Alki

Collaboration Issue

Inside this Issue

WASHINGTON
LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

Adaptation

by Jennifer Wiseman

Jennifer Wiseman

At the Chapter Leader's Forum at the ALA Conference in Chicago this summer, leaders from library associations across the nation gathered to learn about a number trends affecting associations. The trends discussed made it clear that, to remain relevant to our members and successfully carry out our mission, WLA needs to adapt.

Mary Byers, coauthor of Race for Relevance: Five Radical Changes for Associations, offered a dynamic presentation with a bold, no-nonsense look at the realities of today's marketplace—and what it will take for associations to prosper tomorrow. She spoke specifically to a number of changes she sees impacting associations of all types, including:

> **"If WLA can rethink which member market we can competitively serve, we may be able to concentrate our resources and avoid asking members to choose either/or."**

Decreased Availability of Time That Members Have to Dedicate to Association Activities
People are busier than ever. Dual income households have increased from 5 percent in 1950 to more than 80 percent today. Long work hours and long commutes reduce the time available for volunteering. We need to be mindful of the pressures on our members' time that affect both the time they can offer when asked to serve on a board or a committee, but also the time they can dedicate to accessing our resources and their benefits (i.e. reading our publication, attending our trainings).

Increased Value Expectations
Membership in a professional association is no longer considered part of being a professional. Increasingly, our members expect more for their dues dollar than ever before. They are asking, or demanding, to know what they get from their membership. When time and money are limited, members narrow their memberships to those organizations that they feel provide the best return on investment.

Specialization and Consolidation
Our member markets are dynamic and have undergone significant changes in the past decade. Some organizations have been forced to consolidate even as the need for specific, more relevant information increases. Should each of our organizations stand alone and justify our own existence, or can we partner to serve our member markets?

Increased Generational Differences
Not only are the expectations of our members changing, but so are the ways in which they connect with associations. How do we attract, serve and successfully engage everyone from the Baby Boomers to Generation X to the Millennials? Can we communicate with and treat all members the same way?

Increased Competition
The number of other professional associations has grown dramatically (e.g. WLMA, ACRL, CLAMS, etc.), as has competition from the for-profit sector and the internet. We are in competition for member devotion and dues dollars. If WLA can rethink which member market we can competitively serve, we may be able to concentrate our resources and avoid asking members to choose either/or.

Technology Explosion
We must be positioned to respond to existing and future technologies that support information sharing, service delivery, member engagement and networking. Investments in technology are critical for positioning us for the future and making us relevant to our members.

So what do we do about all this? While these changes make our job more challenging — some to a greater extent than others — a few things haven't changed. We still need to engage with members in meaningful and effective ways. We still need to provide real and tangible value. We still need to make a difference for members and create opportunities for members to make a difference. And, we still need to have an impact on the profession and society.

The only difference between where we are today and where we could be tomorrow lies in the questions we're willing to ask and answer on behalf of our organization. Asking tough questions can be an important catalyst for moving our organization forward. Change begins with a conversation. The WLA Board has already begun to discuss some of our organizational structures that may need to adapt, and I invite you to begin having similar conversations among your Interest Groups as well. Ask yourselves what's working well and what we can do more effectively. Together, we can tackle some fundamental challenges, identify opportunities for change, and create viable solutions that will enable us to meet the needs of our members.

Jennifer Wiseman is the project manager for public services at King County Library System and president of WLA.

From the Editor

Joyce Hansen

by Joyce Hansen

Before we dive in, I'd like to say how glad I am to be a part of the *Alki* and its mission to explore Washington libraries, librarians and librarianship. I come to this with many years of experience as a writer and editor, and I've worked as a reference, teen and children's librarian. I'm now a substitute librarian for Seattle Public Library, King County Library System, and Everett Public Library System.

I'm drawn to this job for a couple of reasons. The move into the digital realm--this instant transfer of information and feedback--gives the *Alki* increased access to a new world-wide audience, and I'm enthusiastic to be part of that. If the *Alki*, now in a powerful digital format, can be used to its greatest effect, readers will more easily direct their sights into a dynamic future. Also, while I enjoy being an editor and writer, I specifically looking forward to learning about and fully investigating all things library.

