay with us until (and if) a court overturned it, after which it would not be okay? Would we support intellectual freedom even if a court decreed it ended? I hope so, even if just in a supportive statement. I believe we are confusing ethics with legality. We should take an ethical stance.

An invitation to local participation—in light of the highly organized nature of the opposition to intellectual freedom—may bring pressure to bear on local boards to pass restrictive policies.

I don't think local boards need our Association's approval to carry out their legal responsibilities.

Cameron A. Johnson, Everett Public Library



Washington Library Association Proposed Intellectual Freedom Statement

The Proposed IF Statement

The Washington Library Association supports the principle of free, open, and unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the medium in which they exist.

A democracy can only succeed if citizens have access to the information necessary to form opinions and make decisions on issues affecting their lives. Libraries play a key role in providing access to this information.

The Association regards this access as a right of all citizens. Therefore the Association believes that libraries have a responsibility to provide access to a wide range of perspectives and viewpoints.

The Association believes that parents and legal guardians have the responsibility to guide their own children in the exercise of their rights of access.

The Association recognizes privacy and confidentiality as essential components of intellectual freedom.

The Association supports local community involvement in developing policies that uphold the United States and Washington State constitutional guarantees of free speech and intellectual freedom.

The Washington Library Association endorses the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, Freedom to Read Statement, and Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations.

Therefore, the Washington Library Association opposes censorship and restrictions on access to the full range of constitutionally protected materials.

(11/15/2000)

Background Statement from the Intellectual Freedom Statement Task Force

At the Washington Library Association Executive Board meeting on December 8, 2000, the Board approved a proposed Intellectual Freedom Statement to be presented for approval of the WLA membership at the WLA Annual Conference to be held in Spokane, April 4-7, 2001.

The Intellectual Freedom Statement Task Force was created when the proposed Intellectual Freedom Statement under consideration at last year's conference was turned down by the membership. The Task Force was charged with creating an Intellectual Freedom Statement for the Washington Library Association that will serve us in the 21st century.

Included in this article is the proposed statement and letters from two Task Force members concerning the community involvement portion of the statement.

We encourage comments, suggestions, and discussion about this Intellectual Freedom Statement. Please send them to the WLA listserv, where this letter was originally posted.

Intellectual Freedom Statement Task Force: Laura Boyes (Chair), Cameron Johnson, Candy Morgan, Cher Ravagni, Tom Reynolds, Jan Walsh, Mike Wessells, Janelle Williams, and Tony Wilson

Letter from Michael Wessells

Dear WLA members,

I am a member of the committee charged with rewriting the Association's Intellectual Freedom Statement. I have been asked to represent the majority opinion within the committee regarding the community involvement language in the proposed statement, and to respond to the reservations expressed by Cameron Johnson in his accompanying letter. Like Cameron, I would prefer to emphasize the remarkable unanimity of the committee in regard to all other aspects of the statement and the mutual respect and professionalism displayed by each member during the deliberations.

As a professional librarian, I believe as a matter of ethics that library service should be developed by the local community to be served by the library—this is a basic principle of a democratic society. The alternatives are the definition of service imposed from on high by a professional elite, or by the state and national governments who may purport to know better than the citizens of a locality how they should be served by their own institutions. I believe the heroism displayed by local Boards who stand up for First Amendment principles against local and vocal opposition should be both endorsed and celebrated by this association rather than swept under the rug.

Responding to Cameron's concerns as he has numbered them:

As stated above, I see this statement as a matter of principle, not just process.

As a member of ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, I have seen the national strategy regarding Intellectual Freedom

develop a focus on local community involvement as a major safeguard against federal and state mandates. ALA Councilor Jan Walsh presented examples of states who have recently taken the same approach as we here suggest.

The language of the proposed statement was carefully crafted to answer just such a concern as Cameron proposes here. The Association supports involvement for ONLY such policies as uphold the state and national constitutional guarantees. Restrictive policies that do not uphold these guarantees are not supported.

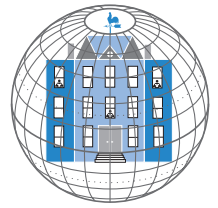
I do not see how a statement supporting free speech and intellectual freedom guarantees could appear as an invitation to restrictive policies.

Local boards do not need our approval, but those members who support free speech would appreciate what the statement offers, which is not approval, but support. I also think state and national agencies who desire widespread restrictions could use a reminder that these decisions need to be made at the local level, and that WLA should support such a concept.

Thank you very much for allowing Cameron and me to express the views of the committee on these matters.

Michael Wessells, Timberland Regional Library

Distance Education and Digital Reference: The Yellow Brick Road?



by **Cameron A. Johnson and Laura McCarty**

Concerned librarians and professors are confronted with mounting pressure from many directions to abandon their role as stewards of knowledge. Distance education, formerly a minor adjunct to traditional college and university programs, is being touted in our state and elsewhere as a full-fledged equivalent to lectures in ivy-covered buildings, just as digital reference is being touted as an acceptable equivalent of reference consultation at a library.

Who Moved My Cheese, or Resistance Is Futile

Library directors, reacting to a specter of “disintermediation,” take up “digital reference” to provide real-time 24/7 service that depends on “collaborative browsing software.” Some say librarians are losing the battle with smarter “Web-based solutions” and online commercially-supported “expert sites.” They say the public will log on to the Web and be pretty happy with what they can find, even though what they get is not particularly accurate or lacks the knowledgeable context that a good librarian can provide. They say the public believes it is good enough because they got a good deal for their money.

University administrators, reacting to accusations of being outmoded in the new global information economy, contract with educational companies to turn faculty lectures and assignments into “courseware.” They say computer and communications technology can deliver services more economically than resident attendance at government-supported state universities, and can fully replace some functions that universities perform. They say “brick and mortar” institutions may die out entirely, that knowledge banks and networked access to course materials may supplant most flesh-and-bone meetings.

In these tax-cutting days, university and library administrators cannot ignore the lure of new revenue streams from corporate “partnerships” in cyberspace.

Much of the rhetoric accompanying the rush to digitized education reads like a religious tract. It has the same invocatory phrases and ideas, the

same driven hyperbole, the fixity of focus, the feeling of having the only answer. And it postulates a world where we embrace insecurity, we adapt and flex, where we are in competition with everyone on earth to maintain our place.

In the long term neither exciting nor inevitable, this dystopia promises not only “lifelong learning” but also massive worker burnout. “E-learning”? How about coming home from a full day’s work every night for the rest of your life and plunging into online coursework? And this is to be continuous, because global competition never ceases, and our pay and health insurance depend on staying competitive in a global economy. Online universities—the University of Phoenix being one of the oldest—are ready to step up to the plate and make these e-learning dreams come true.

The Competition

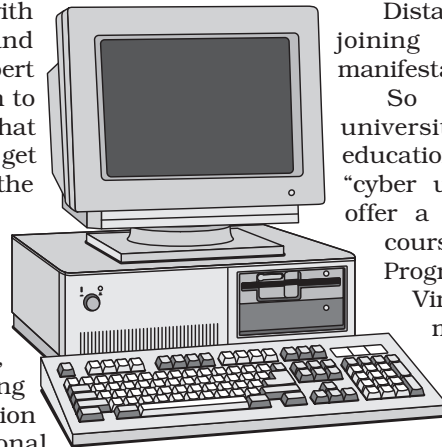
Distance education has now become “e-learning,” joining digital reference as one of the latest manifestations of “e-commerce.”

So far, the upstart competition for public universities—online private sector purveyors of educational services, also called “online universities,” “cyber universities,” or “virtual universities”—mainly offer a limited spectrum of skills-based, utilitarian courses. Dees Stallings, Director for Academic Programs at Vcampus Corporation in McLean, Virginia, describes e-learning as “a commodity market of skills-teaching, information-dispensing, computer-based modules designed to meet the time-sensitive needs of the knowledge worker” (Stallings, p. 7).

Online universities aggressively flaunt their private sector status and predict a future in which the institutional foundations of public universities will crumble and online universities will thrive, independent of government or philanthropic financial aid. “[...]T]he traditional form of post secondary education may be built on foundations totally unsatisfactory for the next century and the new, virtual form may indeed have no need for government or foundation support or accreditation association services,” says Stallings (p. 6).

This message appears to convince some government decision-makers that online universities are a viable and growing industry, despite a chorus of warnings from academics that turning education into a commodity endangers academic freedom. As you read this, the State of Washington is moving to incorporate more virtual components into the state’s higher education programs.

David F. Noble, York University history professor, in an exposé of what he calls “digital diploma mills,” cites the Western Governors’ Virtual University Project—for whom Washington Governor Gary Locke serves as Board of Trustees Co-chair—as an example of this new orientation to higher education. Noble quotes Western’s goals: “expand the marketplace for demonstrated competence,” and “identify and remove barriers to the free functioning of these markets, particularly barriers



Cameron A. Johnson is a reference librarian at Everett Public Library. Laura McCarty is a Friend of the Mukilteo Library.

posed by statutes, policies, and administrative rules and regulations” (Noble, p. 45).

The State of Washington has been looking toward the economic benefits of online education, reports Dan Carnevale in an article in the Feb. 4, 2000 *Chronicle of Higher Education*. “Anticipating rapid growth in the demand for college courses during the next 10 years, Washington State’s Higher Education Coordinating Board is asking the Legislature to increase spending on online education so that the state can avoid constructing new buildings or new campuses” (Carnevale).

Extending the e-learning model to encompass more of higher education’s traditional territory to achieve economic benefits for certain students has also gained supporters in academic circles. Diana Oblinger, Vice President for Information Resources and the Chief Information Officer for the 16-campus University of North Carolina system, wrote in her 1998 book *What Business Wants from Higher Education*, “Today’s increased demand for higher education emerges from economic aspirations and from the certain knowledge that a college degree now provides a greater marginal increase in economic security than it ever has” (p. 24).

Libraries and other faculty and student services, if provided at all by the online universities, are budgetary overhead that threatens to drain away profitability. G. David Garson, Professor in the Political Science and Public Administration Research Department at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, has studied the cost and policy issues of distance education in academia. Garson points out that online universities like the University of Phoenix and Western Governor’s Virtual University—private sector businesses that exist to make a profit—have an unfair pricing advantage over public colleges and universities traditionally committed to pursuit of research. Whereas research costs are born largely by public institutions, the benefits of producing new knowledge in the various disciplines through research and teaching are distributed to society at large: the professions, government, and business.

The Value of a University Seal

Writing in *American Prospect*, Joshua Green says that prestigious universities like Harvard, Duke, Columbia, and Stanford—fearful of being left behind and in search of new sources of funding—have already made contractual arrangements with corporate courseware designers that allow the schools to make money by licensing their faculties’ work for delivery through online universities. Some don’t conduct the online courses themselves, but contract with online universities to deliver the courses to students. Under such an arrangement, the Harvard and Stanford seals become logos for a new type of educational product.

Not all universities have taken this corporate partnership route in offering online distance education courses. The University of Washington, for example, does not hire course production out to a third party, but uses its own distance learning course production department. [See sidebar, “At the University of Washington.”]

Translating a professor’s course notes into a pleasing, well-designed, well-thought-out online course is expensive and time-consuming. There is a lot of “front loading”: course designers must anticipate and respond to student questions even before they are posed; must break the course into lessons that fit together; must provide activities to engage sedentary, screen-bound students; and must use graphics and careful editing effectively. All of this must work technically with all the

At the University of Washington

Bill Corrigan, Director of Distance Learning Design at the University of Washington’s Educational Outreach Department, sketched for *Allki* the background and process UW uses in developing a distance education course:

- UW offers via distance education ten degree-programs, 21 certificate programs, and 270 total courses.
- The instructors are UW faculty or outside experts with teaching experience.
- The Distance Learning Design “shop” consists of eight instructional designers, two editors, one video producer and one graphic artist.
- Instructional designers work with instructors to turn courses into 5-7 lessons, through a process called “instructional design.”
- It takes 4-6 months to develop an online course.
- Some courses are reviewed and critiqued by the originating academic department.
- UW faculty members offering distance education share copyright with the University. Professors leaving UW for another institution must sign a “non-compete clause,” and cannot offer the course at their new university. Outside experts developing UW courses are seen as “working for hire,” with UW retaining all copyright.
- Some other academic departments and professional schools, such as the School of Engineering, School of Social Work, and the School of Nursing, offer their own distance education courses. Some individual faculty members do this too.