This edition brings stories of collaboration, and Steven Bailey (p. 5) makes a good case for the King County Library System's approach in joining with patrons-to-be. Kristie Kirkpatrick highlights the alliance between Whitman County Library and Community Colleges of Spokane (p. 13), and (in a guest I'd Rather Be Reading column, p. 30), Audrey Barbakoff suggests science fiction reads that would satisfy any pod person. Elaine Hall explains how San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) students and alumni cooked up a Learning 2.0 program (p. 10), and Linda Lambert is glad to let you know that it is possible for a plethora of staff from various library systems to pool resources and design innovative offerings--and quite enjoy themselves while doing it (13).

If you know of a stellar story/event/person we should cover, or would like to cover it yourself, email me at alkieditor@wla.org. Want to write a column? Pitch it to me. Ideas to make the Alki better? Pass it along. The theme for the next Alki is "Strange Things in Strange Places (experiences in unexpected places)." Submit your contributions for the March 2014 issue by January 15.

Finally, welcome to the two newest members of the *Alki* editorial committee: Steven Bailey and Brent Mills. Both have written stellar articles for this issue. Enjoy. 📖

Before becoming a librarian, Joyce Hansen worked in a number of positions. Some of these jobs include: newspaper reporter, investigator for the public defender's office, and maid (for three weeks) at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, where she grew up.
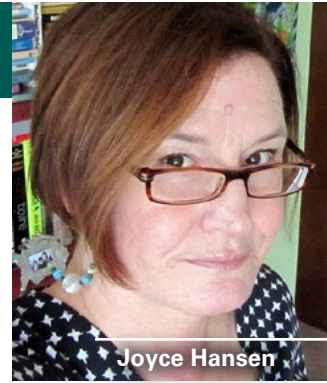
> **"If the Alki, now in a powerful digital format, can be used to its greatest effect, readers will more easily direct their sights into a dynamic future."**

Researching Your Library's Market for Collaborative Ends

by Steven Bailey

"Research is the basis of understanding of the various segments within reach of your library system. A library cannot serve all segments; it must choose which specific segments it considers a priority, its target market."[1]

As public librarians, we strive to design and implement innovative programs and services for our communities. Indeed, programming is one of our core offerings to the community, alongside collections and reference services. But too often the "perfect" program, full of creative and engaging ideas, falls flat due to poor attendance or ill-conceived outcomes. Often our first instinct when this happens is to consider better ways to market our innovative programs (flyers and posters, newspapers and social media, online calendars, word of mouth), thinking that if we could only let the right people know about all we have to offer, then surely they will alter their plans and carve out time in busy schedules to attend.

In *Bite-Sized Marketing: Realistic Solutions for the Overworked Librarian*, Nancy Dowd, et al, get to the root of the matter: "How many times has your library offered a program, product, or service that excited the staff but never caught on with the public? We are quick to say that libraries need to advertise, educate, and inform the public about our services. However, the real problem may be that the library as a product doesn't fill a need for our public."[2]

And as Jennifer Hopwood points out in her chapter of *Marketing Your Library: Tips and Tools that Work*, "Marketing a product doesn't only mean that you are promoting it. That is only one part of it; the first part is your market research. When it comes to library programs, there are several parts to that research. Analyze your community; take a look at your market area to see if your program or concept is even needed. You may have the best idea in the world, but if it is something that is not suited to your area, it will flop."[3]

Taking a step back then from an emphasis on marketing-as-advertising, let's reexamine the development of programming and services for our communities.

Libraries in the King County Library System have recently begun piloting a new approach for developing system programming that places more emphasis on community investigation and outreach (read: "market research") to identify needs within the existing patron base, and developing targeted programming to meet those needs. KCLS Library Director Bill Ptacek noted in *Library Journal* recently that "it is imperative that the public library remain relevant to the people it serves. In the future, libraries will be less about services and more about how to be of service. Research on patron interests and behavior patterns will be crucial to this effort, and libraries will have to be adept at marketing and customer-insight techniques."[4] This approach differs from past programming initiatives within KCLS in that librarians are compiling qualitative and quantitative data to generate a profile of the community served by each library branch, data that informs the service planning process. It is a responsive approach that is especially well suited for KCLS, a very large public library system with a service area population of 1.4 million, covering all of King County with the exception of the city of Seattle and two small Eastside neighborhoods. A mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas, forty-eight branches serve wildly disparate communities within the county.

> **"The new…approach aims to reach people who have never been to a library before, who don't have any currency in what a library is or does, and engage with communities that…remain unseen in library service."**

Every community is unique, even those adjacent to one another. The mix of diverse populations within each varies dramatically, and pockets of immigrants from disparate backgrounds and nationalities pop up in surprising areas. Devising programs that address the needs of everyone is challenging. The new service planning approach aims to reach people who have never been to a library before, who don't have any currency in what a library is or does, and engage with communities that are disadvantaged/low-

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Steven Bailey works for King County Library System as the Librarian Services Manager for the Auburn, Algona-Pacific, and Muckleshoot Libraries.

income and that remain unseen in library service.
In many ways, this approach isn't new at all. As librarians, we have always emphasized reaching out to communities that may not be aware of our services. And we continually strategize ways to increase attendance at library programs. What is new for KCLS, however, is an emphasis on research, on reaching out specifically to those "non-patrons" whose needs can be addressed by the library, and on providing services outside of the branches. "Meeting the patron at the point of need" used to be a rallying cry to come out from behind the reference desk and roam the stacks. Increasingly, it is now a mantra for coming out of the building and providing services in the community.

KCLS librarians are lucky to have mobile service tools at their disposal, namely mini bookmobiles and mobile computer labs, in addition to the expertise of librarian staff armed with laptops (and engaged by the research process). These vehicles are staffed at the branch level, rather than centrally, allowing for targeted services and a flexible, responsive approach to identified patron needs. The combination of research-based outreach, identified need, and mobile collections and technology allow KCLS librarians to truly respond to our patrons' needs, especially those who cannot or will not visit our branches.

Our first forays into community research in areas of South King County have brought us into contact with several key community leaders. Some of these persons are members of communities of need, and some are representatives from service agencies that serve those communities. We conducted interviews with these leaders, who provided valuable insights into the makeup of the communities, the services offered to them by local agencies, and areas where

the library could potentially address a need. In addition, the interviews allowed librarians to connect with those communities and agencies in a way that they had not been able to before.

In her book on library marketing strategies for young adults, Angela Pfeil notes the necessity of market analysis to set program objectives and identify potential partners in the community. Those potential partners can include community agencies, schools, local government, religious institutions, and for-profit businesses. She states that "libraries need to know what programs are already available (or unavailable), who is providing them, and how [libraries] can help with existing programs or fill the need for new ones."[5]

KCLS librarians involved in our community research process used several information sources, including demographic and market segment information, as well as interviews and direct observations. Our preliminary findings from the process indicate the following:

- There remains a need for basic services in some of our communities (shelter and food, as well as utility assistance, job searching, and computer skills).

- Some current library offerings, such as ESL classes, would be better attended if child care were offered in conjunction with the classes.

- While there are multiple service agencies in place to serve these communities, there is little coordination between agencies to align services and prevent duplication.

- Some of the more "wired" segments of our patron base that

Collaboration Across Borders

by Jennifer Fenton

Ring-a-round the rosie,
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down!

Holding hands and moving in a circle to this old nursery room was not only a bonding experience, it also demonstrated developing community ties. Recently Washington State Library sponsored a series of workshops called Sing With Our Kids, presented by musician Nancy Stewart. Stewart's project includes a website called Sing With Our Kids, which is chock full of songs, ideas and materials to connect children in the community by singing.

Stewart's workshop was extremely well received with participants ready to go back to their libraries and reach out to their community to enhance early learning skills for children through singing. This project reaches across the generations. One activity Stewart conducted as part of the project involved community caroling during the holidays. Stewart went to a neighborhood where she had been invited to lead caroling. She was greeted by enthusiastic kids, parent and grandparents. And since Stewart invited people to follow along on their smart phones, teens were also drawn in.

One anonymous attendee, who commented on the power of Stewart's message, also plans to put the program in place in her own community: "I can't wait to share the resources Nancy is creating with families in our community. I've already talked with the staff in my department about future programming around singing with kids and families to be held in our library. I'm inspired to try flash mobs, as well as attempt to create opportunities to sing with groups of kids and families at places other than our library building."