“University of Washington Extension is not interested in canning what the professors do. They have all their life history and knowledge that goes into their courses, and we’re really not interested in cutting them out,” Corrigan said.

In the works is a distance learning librarian who will select materials and assist students. The librarian appointment symbolizes the equal status distance education students now enjoy with on-campus students, Corrigan observed.

[Telephone interview with Bill Corrigan on 1/08/2001]

hardware and software students have at home. Anyone who has used computers recognizes these issues are headaches.

High development costs will likely entail layoff of faculty members and may actually cost more than delivery by traditional methods, says G. David Garson. “[...]Any budget analyst is apt to conclude that to get the same effects one is going to have to

(Continued on next page)

cover the online development and delivery costs through reductions in traditional costs such as the faculty salary component," he says (Garson).

Counting the Casualties

David Noble believes that doubts about corporate partnerships are valid: "Once faculty and courses go online, administrators gain much greater control over faculty performance and course content than ever before, and the potential for administrative scrutiny, supervision, regimentation, discipline, and even censorship increases dramatically" (Noble, p. 46).

Noble says policies and regulations that can be neatly sidestepped in an online higher education "marketplace" might include ownership and copyright of academic course material formerly claimed by faculty members themselves. Pressure to sign away copyright protection is most strongly felt by the most vulnerable faculty—that is, part-time and untenured faculty.

These implications have not escaped the American Association of University Professors. AAUP issued a formal statement arguing that distance education course development should remain within the university community (American Association of University Professors). The document states that within their institutions, faculty should have primary responsibility for both the content and the conduct of distance education, and that professors should be given credit for time taken in preparing distance education courses, should have adequate technical and clerical support, and should exercise control over future use of distance education courses they develop. The policy pointedly defends the notion of academic freedom, invoking the 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, which states: "Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition."

In June 1998, 900 University of Washington professors signed a letter of protest to Governor Gary Locke after he made a series of speeches envisioning a prominent future for virtual education. "While costly fantasies of this kind present a mouthwatering bonanza to software manufacturers and other corporate sponsors, what they bode for education is nothing short of disastrous," the letter stated.

Gayla Diment, head of the UW chapter of the AAUP, is quoted by CNN as saying that the signers were not Luddites: "It's not the fear of technology per se. It's the fear of the scope. We are concerned about the corporatization of campuses" (Woody).

There is much in the curricula of the arts,

humanities, and social sciences that challenges the corporate view of the world. Some professors are concerned that there might be renewed pressure to censor, self-censor, or tone down courses so as to avoid criticizing the corporate viewpoint, corporate culture, or the role of corporations in history and social science. Would corporate higher-education partners sponsor "courseware" that stresses people's need to find fulfillment outside of the realm of consumerism, that says there is an alternative to embracing chaos, to making work your overriding compulsion, to seeing everyone as your competitor? Would it support courseware that highlights the financial exploitation of working people in Third World countries and contrasts that with the growing disparity between the rich and poor in the world? Or would it prefer to sponsor courseware that teaches people how to be good employees, to be "flexible," "adaptable," and politically passive?

Furthermore, courses in the humanities might not be taught at all if it were determined that such courses do not represent a good return on investment. Universities and their partners might choose which courses to develop and offer based only on customer demand.

A hybrid format for reference service is the right idea, not totally supplanting local reference service with virtualized digital reference.

Howard Gardner, Professor of Cognition and Education at Harvard University, summarizes the rational basis for our instinctual distrust of online universities. The e-learning model followed by the University of Phoenix, he says, might turn out skilled practitioners, but ultimately society will lose if the model widely prevails. "The Phoenix mission is completely utilitarian ... there is not the slightest intellectual interest in truth, beauty, or goodness—or, for that matter, in falsity, ugliness, or immorality. Nor is there

interest in how these virtues might relate to one another or how they might be drawn on to help create a better community" (Gardner, p. 116). Whether it is possible to build trust so that students, faculty, and society as a whole receive a fair share of the benefits is a key question.

A Hybrid Formula for Distance Education

Frank Newman, Director of The Futures Project, says casting traditional education as the polar opposite of distance education is a big mistake. He says that academia cannot ignore or dismiss distance education technology, but instead should selectively absorb it into classroom education. He sees film clips, animations, and online chat with students in foreign countries as enhancement to the traditional lecture format. "Used wisely, technology can help close the gap between advantaged and less-advantaged students," Newman says. The Futures Project, based at Brown University and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Ford Foundation, aims at "stimulating an informed debate about the role of higher education in our new global society, and the opportunities and dangers presented by a global market for higher education" (Newman).

What about the State of Washington's plans? "The master plan doesn't call for the formation of a virtual university, but rather it calls for an increase in the number of online courses and in the use of the Internet to create a hybrid format for traditional courses," Carnevale wrote. "The hybrid format would permit some class meetings to be held online, meaning that more courses could be accommodated by the same number of classrooms on campus." Whether or not universities can stick

with this hybrid formula in the face of private-sector competition is a key question.

While universities struggle with these issues, libraries too feel the pressure to virtualize their operations. Like public universities, libraries must respond to the e-learning challenge, but like them we cannot lose sight of our best impulses. A hybrid format for reference service is the right idea, not totally supplanting local reference service with virtualized digital reference.

Digital reference advocates say patrons don't want to deal with flesh-and-bone librarians. The reality is more complicated than that. The reference people we know are open, discreet, knowledgeable, and committed guides to knowledge in all forms; and it's often the digital equipment our patrons seem to despise. Nevertheless, librarians have to take a run at some form of digital reference, not because it is comparable to face-to-face service, but because we have to keep our oar in the stream and a more inclusive model for reference makes sense. If librarians are players, delivering better quality service and better answers to their local patrons than Web-searching "experts" sitting at their terminals in Delhi, then maybe libraries can cement their place in this postmodern world. At least that is the hope.

Postscript

We probably started down this road to "disintermediation" when Descartes first saw the body as a rude mechanism animated by an exalted mind. Now that we have the global mind, why not dispense with the body totally? Well, as an undergraduate maybe you had a professor who took an interest in you; and nearly every day you think about something he said. You can still see the tilt of his head, the way he leaned on the podium, the way he peered from under his glasses through his tired red eyes. You've never forgotten him, and he's inspired you from that day to this. Would that connection have been possible without personally knowing him? We don't think so.

If it is inspiration you want, you'll have to get it from a live and committed person, not from an animated clown juggling balls, or from an Ivy League logo on your digital diploma.

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Homeschoolers *(Continued from page 13)*

Notes and References

For information on support groups in your community, contact WHO, the Washington Homeschool Organization, a statewide, non-profit membership organization. Its mission is to serve the diverse interests of home-based education in Washington State. WHO is nonpartisan, non-sectarian, and non-discriminating in its views of homeschooling and participation in its activities (<http://www.washhomeschool.org/>)

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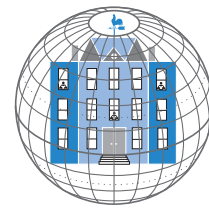
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Building Personal Communities in the Virtual Realm



by Lisa Oldoski

Librarians are members of a wide range of professional communities: the library community at large; the library community of their country, state, county, and city; the educational community; the community of school librarians, public librarians, special librarians, academic librarians, corporate librarians, technology librarians, and other specialties; and the list goes on. Because of the importance to librarians of participation in their communities, I began my library school education in LEEP, the distance master's degree program of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, with a small amount of fear. How could I build my own communities of library students, learners, colleagues, and contacts when I was a four-hour flight from the school I attended?

The developers of LEEP (Library Education Experimental Program) have obviously given some thought to this question, and have answered the concern with what is knowingly referred to, by those who have experienced its riches, as "boot camp." "Boot camp" is a two-week intensive course on libraries, information, and society; it is equal parts intellectual endeavor and survivalist camp. During these two weeks, the members of the incoming class attend lectures, discussion groups, and workshops together; work on group projects; eat together; room together; and spend hours together in the library and the computer lab. Because a twelve-hour day in boot camp is less common than an eighteen-hour day, there is also time spent together asking, "Am I doing the right thing?" and "Am I a librarian?" and "Could you just tell me not to worry and that we are going to survive this because my family is saying that I am stressing them out by calling them to ask?"

By the end of the two weeks, the vast majority of us had decided that indeed we *would* survive, that we *were* librarians, or at least librarians in the making, and that all of us were leaving with contacts, colleagues, and a support network of students, professors, and friends that we didn't have fourteen days before. In the beginning of boot camp, our communities were built on the foundation of the old adage about misery loving company, and on the fact that we were all away from home and none of us knew anybody. By the end, our communities were based on shared goals and intellectual pursuits, burgeoning friendships, and the knowledge that we had survived the

beginning of library school, and were a roomful of would-be librarians with semesters of learning and exploring ahead of us—learning and exploring that we would tackle in various states of togetherness.

Once we were back home, our connections to these communities became completely virtual. We attended classes together with our live video and audio professor, and typed our responses to the class discussion in live text chat; we had online small group discussion and "whispered" (the electronic version of passing notes in class). It can feel strange to have to look at the pictures on the class list to figure out who it was that made the point about young adult literature that you agreed with, or to have to assign identifiers such as "lives in France" or "used to be a lawyer" to everyone, to help you remember what name goes with which face. But other than these aspects of the virtual classroom, the connections made in boot camp allow for the online class experience to seem pretty close to traditional class sessions. Like other library students, we have group discussions and group projects. But our situation requires making arrangements to get together online; and we must negotiate the fact that members of the group live in different time zones—a lesson in planning and problem solving on top of the group project goal.

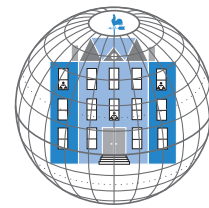
Staying connected to the virtual community does take some effort. Taking online courses, you never bump into people between classes or in the parking lot, so it is necessary to find an alternative. This often plays out in the form of getting to class early for the before-class chat that generally begins with weather reports from students around the globe. From there, the conversations shift to thoughts on the week's reading, what happened in other classes, and new projects at work. The variety of Web boards on the LEEP Web page gives students the opportunity to post questions and comments about all things school- and library-related in an asynchronous atmosphere, and have their peers give their suggestions. The LEEP Web page is the place to ask, "Does anyone understand XML?" "What is your library's Internet policy?" or "Can anyone tell me what the indexing and abstracting class is like?" Finally, LEEP students become great emailers. There is no feeling self-conscious about emailing someone you don't really know because there isn't much of an alternative. As a result of my LEEP experience, I have found myself growing much more confident about sending an email question to a poster on a listserv, or a member of a committee I am interested in, or even the author of a book or article I was impressed by.

Although my fears of not having meaningful connections and a sense of community were unfounded, I am extremely grateful for the "community with a face," so to speak, that I have at the University of Washington, Tacoma Library and for the librarians I have met through WLA. I would not encourage a person who didn't have access to a physical community of librarians to enroll in a distance program without some serious thought about who their local support network will be. An email message may not be able to replace a face-to-face discussion of a project that has you going around in circles, and

(Continued on next page)

Lisa Oldoski is Library Serials Technician Lead at University of Washington, Tacoma Library. She is the 2000 winner of the WLA Scholarship and an intern on the Alki Committee.

Outreach at the Mid-Columbia Library— "Old Fashioned Is Not a Bad Thing"



by **Brian Soneda**

Outreach service at the Mid-Columbia Library is multi-faceted, and is constantly evolving. But two major, ongoing thrusts of outreach here at MCL are Homebound Service and the Bookmobile. Both rely on a personal touch from warm, friendly staff members to succeed. Both are "traditional" library services that have tended to take a back seat in most libraries nationwide to "sexier" services involving computers or high-profile programs. But Homebound Service and the Bookmobile both have great value.

Sandra Jewell has "about twenty stops" on her homebound rounds. She has been our Homebound Service provider for just over a year, and visits approximately ten individuals and about ten facilities. She provides books and other materials and, most important, her time and her attention. After a few repeat visits, she gets a good feel for a patron's likes and dislikes.

Sandra calls Homebound Service an "old-fashioned thing to do: personalized, one-on-one courtesy. People are so happy to see me and are so appreciative. And they are incredibly polite in their appreciation."

When I ask Sandra if she likes serving the homebound, she chooses to answer this way: "Patrons sometimes start out being hesitant, as if they don't want to impose. I let these patrons know that serving them is a joy to me."

The Mid-Columbia Library started as a rural library district in 1949, with a bookmobile as its main mode of service delivery. As such, bookmobile service has had a long and productive history with MCL. Today our one bookmobile operates on a three-week cycle, and visits mainly rural or small-town schools and other rural population centers. As the library system has increased its number of branches over the years (from five to eleven in the last 16 years), areas once served by bookmobiles now have a local branch.