> ❝I'm inspired to try flash mobs, as well as attempt to create opportunities to sing with groups of kids and families at places other than our library building.❞

Sing With Our Kids demonstrated the power of collaboration in an old-fashioned way: getting out there, and tapping your own community to partner on a project relating to early learning.

In addition to traditional collaboration, I look for unique opportunities. In today's technological world, partnering is easier than ever. I am able to cross state boundaries and collaborate with my colleagues all over the United States. An example of this type of alliance is our recent online training, Turning the Page: Northwest Edition. I partnered with my Idaho colleague, Shirley Biladeau, to offer the Public Library Association's advocacy training. (Turning the Page 2.0 is a Public Library Association program, a division of the American Library Association.) Biladeau and I offered the training to library staff in our individual states and collaborated on the live webinars that accompany the program. We also conducted a conference session at the Pacific Northwest Library Association conference in Boise, Idaho on the topic. This joint effort of conducting the six-part series to both Idaho and Washington was a natural follow-up to our joint webinar series on eReaders held in 2011. By partnering, we were able reach a much wider audience.

Webinars, in particular, are a great way to collaborate with a wide number of people and reach people all over the United States (and beyond). Inviting presenters from various organizations to conduct a webinar is a banner way to connect libraries and new partners. Furthermore, the webinars bring together a wide range of attendees, allowing for the pursuit of new alliances. When people attend a

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don't currently use library services would benefit from targeted promotion of our online offerings, especially downloadable eBook and eAudio content.

• Not surprisingly, some areas that are distant from library branches or that face other transportation challenges, such as geographic barriers or lack of direct traffic/transit routes to our branches, do not use library collections and may be under represented in program attendance.

• For some communities, the best way to discern the specific need of that community may be to ask community members through a survey or other feedback mechanism.

To be successful, this new service planning approach requires collaboration between the library, its patrons, and other agencies (potential partners) in the conversation about what programs and services to provide. It is a far more robust and responsive approach. And while all services developed by the library system cannot and need not follow this planning process, the ability to incorporate responsive services into our offerings through outreach and community research allows KCLS the ability to truly meet the needs of our patrons (and patrons-to-be) more effectively. 📖

Notes

1. Walters, Suzanne, and Kent Jackson. Breakthrough branding: positioning your library to survive and thrive. Chicago: Neal-Schuman, 2013.

2. Dowd, Nancy, Mary Evangeliste, and Jonathan Silberman. Bite-sized marketing: realistic solutions for the overworked librarian. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.

3. Hopwood, Jennifer. "The Why, What, Who, When, and How of Library Community Partnerships." In Marketing your library: tips and tools that work. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012. 160.

4. Ptacek, Bill. "The Library As Catalyst for Civic Engagement." Library Journal 138, no. 14 (2013): 30.

5. Pfeil, Angela. Going Places with Youth Outreach: Smart Marketing Strategies for your Library. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005.

webinar on a topic of interest, they are likely to meet others with similar interests. While not exactly like an in-person training, webinars and online courses still provide the opportunity to reach across those borders and find new colleagues and partners to work with on future endeavors.

Another flourishing area for collaboration is bringing together new and veteran librarians to share ideas. I am now working with students at the Information School at the University of Washington to come up with a solid mentoring program for WLA. The opportunity to meet with students and learn about their perspectives has been invaluable. Hopefully the mentoring program will grow wings and take flight. 📖

Coming full circle to successful, wide-scale collaboration reminds me of a project that Washington State Library and Washington Library Association jointly operate every other year. The bi-annual WSL/WLA Continuing Education Needs Assessment has wide reaching impact. This is a hefty and comprehensive needs assessment for library staff that helps us identify what training and continuing education opportunities are needed. Working with WLA has added depth to the assessment. WSL and WLA have different roles in providing continuing education, but we are both dedicated to offering the best possible training. The blood, sweat and tears that go into designing the CENA (Continuing Education Needs Assessment) are well worth it. Analyzing the results allows us to take action and offer needed continuing education. By pooling resources, we are able to more quickly and efficiently meet the needs of the library community for training.

For example, WSL sponsors both in-person and online trainings several times a year. Thanks to the CENA, the topics selected are high demand and responsive. Likewise, WLA uses the CENA to offer both stand-alone workshops via the Interest Groups as well as to plan sessions and pre-conferences for both the annual WLA conference and WALE conference. In 2012-2013, training topics covered by WSL included leadership, innovative reference, and customer service were all rated highly on the CENA. WLA incorporated the CENA into conferences and workshops, and was able to provide offerings on topics such as social media, eBooks and STEM. By working together, more continuing education opportunities are available to all library staff.

Finally, I think back to a recent webinar. When asked "What is collaboration?," everyone had a different definition. All are valid, but my personal definition of successful collaboration is that it involves both give and take and a willingness on all parties to be flexible! 📖

Jumping In Together: Children's Librarians Forge Partnerships with Two Literacy Programs, Make a Splash

by Diane Cowles

Imagine a hot summer day with the blue waters of Lake Washington practically begging you to jump in. Will it be folly or fun? Alone might be daunting, but taking the plunge with another—now, that's how great it can be with collaborations. Children's librarians at The Seattle Public Library have forged two such notable partnerships. With the **Global Reading Challenge** and **Kaleidoscope Play and Learn,** supportive relationships evolved from the initial launch phases to the ensuing good times.

Having fun has always been the hallmark of the Global Reading Challenge, which involves more than 2,500 fourth and fifth graders in forty-eight Seattle Public Schools. The schools represent all regions of Seattle and allow children of all reading levels to compete in the "sport" of reading within a team of seven students. To determine Seattle's champion team, students answer questions in semi-final and city final rounds from ten books in a "Quiz Bowl" game, which features stories from the world's diverse communities.

Seattle Public Library children's librarian Mary Palmer is instrumental in implementing, coordinating, and honing the program that she brought from the Kalamazoo (MI) Library System in 1995. Twenty-four Seattle Public Library branches and more than thirty children's librarians and support staff participate from November through March in a variety of ways: writing questions for the competition, filming video book talks, delivering books to the schools, scheduling and conducting the challenges held at each school, and working the "Quiz Bowl" at the Central Library. The Seattle Public Library secures most of the funding for the program through the Library's Foundation arm. The result of donors' generosity is substantial--thousands of paperback books distributed to the schools, hundreds of prizes, a variety of supplies, and many librarian hours. Children's authors and other community resources, such as those who survived the Holocaust, are lined up for speaking engagements, as well.

Many schools have recognized the value of incorporating the challenge into their reading curriculum, while other schools have wel-comed it as an extra program to enhance reading enrichment. Carter Kemp, a librarian at Kimball Elementary School in Seattle's Beacon Hill area, describes the six years that he has spearheaded the program there as a "great way to provide a good slate of books to kids." Kemp understands the mission of making reading fun by first creating balanced teams—enthusiastic readers and struggling readers together—forged by the proven incentive of competition. "It's not about the winning," he says. This is why he creates mixed teams of boys, girls, all reading levels, and different ethnicities. His ultimate goal is for the children to bond and become a real team in spite of differences. He presents the program shortly after school begins, collects names of those interested, creates teams, and meets with fifty kids during their lunch break three times before the competition starts. By the end of those intense months of reading, the kids have been motivated to read at least one of the ten selected books, and they begin actively competing. The in-school challenges run from the end of January to the end of February. The semi-final challenges are held during a one week period in mid-March, and the final challenge, the "Quiz Bowl", pits ten teams against one another on one night at the end of March.

> **"Kemp understands the mission of making reading fun by first creating balanced teams—enthusiastic readers and struggling readers together—forged by the proven incentive of competition."**

Teachers are happy that reading is happening outside of class, and Global Reading Challenge has enough street cred that it comes up in kids' conversations a lot, according to Kemp. A particularly proud moment for him and the Kimball team came at the semi-final round a few seasons back. The Kimball team didn't win, but their ethics blew him away. They actively encouraged each other and "they knew the right thing to do," Kemp said. The collaboration between school and public library has been a natural fit and makes for good lessons in so many ways: the children learn teamwork and cooperation, and they read good books.