Brian Soneda is Assistant Director for Public Services, Mid-Columbia Library. Matthew A. Peery is Network/Systems Administrator, Mid-Columbia Library.



Patrons get on board the Mid-Columbia Library Bookmobile. Photo by Matthew A. Peery.

That doesn't mean that the bookmobile lacks committed, supportive users. One of our bookmobile staffers, Carol Eakin, tells tales of patron appreciation for the service provided that rival those of Sandra Jewell's homebound clientele.


While there does seem to be some erosion of usage at many stops, stops at schools are immensely popular with students and teachers, who greet the coming of the bookmobile after summer hiatus like the return of an old and dear friend. Carol received a note from a school teacher that ended thusly: "I'm delighted that you could come back this year. Your support of the children's library needs and your support of their teachers' research needs is wonderful. Thanks for being so helpful!"

Sometimes new is not better, and sometimes you can't put a price on the value of patron satisfaction. But you can ask Sandra or Carol about the brightness of those smiles from a satisfied senior or child. 

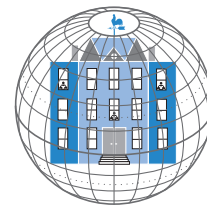
Virtual Realm *(Continued from page 10)*

the ability to watch a librarian doing her job has yet to be replicated online.

In the beginning of my library school journey, I was worried that I would be wandering alone in the virtual realm. But I have found myself with a community of librarians at home that I talk to about librarianship by calling them on the phone or

walking into their office. And I have a community that I can email as well. From my email community, I can find out about intellectual freedom issues in Argentina, special collections at the Chicago Public Library, and what it is like to be a school librarian in Thailand. 

Child Care Workshops That Connect with Your Community: Public Libraries and Washington STARS



by Jill Olson

Public libraries in Washington State now have another opportunity to make a real difference in our outreach service to the child care community. New state legislation, called Washington STARS (State Training and Registry System), requires family child care providers (licensee only), center and school-age directors, program supervisors, site coordinators, and lead teachers to obtain ten hours of STARS approved continuing education each year.

For many years, King County Library System has offered training opportunities as part of its outreach services to the child care community. We have contracted with professionals in a variety of fields to present these workshops. Some examples include the following:

- Nancy Stewart, musician, presented “Songs You’ll Want to Sing,” teaching fun and easy action rhymes and songs to use with the preschool child;
- Brian Raven (formerly Brian Hosey), a local science educator, conducted “Wet and Wild World of Science,” showing how something as simple as making bubbles can become a science activity; and
- Kim Keith of the Seattle Children’s Museum presented a hands-on multicultural crafts program.

How does this new legislation affect library programming? In order for our training to be meaningful for child care providers, our workshops must meet the new state requirements. Child care providers have limited time to attend training, and some would not attend training if it did not satisfy the state requirement. Consequently, KCLS has become a STARS Approved Training Organization.

What does this mean? STARS has specific criteria for training organizations. First, each library seeking to become approved must complete an application, which includes identifying a contact person in the organization and making certain assurances about how the library will guarantee the quality of its workshops. Once approved, the training organization is notified of the required forms to complete in order for its training to be advertised on the STARS Registry and for the providers’ training to be recorded on the Registry. This record-keeping is not terribly time-consuming, and the rewards in patron satisfaction are well worth the extra effort.

Since we became a STARS Approved Training Organization, attendance at our educational programs has doubled. During 2000, Sylvia Hobbs of Bellevue Community College presented workshops on “Preschool Games and Activities that Teach Math” and Tom Drummond of North Seattle Community College presented “Enterprise Talk” (positive “discipline”). Although many organizations and individuals in the community offer STARS training, few of them offer it for free. This is one reason why our training is so popular! Our workshops attract many new customers to our libraries. Once they’re in the door, we can help them learn about library services, programs, and collections that will help them in their work, including special services such as our Books To Grow On program. We advertise our programs by mailing an informational flyer to every licensed child care provider in our service area. The programs are open to any library patron, so many parents and teachers also take advantage of our offerings.

Certainly this model is not a good fit for every library in the state. However, even a small library could enhance its service to the child care community by becoming a STARS Approved Training Organization. You don’t have to contract with outside presenters. Instead, you could call on the skills of your library staff to offer training. It is common for a child care center or a local child care organization to request the librarian as a guest speaker at their staff meetings, addressing such topics as “using the library” and “selecting appropriate books for children.” If the library is an approved training organization, these engagements could offer valuable STARS approved credit for the child care participants, and provide us with another avenue for getting out our message!

At KCLS we are pleased that attendance at these valuable workshops has increased so dramatically, not for the numbers themselves, but because it means we are connecting with more of our community. In our fall series of workshops, nearly two-thirds of the participants requested STARS continuing education credit. Becoming a STARS Approved Training Organization has proven to be an excellent way to reach out to the child care community in King County Library’s service area.

For more information on Washington STARS, call (800) 727-3107 x17 or review their Website (www.cccwa.org/stars.htm). You can also request an informational brochure via email at stars@waeyc.org.

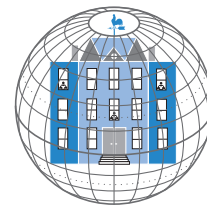
For information on the King County Library System Books To Grow On program, please check out our Webpage (www.kcls.org/webkids/btgo/index.html). You are also welcome to contact me, Jill Olson, at KCLS, if you have questions.



Jill Olson is Children’s Outreach Librarian, King County Library System. For questions, call her at 425-369-3323; email: jilolson@kcls.org.

Outreach to Homeschoolers

by Carla McLean



Why should librarians pay attention to homeschoolers? After all, you may have heard of problems serving homeschoolers, or of their low attendance at programs. Or maybe you aren't Christian and think that all homeschoolers are?

One of the most important missions of a library is outreach to the community. The reasons for this are usually well-understood and agreed upon. But homeschoolers aren't on the top of the list when we think about outreach. Part of the reason for that is they may be somewhat invisible or hard to identify. The most important reason for outreach to homeschoolers is that they are "tremendous allies of the library in your community" (American Library Association Annual Conference).

Statistically, homeschoolers are an ever-increasing segment of the population. "The number of homeschoolers has grown by at least 25% each year since 1990" (Scheps). In 1996, the U.S. Department of Education estimated that there were 50,000 homeschoolers in the U.S., which is 1% of the total school population and 10% of the privately-schooled population (Scheps). Just how prevalent is home education right now? The data indicate there that are approximately 1.23 million American children being taught at home. This number (which has an estimated margin of error of $\pm 10\%$) exceeds the total public school enrollment for the state of New Jersey, the state with the tenth largest student population in the nation. Put another way, there are more homeschool students nationwide than there are public school students in Wyoming, Vermont, Delaware, North Dakota, Alaska, South Dakota, Rhode Island, Montana, and Hawaii—*combined* (Home School Legal Defense Association Website).

Furthermore, homeschoolers are heavy users of the library. A study from 1997 quoted on the Web page of the Home School Legal Defense Association found that 53% of homeschoolers visit a library at least once or twice a month. Nearly half (47%) reported that they visit the library even more often. As a group, homeschooled students frequent the library an average of 3.8 times each month (Home School Legal Defense Association Website).

Problems and concerns that librarians have encountered in serving homeschoolers include staff bias against homeschoolers; censorship (patron's objections to materials on evolution, the occult, and age ratings) (Madden); depletion of the library collection on a particular subject; time and energy demands (Madden); heavy use of interlibrary loan; unsupervised children in the library, and difficulty identifying the homeschooling families (Scheps). As Margaret Martin of the Mercer Island Library (King County Library System) stated: "I have found that programming for homeschoolers has sometimes been frustrating, as librarians want to meet some of the needs of that group, but aren't sure what they want." Diane Adams of Monmouth Public Library (Oregon) has found that she continues to be "frustrated by their lack of use of our resources. A good share of them buy a curriculum and that is all they use." She tried to do specific programs for them and received "no response."

Carla McLean is Reference Librarian, Kent Regional Library, King County Library System.

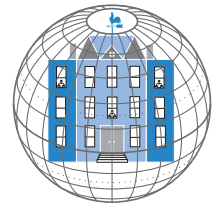
So what are ways of reaching out to homeschoolers in your community? Patience and commitment seem essential. Diane Adams finds that she is "slowly gaining the trust of the homeschoolers in the area." Janice Hedin, Community Liaison of the Homeschoolers' Support Association (serving South King County, Washington), believes that "if a librarian is willing to personally invest in getting to know the parents in a support group, there [will be] two or several moms who are willing to connect with that librarian and include [the librarian] in the goings-on of the group and bridge to the other parents in that group." The librarians must commit themselves to the homeschoolers by showing up *on a monthly basis* to the local support group meetings. In other words, librarians must display their presence—at meetings, conferences, in publications, and by hosting meetings and programs. Judy Nelson, head of the Children's Department at the Bellevue Regional Library (King County Library System), suggests a monthly column, as is done in a column called "BookNook" for three local homeschooling organizations, written by KCLS children's librarians. Twice a month, Bellevue hosts a program of story and discussion presented by a librarian who is also a homeschooling mother. Nelson says the library is open to doing tours of the library for homeschoolers, but the homeschoolers often want to do the tour themselves. The library could do a program called "So You're Thinking about Homeschooling." "Make sure the community knows the public library is there, and that you are a contact person" (Judy Nelson). Other means of outreach are to host a booth at small local curriculum fairs and larger state conventions (suggested by Janice Hedin). Brochures could be created for homeschoolers, such as the very attractive one done by Dori Molletti of the Sno-Isle Regional Library System a few years ago. It is called, "At Home in the Library: Homeschooling Resources" and includes books, cassettes, pamphlets, as well as a list of homeschooling organizations and support groups. Another idea is to place announcements in your local paper, at area churches (roughly 75% of homeschoolers are homeschooling for religious reasons), bookstores, or wherever else you customarily promote the library (Brostrom).

As Rebecca Hershey, Young Adult Librarian of the Kent Regional Library expressed it, the homeschoolers "will be here anyway, so you might as well be ready! They're interesting and fun to work with!" I hope reading this article has inspired some people to reach out to homeschoolers in their community.

(Continued on page 9)

Technology-Mediated Education: eLearning at the iSchool

by Stuart A. Sutton



Beginning in Summer 2002, the Information School of the University of Washington will offer the first courses in its program to deliver throughout the Pacific Northwest the full MLIS degree using a distance-independent model—what I call “eLearning at the iSchool.” The program in the iSchool will build on the proven strengths of three models of distance delivery, but will focus most heavily on the technologies and methodologies of the third. In the following paragraphs, I will outline the distance-independent program of study being prepared by first discussing the theoretical foundations for the model we are pursuing and concluding with a discussion of the program specifics.

Models of Distance-Independent Education

Like all distance-independent learning, the goal of the iSchool program is to unbundle the various aspects of the campus-centric delivery model. Please note that I said “unbundle” and not supersede—the iSchool’s strong commitment to both educational excellence and appropriate professional enculturation leads it to embrace a delivery model that weds critical aspects of the campus experience with that of the student studying at a distance.¹ Because the model chosen for distance-independent learning frames so many of the factors of interest for those looking at such programs of study, I will spend some moments discussing both the characteristics of various models of teaching and learning (including the campus model) and their high-level pedagogical characteristics.² I will then place the iSchool eLearning model into that framework.

There are three models of distance learning that are historically linked to the technologies used to communicate with students at a distance (Nipper). We may also think of these models as generations; we must, however, be careful with generational thinking—it may not best fit the reality if we consider generations superseding one another. These three generations or models of distance education form a continuum ranging from the traditional correspondence teaching of the first generation, through the multiple media delivery mechanisms of the second, to the fully interactive mechanisms of the third. Parts of all contemporary programs in distance-independent learning come to rest somewhere on this continuum. With the use of the term “continuum,” I intend to imply that there are few, if any, pure instantiations of any of the three models. Instead, these contemporary programs mix and match model attributes to achieve educational goals.

Stuart A. Sutton is Associate Professor, The Information School of the University of Washington.

Campus-Centric Model:

Before taking a look at distance-independent models, it is useful to look at the characteristics of the campus-centric model that are of importance to this discussion. In terms of what William Mitchell and Oliver Strimpel call the “economy of presence” (Mitchell and Strimpel), the campus-centric model is the most “expensive” since it requires, at a minimum, the following things: (1) establishment and maintenance of a place where resources and the teachers and learners will gather; (2) the inconvenience and expense for both teachers and learners of traveling to this “place”; and (3) the inconvenience and expense of being present at times that might have been more productively spent elsewhere (e.g. at work or with family). Given these factors, the most expensive expression of this model might be the teacher in a resource-rich environment engaged in a tutoring conversation with a single student—an Oxfordian model. In the campus-centric model, the various costs outlined above bring with them a raft of benefits including, but not limited to: (1) a hoped-for focus that may come by being in the same place at the same time with common goals; (2) the convenience (once there) of centrally organized resources; and (3) the opportunities for controlled enculturation (particularly important for the young leaving home for the first time).

More specifically, the campus-centric model can be characterized along a number of dimensions that I will subsequently use to compare it to distance-independent models:

- **Technology Infrastructure:** At a minimum, nothing is needed technologically for teaching and learning to take place in the campus-centric model other than the participants (teachers and learners) and a place. We can all visualize our most idealized notion of this teaching and learning experience—Aristotle sitting on a rock under a tree joined in conversation with his eager learners.
- **Communication Channels:** These channels denote the direction of the messages exchanged between teacher and students, and between and among students (i.e. peer-to-peer). In a campus-centric model, these channels *may* be characterized as symmetrical—i.e. communications can be equally bi-directional among all participants. Of course, this need not necessarily be so. Many a campus-centric experience is purely asymmetrical—e.g. the large lecture with signals traveling solely from the lecturer to the student audience.
- **Time/Space Continuum:** This dimension denotes whether the teaching and learning experience is time- and space-bound. To be time- and space-bound means that the teacher and his or her learners are “bound” to the same space or to the same time or both. This dimension is the quintessential one defining the campus-centric model. Some assert that the confluence of time- and space-binding is the principle factor in assessing the quality of the learning experience when differentiating the campus-centric and distance-independent models. We speak of the time aspects of a learning experience in binary terms—i.e. it is either

time-bound (“synchronous”) or time-unbound (“asynchronous”). We do not speak of the space aspects of the experience in binary terms but say that it admits to degrees of distance—e.g. the students may be geographically removed from the instructor (i.e. space-unbound) and yet are required to gather together in a particular place (i.e. both space- and time-bound in relationship to each other).

- **Pedagogical Models:** For purposes of this discussion, there are three high-level forms of pedagogy possible in the campus-centric model. Each represents a mechanism for legitimizing what and how students learn. The first is the historical method of education in which “what we were taught is what our children should be taught.” The second is the quasi-scientific method in which what is legitimate to know are those “theories and findings of professional experts” (Boyd). Both of these mechanisms of educational legitimacy can be rooted in a finite base of information stemming either directly from the instructor or from an equally finite base of literature provided in text or through other media—in another words, “delivered.” Nipper summarizes the characteristics of the first two forms of legitimate pedagogy in the following terms:

It is authoritarian, as it imposes text or broadcast material upon the learners as if learning material comprises the eternal truth about the given subject.
... It is non-interactive (Nipper, p. 65).

The third mechanism is a discursive process that legitimizes education as a social process and can only be achieved through full discourse (Aristotle’s conversation on that rock under a tree) (Boyd, p. 242). Habermas characterizes this method as a collaborative process in which the legitimacy of what is learned is a function of consensus after “non-dominative discourse” (Habermas).

Given these experiential dimensions of the campus experience, I will briefly explore the three models of distance-independent learning and then turn to their various implications for the eLearning program of study emerging at the iSchool.

First Distance-Independent Model:

The first of these generations is traditional correspondence teaching in which the sole form of communication between student and teacher is textual. Communication channels are both asynchronous (time-unbounded) and asymmetrical with information flowing from the instructor to the student without discourse. Student peer-to-peer communications are nonexistent in the first generation. Given the limitations of the technologies employed and the nature of the communication flows, the correspondence teaching model is satisfactory for both the historical and quasi-scientific pedagogical mechanisms. Summary:

- **Technology Infrastructure:** Minimum demands (pen, ink, and a postal service);
- **Communication Channels:** Asymmetrical (instructor to student);
- **Time/Space Continuum:** Time- and space-unbounded;
- **Pedagogical Models:** Historical and Quasi-Scientific.

Second Distance-Independent Model:

The second generation is mistakenly referred to as

multimedia distance teaching, when what is really meant is multiple media. To the text of the first generation, the second adds other media including videotapes and audiotapes, and with increasing frequency, broadcast media (both radio and television). Interaction patterns between instructors and student in second-generation distance education remain largely the same as the first generation. Peer-to-peer communications (with rare exceptions in broadcast situations) do not exist. Combinations of time- and space-binding become richly varied in this generation. For example: (1) Time-bound students with broadcast media that are space-bound when they gather in a classroom; (2) time- and space-unbounded students and instructors where materials are packaged in multiple media and “delivered”; and (3) space-unbound but time-bound students receiving instruction streamed to their desktops over a network. With rare exceptions found in synchronous broadcast situations, peer-to-peer communications either do not exist or are so cumbersome as to drastically reduce their utility.

- **Technology Infrastructure:** Multiple media (text, audio, and video, both tape and broadcast);
- **Communication Channels:** Generally asymmetrical (instructor to student);
- **Time/Space Continuum:** Richly varied time- and space-binding/unbinding;
- **Pedagogical Models:** Historical and Quasi-Scientific

With either the first or second generation, there is a sharp shift in the economy of presence. When we unbind space, we liberate the participants in the enterprise geographically allowing them to remain closest to work and family. When we unbind time, we liberate the participants to manage studies when time costs are least. When we unbind time and space, learners and teachers can manage their enterprise in time- and space-frames balanced against other demands. Thus, time- and space-unbinding reduces overall personal costs for participants in the economy of presence while it may increase their costs in terms of the technologies necessary to be unbounded.

Third Distance-Independent Model:

While the first two generations of distance-independent teaching and learning reduced costs for their participants in terms of the “economy of presence,” they did so through the narrowing of available pedagogical forms and at the expense of certain socialization values that mark the time- and space-bound campus experience. It is not until we get to the third generation that it becomes *possible* to develop a community of teachers and learners with communication technologies that support (and some would say that rival) interactions previously found only on the campus.

Thus, the third generation stands in sharp contrast to the first two. The third is social in nature and emphasizes communication among all members of the academic community. It supports discursive pedagogical mechanisms and collaborative work through a rich array of

networked information and communications technologies.

- **Technology Infrastructure:** Multiple networked media (text, audio, video (recorded and broadcast), chat rooms, bulletin boards, and e-mail);
- **Communication Channels:** Symmetrical and asymmetrical (instructor to student and peer-to-peer);
- **Time/Space Continuum:** Richly varied time- and space-binding/unbinding;
- **Pedagogical Models:** Historical, Quasi-Scientific, and Discursive

The following Table of the Generations summarizes all of the characteristics of the various models discussed above and illustrates the potential for the third generation to emulate nearly all of the core attributes of a campus-centric experience.

With this background, I now turn to describing the distance-independent program for the MLIS degree now emerging at the iSchool of the University of Washington.

The iSchool Model of eLearning:

The iSchool is firmly committed to making the degree earned through its eLearning program equivalent to that earned through the campus experience. Given that commitment as a base referent and the characteristics of the various models defined above, the outlines of the MLIS eLearning program can be defined.

Like the campus program, the eLearning program consists of 63 credit hours calculated on the basis of a quarter system. The core courses for the newly revised curriculum are organized around the lifecycle of information and total 34 quarter credit hours. The remainder of a student's program of study may be taken from a rich selection of electives leading to either a particular specialization or a broad general education. Programs of study can be framed in terms of traditional or emerging information environments. It is estimated that part-time students in the eLearning program will complete the degree in approximately three years. However, we also assume that some students may take an additional year to complete the degree.

While the program of study will draw from across the three generational models of distance-independent learning where appropriate, it will be firmly rooted in the technologies and principles defining the third generation. As a result, it will rely heavily on the Internet in general and on the Web in particular in managing communications between and among instructors and students deeply involved in discursive processes including collaborative work. As the table below illustrates, it is through technology-enhanced communications channels that the third generation makes the full array of pedagogical mechanisms found in the campus-centric model available to a community of geographically dispersed teachers and learners.

However, even given the communication power of the Internet-based technologies, we here in the iSchool think that it is not possible to forge the kind of practice community that our profession demands *solely* through technology-supported communication mechanisms. We do not believe that the necessary level of professional enculturation can be achieved *solely* at a distance but requires a level of human bonding that currently can be achieved only through face-to-face encounters. We intend to achieve the desired level of professional bonding and enculturation through two mechanisms: limited campus residencies (primarily concentrated at the beginning of the program of study) and student study cohorts.

Each summer, the School will begin the program of study for a select cohort of students from throughout the Pacific Northwest. The students will gather on the resource-rich Seattle campus for a short residency and will begin their program together with the gateway course for the MLIS degree—"The Lifecycle of Information." During that campus visit, they will be introduced to the technologies that will be used throughout their program of study. They will also launch a second course to be completed from home over the summer using the Web-based course management software and associated technologies.

Our plans are to make it possible for a student taking the core courses to spend three to four consecutive weekend-spanning days each quarter on campus launching several courses. This pattern of short campus residencies at the beginning of each quarter will be repeated over the course of the first year of study as the cohort completes the process of bonding and the core courses. As the student advances in the program, a number of elective courses will be offered that do not require the campus residency, but are totally Web-based.

Given the e-Learning reliance on Web-based technologies for communication and management of courses, students will need to enter the program with some degree of information literacy

Generation	Technology	Communication (Teacher-to-Student)	Communication (Peer-to-Peer)	Time/Space	Pedagogy
Campus-Centric Generation	Technology Independent	Symmetric Asymmetric	Symmetric	Synchronous Asynchronous	Historic Quasi-Scientific Discursive
First Generation Distance	Text	Asymmetric	None	Asynchronous	Historic Quasi-Scientific
Second Generation Distance	Text Video Audio Broadcast	Asymmetric	None	Asynchronous Synchronous	Historic Quasi-Scientific
Third Generation Distance	Text Video Audio Broadcast Internet	Symmetric Asymmetric	Symmetric	Asynchronous Synchronous	Historic Quasi-Scientific Discursive

Table of the Generations

and ongoing access to the Internet. This means that students need to have a basic understanding of computer operations such as file management and general productivity software including word processing. A general understanding of Web browsers will also be assumed. Given the intensive network-based nature of the program of home study, students will be expected to have ready access to a networked machine for between 15 to 20 hours a week for a full part-time program.

Conclusion

The conclusion I reach is that the development of libraries, information centers and other information intensive activities such as the evolving concept of education in an electronic age are following parallel paths. The concept of the library as a particular place focused on a local collection is giving way to a service-oriented institution focused on technology-mediated access to information regardless of where it is located. In like fashion, the traditional concept of the classroom as a particular place with resident students and faculty (a different kind of collection) is giving way to geographically dispersed human and instructional resources and to a new focus on technology-mediated access. I believe it is fitting that the technological forces shaping the new environment in which future information professionals will practice should also shape their educational environment.

Notes and References

¹ I use the term "delivery" advisedly. As I hope to make clear in subsequent paragraphs, in only the first two generations of distance-independent education was the model one of *delivering* education. The term "deliver" conjures up images of the structured packaging-up of

information (based on the available packaging technologies) and delivery of those packages to the student where it is hoped that their content will be absorbed and converted to knowledge. Validation comes through testing whether delivery and absorption were successful. As defined later, the term "delivery" does not fit the discursive model of the third generation of distance-independent learning where, in fact, what is known is a social construct borne of discursive interaction.

² Much of the theoretical underpinnings of the generational models was developed in an earlier paper: Sutton, Stuart A. "Planning for the Twenty-First Century: The California State University." "Perspectives on Distant-Independent Education," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 47 (11) (1996): 821-825.

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Douglass-Truth Library: A Carnegie Building, Then and Now

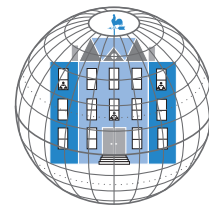
This Seattle branch opened in 1915 as the Yesler Library, named in honor of Seattle pioneer Henry Yesler. The building was designed by architects W. Marbury Somerwell and Harlon Thomas in the Italian Renaissance style, with buff tapestry brick, terra cotta trim, and red mission tile as the exterior materials. Because the funds for construction came entirely from the city, this library is unique among the seven historic Seattle Carnegie branches. Over the years, the Central Area has been home to many different ethnic groups; and the history of library service to this community, from this facility, has reflected these changes.