Another successful and fun partnership, judging by the overflow of strollers, is the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program which brings together various agencies serving families with The Seattle Public Library. Of the five Kaleidoscope Play and Learn partnerships meeting in branches, the one that meets weekly at the Beacon Hill Branch Library, located in the heart of multicultural Seattle, attracts an ever-burgeoning roomful of toddlers and adults--seventy percent of

Diane Cowles is a children's librarian at the Beacon Hill Branch of the Seattle Public Library and the Alki Editorial Committee Chair.

whom are Chinese-speakers. Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC) provides the services of early learning and Connie Man, bilingual educator, guides participants through a variety of age and developmentally appropriate activities that can be easily replicated at home. "The library echoes the learning in class," Man said.

The children's librarians at each site provide literacy talks and promote library programming and materials throughout the year. The library's liaison is Cikeithia Pugh, Early Learning Program Manager, who coordinates the five library sites with Denise Louie Education Center, Wonderland Development Center, and CISC, and manages a budget that provides in-service education as well as age appropriate books for browsing. Francesca Gemeroy of Wonderland Development Center happily summarizes: "The collaboration of Play and Learn and The Seattle Public Library has allowed us, as Play and Learn facilitators, to utilize of one of the greatest resources in our community, our neighborhood library. We are able to introduce new books, show how reading and exploring literature can be done for all ages of children, as well as encourage families to connect with their local librarian." 📖

A Kaleidoscope Play and Learn group.

The author has worked with The Maple Elementary School 2013 team, the "Brilliant Bookmarks."

Whitman County Library: Community Ties Create Life-Long Users

by Kristie Kirkpatrick

Through collaboration with local businesses, organizations and experts, Whitman County Library (WCL) has provided quality community programs at little or no cost to library patrons. One of the most beneficial partnerships is with the Community Colleges of Spokane, which offers ACT 2, classes offered for a minimal fee to those retired or preparing for retirement. While baby boomers are the focus of ACT 2, adults of all ages are encouraged to attend.

This fall marks the third session of ACT 2 classes in the Colfax branch, and I think they represent the most diverse line up yet. With more than twenty CCS classes offered, topics range from art in multiple mediums to technology, including archaeology, a Middle Eastern cultural exploration series, music, and food preservation.

> 66 **I sometimes think of the library as our town living room.** 99

Jaclyn Jacot, director of ACT2 and Career Transitions program at the Institute for Extended Learning says, "The Community Colleges of Spokane continues to be amazed at the steady growth of the ACT 2 program in Colfax. The community support has been tremendous, and CCS looks forward to offering a larger array of distance learning opportunities in rural Whitman County in the coming years."

Besides an impressive subject matter line up, the quality of the instruction has also been top notch. One participant, Sue Hallett of Colfax, was inspired to write the following commentary in the September 14, 2013 edition of the *Moscow Pullman Daily News:*

"When I was a kid, the first thing that drew me into the public library was the air conditioning. In my home on hot summer days, we kept cool, or cool-ish, by shutting the window shades, running electric fans, and whining. The library was a lusciously cool haven, where I could wander around as long as I liked. I spent lots of time standing in front of bookshelves, pulling down a particular book, scanning the dust jacket. Soon I was lost in the world that the book created in my head.

 "I'm in my sixties now, and retired. I can track down any book in the world on the internet and my house is air-conditioned. But my local library holds me captive in different ways. It's the place where I can stop in downtown to browse the new book section or use the bathroom or write out a greeting card that I just bought, so that I can mail it before I go home. I usually see people I know while I'm there. I sometimes think of the library as our town living room.

"This past summer I attended a community college class at the library taught by an archaeologist who told us about excavating underground chambers on the island of Sardinia, which no one had entered since the Bronze Age. The thought of that gave me shivers. He described the

Anasazi ruins at Chaco Canyon in the American Southwest, where Great Houses and roads as well-built as those of the ancient Romans still run through the high desert, for what purpose, no one is quite sure. For three hours I sat with my classmates, entranced. I lost all track of time. I could hardly wait to get home, and make my husband sit and listen to the pages of notes I'd taken.