In 1975, the neighborhood was invited to choose a new name for the library, one that would reflect the ethnic nature of the community. The branch was renamed the Douglass-Truth Library after the two most popular entries: Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. To commemorate the name change, local artist Eddie Walke painted colorful portraits of the two abolitionists to display in each wing of the building. The Douglass-Truth library is scheduled for further renovation in 2003, as part of the Libraries For All project. The picture on the left shows the building in the past; the picture on the right shows it now. *Submitted by Marilyn Sheck.*



Reach Out to Recruit New Librarians

by Tami Echavarría



To recruit or not to recruit, that is the question. How you answer may depend on whether you think libraries will be around in the future. There are some in the profession who assert that the extinction of books and the consequent demise of the library is here (Tuchmayer). If your thinking falls in this camp, it would seem pointless to recruit new people into the career of library and information science. If, however, you believe libraries are not obsolete, recruitment of potential new librarians merits consideration.

Libraries are anything but stagnant. Many of us have witnessed tremendous changes in libraries just in the past two decades. Consequently, the careers of librarians have also changed; and preparation provided by library schools has changed. Technology has spurred on new developments, librarians have learned more year after year, and the result has been a dynamic and stimulating profession for most of us.

Those who believe in a digital information age without books and libraries are ignoring the compatible use of computerized and print information sources. A survey conducted by the Urban Libraries Council confirmed that 75.2% of Internet users also use the library, and 60.3% of library users also use the Internet (Keller). "There are times when users who can access digital services from their home or workplace will do so, but few choose to do so exclusively" (Griffiths, p. 47). Librarians link cyber resources and collections with physical resources and collections and assist others in doing so. Gardiner Hanks comments, "We can recognize that our business is information and cultural services based on information. If we can keep focused on our function rather than our current product [books], then I think that we do have libraries in our future" (Hanks, p. 39). Current information from market data retrieval indicates that the national work force of reference librarians has grown steadily over the past five years (Keller).

Librarianship is a service-oriented profession. Although librarians work with ideas, librarians also work to link people with the ideas in which they are interested. Libraries and librarians facilitate people's access to the record of human knowledge. Libraries champion equity of access to knowledge resources and services. Libraries provide encouragement and nurturing of a reading public. With the advent of the Internet and subsequent innovative and creative endeavors using Web-based technology, a new medium has been added to augment the means libraries use to achieve these goals. Most recent innovations may be instrumental in transforming libraries into the

future (Griffiths, p. 46-47). As social creatures, humans still prefer a personal touch in the service they receive (Günther). Librarians serve a diverse reading public, and public service is still a value of the profession.

Proceeding from the assumption that libraries and librarians will exist in the future, we will need future librarians to replace those who retire from the profession. As we face ourselves in the mirror, it is undeniable that our profession is graying. The torch must be passed to a younger generation of librarians. Who these librarians will be and the number there will be are matters that are partly within our control right now. How we go about the process of recruiting should work for us, not against us.

In today's advertising and merchandising age, an impersonal ad campaign to entice prospective librarians might seem like the thing to do. Indeed it may be one avenue to attract attention to our profession. In April 1994, *Glamour* ran an article describing how librarians' use of cutting-edge technology has transformed the profession. For five months after the article was published, over 3000 people requested career information from the American Library Association (David and Sherdin, p. 121). The image of librarians may have finally turned the corner away from the drab stereotype we have been fighting for decades. According to the most recent issue of *Occupational Outlook Quarterly Online*, "Librarians are bringing the information revolution to the public... [and] the number of librarian jobs is projected to grow about 5 percent between 1998 and 2008" (Crosby, pp. 5, 9).

But this approach may not be sufficient without plenty of follow-up to encourage the initially curious to pursue the prerequisite education to enter the field. And marketing ourselves, for many of us, may not be particularly compatible with our personalities. If we enjoyed performing marketing and sales, wouldn't most of us have chosen the business world for our careers rather than libraries?

Librarianship is not a high-profile profession, but a one-on-one service profession, respectably but not highly paid. While the work is challenging and intellectually stimulating, few people outside the profession have any idea what librarians do. The nature of our daily jobs is widely misunderstood. "What we do intellectually isn't always easy to display graphically or describe in recruitment materials," notes Margaret Myers (p. 199). In fifteen years of recruiting college undergraduates to the profession, I have consistently asked the question, "Have you ever considered a career as a librarian?" Almost invariably, the answer is "No, I never thought of it before." I submit that if the word is not getting out that this is a rewarding career, we as librarians must be the ones to get the word out. How? If marketing and selling ourselves are not our forte, we can approach the endeavor differently.

First, let us pause to take a look at a personality profile of our profession. Personality types are the result of cultural and personal forces that interact over time and are measured by various interest inventory assessment instruments. A person learns to prefer some activities as opposed to others; later those activities become strong interests and competencies. We tend to search for environments where we can exercise our skills and abilities, express our attitudes and values, and accept suitable challenges and roles. We gravitate toward people similar to us,

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often giving credence to the old adage “birds of a feather flock together” (Scherdin (1), p. 13). The results of several interest inventory assessments on various groups of librarians in all types of libraries have shown some common personality characteristics. Librarians tend to be decisive, logical, productive, and reflective. Although comfortable with people, we tend to prefer personal one-on-one interactions, and tend to be reserved and hesitant in marketing our strong points to others (Scherdin (2), pp. 134, 146-149). “The field attracts thorough, systematic, consistent, hard-working persons who work well in an organized environment, as well as those who tend to see the ‘big picture,’ need an opportunity to think, plan and create” (Myers, p. 200).

Perhaps it is time to resurrect a recruiting technique that the American Library Association promoted from about 1986 through about 1991. The “Each One Reach One” concept was based on the “belief that we are our own best recruiters” (Moen and McCook, p. 860). This technique of recruiting allows each librarian to be him/herself, not a salesman. Studies of librarians and library school students have suggested that career choices are most often made because of the influence of significant role models (Moen and McCook, p. 860). This means that most people who become librarians do so because they have known a librarian who has made a positive impact on their lives—in fact, so positive an impact that it propelled them to consider the field for themselves. “Each One Reach One” suggests that every librarian can be a role model and thereby recruit those with whom we come in contact. We can all do this just by being ourselves. “Study after study has shown that the most effective recruiters to careers in librarianship have been working librarians. Their most fertile field? You guessed it, people who work in their libraries” (Berry, p. 1999).

To recruit, we need to go one step further. We need to introduce the concept of considering a career in library and information science to those people around us. Since people do not usually think of librarianship as a career choice on their own, we need to be proactive in starting the conversation.

Unless students already have clear career aspirations, they often respond with interest to a suggestion. And that opens the door to share with them. We can describe the many meaningful and enjoyable activities we have a chance to do in our careers. There are many good articles available that students may read that mention traditional and non-traditional jobs. The *Occupational Outlook Quarterly Online* article on Librarians (Crosby) is a good place to start.

The most important thing we can share with others is our own enthusiasm for our profession. In a fast-paced world with a lot of career burnout, library and information science offers many different choices of where to use our degrees and skills: with a little courage, we can delight in our choice over the span of an entire career. Besides traditional library settings in school, academic, public, and special libraries, there are new, technologically-challenging avenues, such as information architecture and database management. The high-tech aspect of today’s library and information science profession is often very attractive to young people. Other positive aspects we can share are intangible benefits such as cooperation and collegiality, intellectual stimulation, life-long learning opportunities, variety, eclectic colleagues, pleasant work environments, and job security (Sheehy). Looking for a role model, people may already have been watching you, and can see that you enjoy what you are doing. Your willingness to share

with them can make a difference in their lives as well as your own. Helping people realize their goals and aspirations can be one of the most gratifying accomplishments of your career (Studdard, p. 792). As those we mentor go on to become librarians, they become colleagues and often lifetime friends.

Who are the people we should reach? And when should we enter their lives? The most effective time to reach people is when they are interested and willing to listen. Undergraduate students, re-entry students, and support staff are all likely to be open to hearing about options for their future. Younger students can also be introduced to the idea.

Minority students and support staff are excellent choices of people with whom to share. “Diversity is a long-term endeavor, one of the more difficult challenges ever facing libraries” (Riggs, p. 26). Encouraging members of minority groups to enter the profession is part of the goal of making our libraries more multiculturally responsive. “The importance of recruitment efforts related to diversity is based on the need to ensure that a broad range of perspectives is represented in library decision making,” that

library staff are representative of and sensitized to the needs the community served, and that equitable service is provided to all (Winston, p. 245). U.S. Census Bureau projections indicate that our population is increasingly more multicultural; the population that our libraries serve is more diverse. “This is further translated into a need for more minority library professionals who can identify with people in the minority communities” (Alire, pp. 126, 128-129).

We must not forget that librarians have a long and caring history in attempting to serve culturally diverse populations. While it is only human nature that each new generation thinks that we must begin anew, it is also important to recognize service styles that have been tried and strategies that have been implemented to address multicultural concerns ... What we must do is learn and understand the information environments of diverse people ... Meeting the needs of diverse populations requires an ability to be quiet, be still and be sensitive in order to create in ourselves a realistic sense of different sets of perceptions (de la Peña McCook, pp. 21-22).

Often non-traditional library users are more comfortable with someone of their own culture who can acquaint them with libraries. Librarians who are themselves of an under-represented minority group are important as visible role models to the library’s constituency. Minority colleagues can help other colleagues become more comfortable and knowledgeable about their cultures. Reaching out to minority support staff and minority students to help them realize that library science may be a

***By each of us
comfortably reaching
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effectively.***

viable career path is a starting point to attract minority colleagues into the profession. Minority colleagues can be most effective as necessary role models for minorities (Alire, p. 133). It is important that when a member of an under-represented minority group looks at a librarian, the individual can identify with the librarian, and can easily see that what the librarian has accomplished is realistic for him or her to accomplish too.

Support staff are a rich resource for recruitment, particularly as libraries hire more culturally diverse staff. Support staff are comfortable working in the library environment, and they often are eager to learn more and to take on new responsibilities. Although some staff are not able to attend a library school, many others are. Many MLS graduates are people who are changing careers, returning to graduate school after a hiatus from school, or support staff who have worked in libraries and who wish to become degreed librarians. There are more Internet-based distance education programs in library and information schools that make the attainment of an MLS possible for these prospective librarians, even in remote geographic locations. But many of our support staff may not be aware of these opportunities until we tell them.

Re-entry students sometimes return to college with clear career goals. Some students return to get a degree that will help them increase their earnings in their chosen careers. Still others return because they have a lifelong dream of getting a college degree, but do not have clear career goals. Many of these students find libraries that are technologically more advanced than those they were accustomed to in the past, and they are very glad for a librarian's help to sort it all out. A recruiting librarian can strike up a conversation with these students and get to know them over a period of time. Not asking what they plan to do with their degrees is missing an opportunity to share library and information science as a potential career they might consider.

A good time to begin talking to students about their future plans can be during their junior or even sophomore years. Introducing students to the idea of being a librarian is easiest with student employees in the library. These students already observe and interact with librarians to some degree. If a librarian shows genuine concern about them personally and gets to know them, the librarian can become a role model. A mentoring relationship may develop in which the librarian can help the student ask him/herself the right questions about selecting a graduate school and get information from the American Library Association and other professional organizations. It is important to keep in mind that the student must make the decisions for his/her own future; the librarian provides guidance in the decision-making process.

Younger students can also be introduced to the idea of becoming librarians. Some active recruiters in the profession think that the earlier we start, the better. Maybe so, but there must be a lot of reinforcing of these ideas if recruitment is to be fruitful. Young people change their minds many times about what they want to be as they grow up.

They still have many years of education ahead of them before they qualify to enter a graduate school to study library and information science. On a recent visit to Louisiana where there is an active teenage library association, former ALA President Ann Symons wondered,

[W]ho in this group of teenagers would actually become a librarian. Has the experience of working in a school library and participating in LTLA [Louisiana Teenage Librarians Association] been a spark that will light a fire? What do we need to keep them interested? If we are going to recruit librarians in high school, how do we convince them that they must wait until they get a master's degree before they can be library and information science professionals? (Symons)

School and children's librarians can be valuable role models in the lives of the young people. But they may need to mentor the youngsters for a long time to be effective in influencing their eventual career choices.

Recruiting new librarians is everyone's job in the profession (Berry). By each of us comfortably reaching out to those around us, we can recruit effectively. We just need to be mindful that we have something worth sharing with others, a gratifying career that others can also experience. Then we need to be interested in the people around us, and in how their abilities and talents might fit within the many career options that library and information science has to offer.

Libraries, as they evolve in this ever-more technological age, will be around to facilitate access to information, teach critical discernment of information sources, and equalize access to knowledge for all people, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Librarians will be needed, even though their jobs may evolve into forms we can only guess. Who the librarians of tomorrow will be and whether there will be enough of them to carry on the mission of our profession is a question we can have a hand in answering by reaching out to those around us. Each one of us can reach at least one other person in the span of our career. We can do this in a personal manner that is respectful of our own personality preferences and demonstrates an interest in others. We are our own best recruiters.

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The Mid-Columbia Library's New Keewaydin Park Branch/Neva LeBlond Bequette Service Center

text by **Brian Soneda**

photographs by **Matthew Peery**

On June 1, 2000, Mid-Columbia Library opened a new neighborhood branch. This branch is the Keewaydin Park Branch/Neva LeBlond Bequette Service Center. The building was the remodeled and renovated former Kennewick Branch.

In September, 1997, Kennewick voters passed a \$5.9 million bond. Most of the bond money went to the new Kennewick Branch, which opened in May 1999 (see the December 1999 issue of *Alki* for coverage of that event). The remainder of the bond money went to the remodel project. Bond money funded the conversion of half the building into a modern branch library, and the library district funded conversion of the other half into the district's new service center. Buffalo Design, the architectural firm responsible for the new Kennewick Branch, also oversaw the remodel project. The branch is named after the neighborhood park across the street, while the service center is named after the founding director of the then Mid-Columbia Regional Library.

On January 1, 2001, the Prosser Public Library became the Prosser Branch of the Mid-Columbia Library. This branch will eventually replace MCL's small West Benton Branch. MCL welcomes Prosser, its newest branch. You don't stay "New Kid on the Block" for long in MCL Land. 📖



A leaf impression in the walkway concrete.



Keewaydin Park Branch checkout area.



Keewaydin Park Branch entrance walkway, door area, and sign.



Keewaydin Park Branch at night.

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At the iSchool: A Group Interview of University of Washington iSchool Faculty

by Laura McCarty

[Editor's note: This interview accompanies "The UW iSchool: Changes in Library Education," Alki, Dec. 2000. More about the KALIPER study is available in that article.]

Laura McCarty for Alki: The KALIPER project (Pettigrew and Durrance) examined curricular change at library and information sciences schools nationwide, and identified these changes in terms of six trends: broadening of curricula, dominance of the user-centered perspective, infusion of information technology into the curriculum, rethinking of professional specializations, adapting of instructional formats, and expansion of the variety of degrees offered. Do the iSchool's programs reflect these trends, at least to some extent? How are professional specializations being rethought at the iSchool, if indeed they are?

Mike Eisenberg (Director): We are very aware of the KALIPER Project. In fact, one of our faculty, Karen Pettigrew, was a major contributor to that study; and Stuart Sutton also participated.

Karen Pettigrew (Assistant Professor): Programs at the iSchool reflect all these trends to a great extent. For example, the iSchool has done the following:

- totally revised its MLIS curriculum and implemented such innovative new core courses as information behavior;
- expanded its course offerings in information technology (in addition to its new computer lab, the iSchool created UW's first "Technology Exploration Lab" where students receive unique experiences in creating and learning about new technologies);
- started a new undergraduate degree in informatics and a Ph.D. program in information science, with a second master's program in information management planned for 2001; and
- is in the process of designing a MLIS distance education program that will be offered using the Internet to a great extent.

Professional specializations are being rethought in several ways. In addition to preparing students for professional roles as librarians in traditional settings and in such specializations as law librarianship and school media, students are also learning about opportunities in non-traditional settings, particularly in high-tech fields where their

MLIS knowledge and skills are greatly needed and easily transferred. New courses at the MLIS level particularly reflect this broadening of perspective. To facilitate these efforts, iSchool faculty are collaborating with new partners in the private sector and creating new opportunities for student field work and employment upon graduation.

Mike Eisenberg: The trends identified by KALIPER are indicative of the positive change, growth, and expansion of leading schools in our field. We are fortunate to be included among the schools who have made progress in all these areas.

Alki: Is the iSchool actively recruiting students into the MLIS program? If so, what is the main goal of the recruiting effort? Do you plan to hold meetings at off-campus or out-of-town locations?

Lynnea Erickson (Student Services Administrator): We are currently engaged in several recruiting activities, and are seeking bright, dynamic, dedicated people from all walks of life. We are offering six formal MLIS Information Sessions here on campus, and we may try to schedule at least one off-campus information session.

We are particularly interested in cultivating diversity and in recruiting people from groups that are generally under-represented in the library and other information professions. For example, this year we are fortunate to have two students who received scholarships from the ALA Spectrum Initiative program. In addition, we are continually updating our Financial Aid Resources Web page in order to provide informational assistance regarding scholarships and other forms of financial aid.

Mike Eisenberg: I recruit in all my speeches and presentations, and encourage persons from under-represented groups to apply to the School. In terms of areas of interest, we also highlight the shortage of professionals working in children's and youth services. We are very interested in recruiting in the Pacific Northwest. As the only accredited school located in the region, we recognize and accept our unique responsibilities in the region. In the past 18 months, I have spoken across the state as well as in Idaho, Alaska, Montana, and Oregon. Our distance program (slated for Autumn 2002) will focus on recruiting students from the region.

Alki: Can you talk about the process that was used to revise the master's degree curriculum? Who was involved? What further changes or revisions do you expect to see in the curriculum during the coming year?

Joe Janes (Assistant Professor): A student-faculty task force met for several months, reviewed prior curricular work at the school, and talked with faculty, students, alumni, and interested others. An extended discussion period around a draft revision document followed, which included all those constituencies. The faculty approved the broad outlines; then new course descriptions were developed and approved. We anticipate only minor changes in the coming year or so,

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primarily in elective courses.

Alki: There appear to be more courses in the core curriculum for the MLIS, and the sequencing of these core courses seems to be more controlled than previously. Is this true? Can you elaborate on the rationale for making these particular changes?

Joe Janes: Yes to both questions. The core now accounts for slightly more of students' programs than did the old core and concentration requirements; all other courses are free electives. The core curriculum is roughly divided in halves, the first being highly sequenced to provide context, flow, and focus to the courses, and allowing courses to build on each other in order. The second half of the core can be taken in any order at students' convenience.

Mike Eisenberg: From my very first interview, I heard numerous concerns about the existing curriculum, including lack of focus and cohesion, redundancy in courses, and the need for a wide range of offerings. The curriculum revisions resulted in a more controlled and sequenced core, to ensure that every University of Washington MLIS graduate has a solid, high-quality, and consistent base. For example, we recognized the importance of the teaching role in all library and information settings today. We are therefore the first library and information program to have a required course in instruction and training. At the same time, we sought to give students flexibility and options. With almost half of their courses as electives, students are able to focus and specialize.

Stuart Sutton (Associate Professor): There are more (and different) courses in the new MLIS core. However, with the exception of LIS 500, "Information Lifecycle," which must be the first course in the student's program of study, the remaining core courses are not controlled in terms of sequence.

We are now in the process of reexamining the elective curriculum. It is highly likely that we may impose more prerequisites. For me, there are two aspects to the rationale for this action: (1) a more structured sequencing from core to the elective curriculum makes it possible for the faculty to know what students entering any given class already know; and (2) more consistent sequencing and a stronger prerequisite structure make it possible to look at given areas of inquiry in greater depth.

Alki: Are you receiving feedback from students about the new curriculum? Were any notable questions asked at the MLIS program information meeting held on October 26, 2000?

Lynnea Erickson: The comments I have heard so far indicate that students find the new curriculum intensive and demanding, but also exciting and inspiring.

On October 26, in addition to the usual application-related questions, people were curious about the job market, job titles and activities, etc. There seem to be equal numbers of individuals interested in more "traditional" librarian careers and interested in the burgeoning "newer" professions. At the last information session, there was a woman who was retired who was very energetic, vivacious, curious, and who said she was "looking for something to do for the rest of my life." It turned out that this comment was quite inspirational to others in the audience. There was a sense of excitement at these sessions.

Alki: When the new MLIS curriculum was being defined, how was input solicited from practitioners in Washington regarding desired features of the new curriculum?

Joe Janes: The task force met with a group from the SLIS Alumni Association and sought their comments and feedback. In addition, the School's Visiting Committee was briefed at each of their meetings; and their comments and suggestions were also incorporated in the work.

Alki: The gulf that separates theory from practice is a very real obstacle that MLIS students must surmount as they develop into competent professionals. How can faculty help students resolve this important personal dilemma?

Joe Janes: By being sure they get both, in appropriate ways and places, and making sure they understand that neither alone is or ever will be sufficient to serve them in their future careers. Also by reinforcing the importance of continuing education and lifelong learning, so students know they never really stop being students.

Allison Carlyle (Assistant Professor): One of my goals for teaching is to bridge the practice-theory gap. I believe that a bridge between the two is critical, so that knowledge gained from practice informs and challenges theory, and knowledge gained from theory shapes practice. Faculty can help students by teaching in this bridge format; in other words, explanations of theory are accompanied by discussions or exercises that illustrate practice. Especially important are exercises that show weaknesses in theory, so that students are aware that theory in LIS is still developing and changing.

Mike Eisenberg: I'm not sure that I agree that there is that much of an obstacle; it's more of a positive challenge. We *want* both theory and practice in a professional education. At the iSchool, there are concerted efforts to link theory and practice. Students also have numerous opportunities to make connections through an expanded directed field work program, interaction with alumni and people in the field through Project Network and other mentoring efforts, and through the Master's Portfolio, which replaces the Master's Exam. Portfolios are verification that students are able to relate theory to practice. Each portfolio must include significant experiences in teaching or training, leadership, and service; creation of a professional level document or presentation; and participation in the design and development of a significant project or product involving information technologies.


Stuart Sutton: The gulf that you identify has always been there. However, the body of theory grows steadily as we get deeper into an age of networked information systems and more heterogeneous knowledge representations schemes. I've always asserted that practice uninformed by theory is as useless in the long run as theory uninformed by practice. That said, I must add that there is usually only *one* place where a grounding in theory that can grow as the professional grows

occurs, and that is while doing professional study. There are *two* places where bridging the “gulf” between theory and professional practice occurs: during professional study and when the new professional enters practice. No matter what we do in the academy, that entry into the profession is as an apprentice.

Thus, responsibility for bridging the “gulf” rests equally with the academy and with the profession in which the apprenticeship is served. The faculty can help bridge the “gulf” by trying at every turn to operationalize theory in terms of the problems of practice. And I think the School can do more to

educate the profession regarding *its* responsibility with regard to bridging the “gulf.” I am looking forward to the day when some advertisements for professional positions in libraries don’t begin with “must have 3-5 years’ experience” and say instead “position designed to assist new professional in transitioning from formal education to practice.” So I guess I have thrown the question back to you and the profession.

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convergence

by Dolly Richendrfer, Spokane Public Library

Converging ideas, technologies, disciplines, and personalities capture the spirit, design, and intent of the Washington Library Association's 2001 Annual Conference in Spokane, April 4-7. Join your colleagues from across the state for an exciting **convergence** of people, thoughts, and ideas at the WestCoast Grand Hotel at the Park, located adjacent to the city's beautiful Riverfront Park and Spokane River.

On Wednesday, attend one of the preconference programs on topics ranging from teens and access to information, to the 2000 Census. Whether you are a new or long-time member, you will enjoy the Wednesday evening Meet and Greet New Member Reception, a perfect opportunity to relax and unwind before the Mystery Evening, sponsored by the Gale Group, featuring a thrill-filled whodunit and a tempting array of desserts, as well as champagne and non-alcoholic beverages.

Start Thursday with breakfast and a thought-provoking keynote address by *Library Journal* Editor-in-Chief John Berry III. Then, choose from a packed slate of programs, including sessions on stress management and the emergence of e-books as a player in the technology arena. Attend the business luncheon, followed by another great lineup of programs on everything from digital reference, to marketing your library, to trends in acquisitions. Next, attend the no-conflict interest group business meeting of your choice. The Thursday banquet features renowned poet and author Marge Piercy, who will read and comment on her work and entertain questions from the audience. A book signing follows.

On Friday, breakfast with noted author Susan Fletcher at a gathering of CAYAS (Children's and Young Adult Services Interest Group), or join American Library Association President Nancy Kranich and Pacific Northwest Library Association President Susannah Price for a lively update of regional and national developments. Then enjoy programs on finding legal information on the Web, or bringing order to CAYAS, or the debate about elected versus appointed trustees. Honor friends and colleagues at the Awards Luncheon, followed by the Intellectual Freedom Statement ratification. Friday afternoon showcases such notables as Philip Bereano on open information and privacy, and Michael Eisenberg on Friends of Libraries. Friday evening, dine on a sumptuous repast and listen to PBS's *The NewsHour* Senior Correspondent Ray Suarez, as he brings his unique perspective to a commentary on the national scene. Wish outgoing

President Cindy Cunningham a fond farewell at the President's Reception, which features Washington wines and scrumptious nibbles.

To cap off an information-packed three days, attend the Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association Saturday Breakfast and program on the history and importance of Friends' groups. Meet regional activists, and learn more about the HistoryLinks.org project.

Be sure to visit the exhibit area to meet vendors and learn about new products and services. Enjoy coffee and snack breaks provided by conference sponsors, and don't miss the pre-banquet Exhibitor Reception on Thursday in the exhibit area.

We hope you will all join us for a memorable and enriching conference!



Interest Groups Profile

by Cheryl McCulloch, Kitsap Regional Library

Are you an active WLA Interest Group member? When did you last attend the annual meeting of an Interest Group?

Interest Groups (IGs) are made up of library promoters who believe IGs are important and who are willing to give their time to support this belief. IGs are the lifeblood of WLA. Without IGs to locate speakers and programs, WLA conferences would be much less interesting. Conference Program Chairs would spend much more time searching for diverse and interesting programs.

Let me present some of the people involved in IG leadership:

Jacquelyn Keith, Chair of CAYAS (Children's and Young Adult Services)

Jacquelyn is Children's Service/Family Literacy Coordinator for the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (WA). She coordinates all activities related to children's service (birth to sixth grade) and any and all issues related to family literacy. Jacquelyn has worked in libraries since 1979—at Park County Library System (Cody, WY), Nampa Public Library (ID), and at FVRL since 1997.

CAYAS is dedicated to providing services for librarians serving children and young adults, ensuring and assisting with educating individuals interested in work in youth services, and providing workshops and conference programs that will inform all WLA members of the work of CAYAS.

Jacquelyn believes IGs are important vehicles for encouraging WLA members to become involved in the Association, for helping inform members of issues and concerns within a particular IG, for encouraging members to share information, and as a forum for discussing concerns and problems. IG membership is also a great way to get to know fellow librarians across the state. IG members should network with each other and with other WLA members about issues and concerns relating to libraries and increasing membership to provide leaders in future years.

Gail Goodrick, Co-Chair with Kati Irons of CDIG (Collection Development Interest Group)

Gail is Non-Fiction Collection Manager for Kitsap Regional

Library, Bremerton, WA. She selects non-fiction materials, plus works as a reference librarian. Gail has been in the library profession for 21 years.

CDIG has been inactive for some time. Gail and Kati hope to stimulate renewed interest and new members. An IG provides a great opportunity to share knowledge and experience with others working in a particular area of librarianship. Gail hopes that CDIG will have lots of new members from all parts of the state.

Chris Smith, Chair of LIT (Literacy Interest Group)

Chris has been with the King County Library System for over ten years—five as a professional librarian—and is currently Literacy and ESL Specialist for KCLS. His duties include selecting Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESL materials for the 41 community libraries, chairing an internal committee on literacy and ESL collections and programs, and supervising three Literacy AmeriCorps members who coordinate over 30 weekly ESL classes in the libraries.

Chris feels that there is a lot of useful information and experience stored in the brains of library staff across the state. So much of it is never shared because we have less time to meet each other face to face and simply ask questions or compare notes. IGs are a great way to encourage that kind of interaction.

Serving ever-increasing numbers of language groups is a concern for LIT members. Expectations that all public agencies will do whatever they can to accommodate individuals with minimal English skills are rising. Family literacy for both native and non-native speakers continues to be an important and complex issue. Many people know there are literacy and/or ESL issues in their communities, but don't know how to start addressing them: Chris sees the LIT IG as a starting place for more collaboration between libraries on specific literacy issues. The LIT Interest Group needs to grow and include library staff from all areas of the state. IGs, including LIT, should be utilizing the potential of electronic communication to keep IG members connected and energized between annual meetings, Chris believes.

Sally Nash, Chair of MAST (Managers, Administrators, Supervisors and Trainers Interest Group)

Sally has worked in the library profession since 1986, and is currently Community Librarian III, Manager of the Tumwater Timberland Library.

Sally believes IGs provide focus. All IGs should provide training and discussion of issues pertinent to that group. Sally hopes for increased membership and activity for MAST.

David Menard, Chair of RIG (Reference Interest Group)

David comments: "This is my second year as Chair of the Reference IG; last year I had the pleasure of working with Sarah Hunt as Co-Chair. I am Branch Manager of the Ferndale Library, Whatcom County Library System. I'm also the newly-assigned (and partially-trained!) WCLS Webmaster. In 1989, I started in libraries, gluing pockets into books. Apparently the glue went to my head, because I've worked in libraries ever since. When I was hired by WCLS two years ago, I was working at Whatcom Community College Library, Western Washington University's Wilson Library, AND Bellingham Public Library.

"WLA has a great pool of talent and advice to draw from, and last year's WLA Conference in Tacoma was a highlight for me. Getting a chance to meet the Firesign Theatre was inspiring—those guys helped me survive college!

"IGs are not only a large part of conference planning, they're a great way to hear about what's bubbling under the surface. Many issues that eventually take center stage are first talked about in IGs, and they're also a good place to get your feet wet

in the WLA organization. Great colleagues, great sharing ... and fairly decent food—what more could you want?"

Jonathan Betz-Zall, Chair of SRRT (Social Responsibilities Round Table)

Jonathan, 24 years in the library profession, is Branch Librarian for City University (Everett, WA), and supports students in the M.i.T. (Master's in Teaching) program. Jonathan answers reference questions, provides research advice and assistance, selects materials, and collaborates with faculty in instruction. In his spare time, he serves as part-time adjunct instructor in the Library Technician Program at Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA.

The social responsibilities of libraries concern such topics as censorship, pornography, sexual (and other) harassment, racism, inequality, and powerlessness in the face of corruption. These are all important issues that SRRT is grappling with. Jonathan says that SRRT needs more people willing to take active roles, set directions, and adopt activities. SRRT's current plans are to use resources provided by ALA to promote "sustainability in libraries."

Jonathan comments: "Personally, I'm more active in these areas [of social responsibility] outside the profession. Right now I'm going for a Master's degree in Environment and Community at Antioch University. I hope eventually to work for community organizations promoting environmental justice."

Lisa Adams, Chair of WALE (Washington Association of Library Employees)

Lisa has worked in libraries for 23 years. She is currently Community Services Coordinator for the Richland Public Library; her duties include planning programs; publicizing library activities; creating displays, bookmarks, flyers, brochures, posters, etc.; and working in circulation and reference. Lisa feels that IGs are important because they give all library employees an opportunity to get involved in a group that is targeted to their specific job or interest.

Some of the main issues of WALE include support staff working with rather than for professional librarians to create a better library atmosphere for their patrons; education and training opportunities for support staff; and uniform job titles and duties at all libraries.

Lisa comments: "I feel WALE should be working to educate members about what WLA and other agencies have to offer libraries and library employees, as well as addressing whatever issues are of interest to WALE members. IGs in the future should be more culturally diverse, with a wide mix of professionals and support staff working together to create a broad spectrum of ideas."

Other IGs include GRASSROOTS! (dedicated to educating public policymakers on library issues), IFIG (Intellectual Freedom), ILL (Interlibrary Loans), and TSIG (Technical Services). And of course there is WLFTA, Washington Library Friends and Trustees Association!



Who's On First?

Censoring the Internet: A Fundamental Test of Values



Tom Reynolds

by Tom Reynolds

This is the first time since the development of the local, free public library in the 19th century that the federal government has sought to require censorship in every single town and hamlet in America ("ACLU Vows Court Challenge ...").

Library Users' First Amendment Freedoms Will Again Be Tested in Court

It was inevitable. Although many thought that it would not happen. Even though the White House, the American Library Association, and, in the end, even some conservative groups lobbied against it. Although the crisis involving the presidential election led many to dream that it would be put off for another year, another Congress, and another President. Even though by its passage, Congress disregarded the recommendations of its own advisory commission on the issue. In the end, it was inevitable.

You see, the censors had done their grassroots homework. Beginning with the Communications Decency Act in 1996 (declared unconstitutional in 1997), they have organized and lobbied for a national mandate to censor the Internet—a mandate that would censor the free speech rights of both children and adults. Moreover, they had continued to work for such a mandate even when legislative proposal after legislative proposal was either defeated in Congress or declared unconstitutional in the courts.

The movement was based on fear, demonizing, half-truths, and in some cases outright lies—the real family values to which the censors subscribe—and it was very effective. National media spokespersons, like talk show host Dr. Laura and columnist Cal Thomas, kept the vitriol flowing through the media, while legislators like Senator John McCain and groups like Family Friendly Libraries, made Internet censorship a legislative litmus test for anyone in Congress who wanted to retain a pro-family label. Presidential candidate George W. Bush added his approval. And they didn't let the growing number of questions give them even a second thought as they pushed for legislation.

So with the presidential election finally settled, Congress returned to work, and on December 15, 2000, passed the Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Bill (HR 4577). Neatly tucked into

this appropriation measure were two riders restricting online access: the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (NCIPA). Given the choice of vetoing the entire appropriations bill or signing it, President Clinton signed the measure on December 21.

The CIPA requires that libraries and public schools, as a condition for receiving either Universal Service Discounts or funds available under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) or Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, adopt and enforce acceptable-use policies accompanied by a "technology protection measure" (i.e. blocking software). Such software would be required to block access to "visual depictions" that are either "obscene" or "child pornography" for both children and adults; and when a minor is using a computer, the software would need to block material deemed "harmful to minors" ("Congress Passes Filtering Mandates").

CIPA would require certification of libraries seeking federal funding to purchase computers needed to access the Internet, or to pay for direct costs associated with providing Internet access.

The Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act requires libraries and public schools, as conditions of Universal Service Discounts, to adopt and implement Internet safety policies that restrict minors' access to inappropriate material on the Internet, and to address a number of other minor safety and security measures. ALA had tacitly supported acceptable-use legislation as a counter proposal to mandatory filtering. But the final wording of the NCIPA was some distance from the original ALA proposals.

More than 100 years of local control of libraries and the strong tradition of allowing adults to decide for themselves what they want to read is being casually set aside ("ACLU Vows Court Challenge ...").

Even before HR 4577 was signed into law, the American Civil Liberties Union announced that it would challenge those portions of the legislation that mandated blocking software. One month later, after what was described as an "intense discussion" at its Midwinter Meeting, ALA's executive board voted to initiate legal action challenging the CIPA ("American Library Association Votes ..."). ALA's legal action was based on an understanding that the CIPA is an unconstitutional infringement on the First Amendment freedoms of library users.

ALA's reaction to the CIPA was just as inevitable as the passage of the legislation itself. It was inevitable because, if enforced, the CIPA will cripple libraries' ability to make electronic information available both to adults and minors. But it was also inevitable because after winning a great victory (*ACLU vs. Reno*) and helping set a new standard for free expression on the electronic highway, ALA has become a visible champion of the cause of free speech rights for users of the Internet, at least for library users.

Tom Reynolds is Adult/Teen Librarian, Edmonds Library, Sno-Isle Regional Library System.

No filtering software successfully differentiates constitutionally protected speech from illegal speech on the Internet. Even the federal commission appointed to study child safety on the Internet concluded filters are not effective in blocking all content that some may find objectionable, but they do block useful and constitutionally protected information (American Library Association Votes ...”).

Congress and the COPA Report: Don't Let the Facts Get in the Way

To underscore the political momentum the filtering mandate had attained, Congress casually rejected the report of its own commission, set up in October 1998 to make recommendations on this very issue: “The Commission concludes that no single technology or method will effectively protect children from harmful material online” (COPA Commission).

The 18-member Commission on Online Child Protection, or COPA, was established to study methods to reduce juvenile access to sexually explicit material deemed harmful to minors. Proponents of blocking software hoped the Commission would endorse the use of filters. But the Commission insisted on hearing all sides of the question; and in October 2000, just as congressional efforts to push through a filter mandate hit their peak, COPA issued its report. It proved such a disappointment to its sponsors that Congress simply disregarded it.

For the record, COPA recommended a mixture of approaches including public education, promotion of acceptable-use policies, tough enforcement of existing laws, and industry action to identify and label objectionable sites. At the center of the Commission's proposals were voluntary action by the online industry to implement a best-practices approach to protecting minors online and a major public awareness campaign on the best ways to promote minors' online safety. Reasonable, but way too tame for those determined to keep online smut out of the hands of minors—no matter what the cost.

Filters, A Blunt Tool

In fact, it is the information price to be paid by the blanket use of blocking software that has been consistently sidestepped by proponents.

How effective are filters in protecting children? ALA President Nancy Kranich asks this telling question in “Assessing Internet Access,” an article in *Media Studies Journal* (Kranich). Her answer shouldn't surprise anyone familiar with the growing body of evidence about the effectiveness of blocking software. She concluded that filters “might do more harm than good. They sweep too broadly, blocking only some sites featuring indecent materials while restricting access to legal, useful resources” (Kranich, p. 43).

The evidence for this assertion seemed to be everywhere during 2000. Story after story revealed how much information was lost when censorware was applied. Filters block up to 20% (approximately 600 million sites) of the benign Websites (Kranich). But if these sites are not pornographic, many do have something in common. A large number are political.

When it was revealed that a well-known search engine blocked the national Democratic Party's Website or that the site of congressional filtering proponent House Majority leader Dick Arney was blocked by some software, many observers chuckled. But in a series of reports during the fall, the online anti-filter group Peacefire revealed that blocking software with settings typically used in library and school environments regularly blocked politicians' and human rights Websites, including such sites as Amnesty International and *Peace Magazine*. The

experience of having their Website blocked was one reason certain conservative groups (for example, Free Congress Foundation and some state chapters of the American Family Association) belatedly joined the effort to defeat the filtering riders.

For the real story on the breath and variety of non-pornographic sites blocked by various blocking software, check out Peacefire's Website (www.peacefire.org)

Battle Over First Amendment Values Enters New Stage

With the election of George W. Bush, Republican partisans sounded the theme that years of divisiveness in Washington D.C. were over. These activists conveniently ignore the fact that it was primarily conservatives that have fostered the social-issues culture wars in the 1990s and that have increasingly targeted groups like ALA that take a strong First Amendment stand in protecting speech and expression.

Don't be fooled! These groups will now have more influence than ever, and civil libertarians (and I include a majority of librarians in this group) must be prepared to fight even harder over the next four years if we are to effectively protect the rights of library users.

So what should be done? One thing we shouldn't do is shrink from or question the rightness of our cause. This fight is inevitable if we are to maintain free, open libraries. Another thing not to do is panic.

ALA has a Web page providing libraries with information on the Association's activity regarding the CIPA (www.ala.org/cipa/). At the beginning of this site, ALA gives libraries and librarians concerned about the CIPA some very sound advice. Here are some of ALA's suggestions, amended to reflect this commentator's view of the situation.

- (1) Libraries should not rush to make changes in their current policies and procedures regarding Internet access. Many have fixed anxiously upon the April 20, 2001 deadline for implementation of the CIPA. However, with a First Amendment lawsuit now filed, it is likely that the filtering riders passed as part of HR 4577 will be enjoined (implementation halted) until at least a federal district court can rule on the case. If that initial decision goes against the filtering mandates, implementation of the statutes will be effectively halted until all appeals are exhausted. The FCC, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Department of Education must take comments and issue rules on implementation of the CIPA and NCIPA. Sections of these two filtering riders, including those dealing with library certification and the definitions of obscenity and material “inappropriate” for minors, require either administrative or judicial definition.
- (2) At the same time, local libraries should begin the process of sharing with library users, legislators, and the local media about the negative impact the CIPA and NCIPA will have on library service, either because of decreased

- library funding or because of a reduction in information available due to mandated filtering.
- (3) Local library boards and state library associations should pass resolutions similar to ALA's Resolution on Opposition to Federally Mandated Filtering. Whether or not your library system chooses to use filters, I believe we should all oppose what amounts to federally mandated censorship. ***This is the truly conservative position on filtering.*** Ironically many who call themselves conservatives and regularly oppose federal mandates on a variety of other issues support this one-size-fits-all federal filtering mandate. I believe they are simply wrong on this issue, wrong for libraries, wrong for communities, and wrong for children and adult library users.
 - (4) Libraries should become familiar with ALA's updated "Libraries and the Internet Toolkit" (www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/internettoolkit.html). It is great for helping libraries manage and communicate about the Internet.
 - (5) Become familiar with ALA's CIPA Web page; and send your questions, concerns, and stories about how you are approaching the CIPA to ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom.

WLA Gets a Second Chance: Revised IF Statement to Be Debated

At last year's WLA Annual Conference, the membership rejected the draft of a revised

Intellectual Freedom Statement that would have replaced the Association's current Intellectual Freedom Statement and the Freedom to Read Statement (see "Who's on First?," *Alki*, July 2000). The rejected draft was a vague values statement; and among others, I spoke against its adoption. As a result, I found myself on a second task force appointed to redraft the statement.

The work of that task force is a story unto itself. But our product, a new draft IF Statement for the Association, appears in this issue of *Alki*, along with comments by two TF members. The draft is also posted on WLA's egroup listserv. I would encourage all members to review this statement and comment via the listserv.

The new draft statement is a more traditional and, I believe, a much stronger statement of intellectual freedom principles than the one rejected last year. I will share my thoughts on this document with WLA members via the listserv before the Spokane conference.

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Notable Fiction (Continued from page 31)

almost undisciplined first novel about three families in England, coping with the clash of cultures and the difficulty of maintaining one's cultural identity in a sea of strangers. Smith's inventive use of language and her seeming ability to take a subject and then riff on it (mostly) entertainingly for pages on end recalls Salman Rushdie's marvelous linguistic abilities (shown to perfection in his *The Moor's Last Sigh*).

The main characters in Joy Williams' *The Quick and the Dead* are three teenage girls, an angry ghost, an eight year old girl, residents of a nursing home, and a former big game hunter. How all of these characters interact in the desert and cities of Arizona provides an ample canvas for Williams' considerable skills in manipulating language in new and colorful ways.

So what are you reading this column for—go check these books out! 

INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Alki: The Washington Library Association Journal is published three times per year (March, July, and December). Each issue is centered on a theme relevant to Washington libraries. Unsolicited contributions are welcome and encouraged, but will be published based on the needs of specific issues. All submissions may be edited. The Editor and the *Alki* Committee reserve the right to make the final decision on any submitted material.

Deadlines for submissions are January 15 for the March issue, May 15 for the July issue, and October 15 for the December issue.

Format: Submissions should be in electronic form, if possible. The preferred formats are Word for Windows or ASCII text transmitted as an e-mail message or attachment (in rtf format), or submitted on a PC-formatted 3.5-inch disk. Hard copy will be accepted if the author does not have other options. Photos should be black-and-white. The Editor should be contacted before submitting artwork. Photographic prints and artwork will be returned, if requested. Otherwise, they will not be returned.

Articles typically range in length from 1,000-5,000 words and need not conform to the issue's theme, although theme-related articles are more likely to be published in the corresponding issue. Unsolicited articles unrelated to the theme, if they are selected for publication, will be published on a space-available basis. Articles should be in-depth examinations of issues of importance to Washington libraries. **Alki** publishes news and announcements in a column format.

News of personnel changes, professional organizations, awards, grants, elections, facility moves or construction, and/or establishment of newsworthy services can be submitted, and may be edited and included on a space-available basis. Items that require a timely response should be submitted to **The WLA LINK**, instead. **Columns** appear regularly and cover specific areas of library service or operations. Columns typically are pre-assigned in advance, and may be written or administered by a designated person. Anyone interested in submitting material for a specific column should contact the Editor.

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I'd Rather Be Reading... Notable Fiction



Nancy Pearl

by Nancy Pearl

Even before I was appointed to the Notable Books Council of the American Library Association, I always found the list of winners a useful tool when I was searching for something good to read. I've now been on the Council for seven of the last ten years, so looking back over those lists is like recalling old, beloved friends (and a few enemies). I'm especially happy with the choices we made this January

2000 was a year that was very good for fiction and disappointing for non-fiction. I had to do a lot of scrambling to try to find good non-fiction to recommend on my radio program. I think the other members of the Council felt the same way, and it's reflected in the fact that we chose fourteen works of fiction, eight of non-fiction, and three books of poetry.

Although there will be a formal, annotated list in an upcoming issue of *Booklist*, what follows are my opinions about our fiction choices. I'll discuss the non-fiction in a later column.

Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin* won the Booker Prize this year. It's a novel that displays the author's great gift for storytelling. If her recent novels have seemed to be merely rewritten versions of her earlier novels *Lady Oracle* and *Cats-Eye*, her newest novel is wonderfully inventive. And feel free to skip the science fiction parts if you really must.

Frederick Busch has always seemed to me to be an under-appreciated and under-read writer. (I loved his novels *Girls* and *Harry and Catherine*.) *Don't Tell Anyone* is a fabulous collection of stories, told from a variety of viewpoints and displaying a deep understanding of the human condition.

Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* was not one of my particular favorites (I thought it was about 200 pages too long, for one thing). But this novel about two cousins who become involved in the start of the comics industry in the late 1940s and 1950s was highly thought of by the rest of the committee.

J.M. Coetzee is one of South Africa's two great writers (along with Nadine Gordimer). His novel *Disgrace* won last year's Booker Prize, and deservedly so. In bare, unadorned prose, Coetzee describes the fall and redemption of a college professor, that parallels the fall and possible redemption of South Africa.

To be honest, I admired Jim Crace's *Being Dead* more than I liked it. It opens on a deserted sand-duned beach in England, with a couple lying dead. Chapter by chapter, like an archaeological dig, Crace uncovers their lives, from the moment of their deaths by violence, back through their long and successful marriage, to their original meeting. In-between those chapters are descriptions of what is happening to their bodies as they lie decomposing. It is an amazing work, but not one that I imagine people will want to clutch to their bosoms, declaring that they absolutely love it!

Helen DeWitt's *The Last Samurai* is a wonderful first novel about a young boy—a child prodigy—and his search for his father. In trying to figure out who his father is (his mother

refuses to tell him), Ludo uses all the lessons he's learned from the obsessive viewing of Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* that he and his mother have done.

It's nice to have a Washington writer on the list, and Laura Kalpakian's story collection *The Delinquent Virgin* was a favorite of the Council members, who were all taken with her quirky characters, lively plots, and interesting settings.

Thomas King's *Truth and Bright Water*, a coming-of-age novel, is set on an Indian reservation on the border between Calgary, Alberta, and Montana. In addition to its other pluses, it has some of the best dog characters I've read about in a long time. The main dog is Soldier (who will long remain in a reader's memory), but there is also a group of dogs known as the Cousins who are pretty interesting in their own right.

When I first began reading Matthew Kneale's *English Passengers*, which was one of the finalists for this year's Booker Prize, I couldn't get into it; but when I went back to it a few months later, having prepared myself emotionally for the experience of reading a novel not only set in the 19th century but also written as though it were a 19th century novel, I absolutely loved it. This story of the clash of cultures when the British come to Tasmania is told in the voices of more than twenty different characters. It is filled with humor and sadness, and is very nearly a perfect first novel. All that, in addition to the fact that it should win an award for the best book jacket of the year.

If you've missed the Anne Tyler of the 1970s and 1980s, pick up Antonya Nelson's *Living to Tell*. It's the closest I've found to Tyler's wonderful novels about family relationships. Nelson's novel is about the Mabie family (insomniacs, all) of Wichita, Kansas, and one particular year when all three adult children move back into the family home.

There's no humor in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the story of a Sri Lankan woman who, after being educated as a forensic pathologist in England, returns home and becomes involved in the endlessly ongoing civil war there. Ondaatje's writing is absolutely wonderful: elliptical and poetic, all at the same time.

Tom Paine's *Scar Vegas* is another great story collection, with a diverse group of characters in a variety of situations that range from the absurd to the ordinary. (One story begins, "The general's panties were too tight.") This sort of collection bodes well for Paine's future as a writer.

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* is an exuberant and

Nancy Pearl directs the Washington Center for the Book at the Seattle Public Library.

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