"My childhood experience of the library was a private one, just me and a book. Our library still offers the magic of books, but it has grown into a public space, too. There are things we can only understand when we take a look at them together. At this point in my life, the library is doing it all again in a new, more collaborative way, taking me to faraway places along with my neighbors, opening up larger worlds, making time stand still. I can't wait for the next Chaco Canyon."

Collaboration provides our community with a wide range of program opportunities, and ringing praise like Sue's is one reason classes are filling. For more information on Whitman County Library's program collaborations, contact Kristie Kirkpatrick at kirkpatr@colfax.com. 📖

Hallett in grade school.

Hallett at a recent library art show.

Kristie Kirkpatrick is the director of the Whitman County Rural Library District.

Whatcom Libraries Collaborate: A Six-Library Success Story

How Six Libraries--Academic and Public--Came Together in Collaboration and, Incidentally, Camaraderie

by Linda Lambert

Way up here in the fourth corner of the state and of the United States, librarians and library staff in Whatcom County like to get together. We can't quite call First Fridays, the monthly dinnertime assemblage of library folk at a local brewery, a collaboration unless one uses the term very loosely and includes libations that are not standard at official meetings.

Western Washington University faculty librarian Sylvia Tag was the instigator and organizer of the group, an untenured position, by the way. Tag's position description (if there were one) would include developing an email list, sending it out to all library staff, and cheerily greeting whomever arrives--spouses included--whether there are a handful or a dozen plus. Often, the participants are also WLCers. (P.s. We do not use this term. It will be retired after this article is published!)

WLC stands for Whatcom Library Collaborates, the action name coined by Joan Airoldi, the recently retired director of the Whatcom County Library System. Like the First Fridays group, Whatcom Libraries Collaborate also means gathering around food, but beverages usually involve coffee since meetings are at 7 a.m. the first Thursday of each month at a funky cafe in downtown Bellingham. We call it the Old Town Cafe Incubator because it is at Old Town that we share concerns and cook up ideas about how we might cooperate together. Those alliances have included working on a community wide book club, initiating a courier service among the libraries, and sponsoring a professional development day for our staff members.

It's time now to tell you who the "we" is: the directors of Bellingham Public Library, Whatcom County Library System, Northwest Indian College, Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College and Western Washington University.

Collaboration, or at least cooperation, actually began in 1944 when the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Library District entered into an agreement to serve county residents who lived outside of the city limits--an agreement which has been maintained almost without interruption since those early years.

> **"…public library card holders can place holds and…materials can be returned to any public or college library, as well as several grocery stores in the area."**

By the Lummi Island book return: three lions and a Library Director For The Day (green shirt)

It took us a few years longer to catch the vision of a collaboration among a diversity of libraries. We began meeting in 2001, but sporadically. Our present sustained efforts were kick started by the Washington State Library's now-defunct One Book grants. These grants helped a library organize an effort in which their community reads one book together at the same time. Whatcom County Library System and Whatcom Community College received grants of $7000 each, with Bellingham Public Library and Bellingham Technical College signing on, as well as our community partner Village Books, a great independent bookstore begun by Dee and Chuck Robinson in 1980.

We assembled a large steering committee and worked closely together to do our first One Book program, WhatcomREADS, in 2009, which featured author Sherman Alexie and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*. The 2014 author is Cheryl Strayed, preceded by David Guterson, Elizabeth George, Jim Lynch, and Tobias Wolff. We formed a non-profit organization to insure that the program would live on. For the first time in six years, the main event in 2014 is projected to surpass the capacity of our Whatcom Community College venue and will be held at the Mt. Baker Theater.

WLC

WHATCOM LIBRARIES COLLABORATE

After One Book, the next joint effort featured the first connection partnership between Bellingham Public Library and Whatcom Community College. The WCC Connection provides for the delivery of public library holds to the college and provides a self-checkout computer and book drop. The Connection serves students, faculty and the general community, and exemplifies the college's goals to "contribute actively to the vitality of Whatcom county...as a community and educational partner" and "to lead collaborative efforts with other educational institutions."

Other connections have followed with Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College and Northwest Indian College's Connection with the Whatcom County Library System.Through what we call our "One Card" (though there is not a physical card), public library card holders can place holds and have material delivered to their nearest public library or college. Materials can be returned to any public or college library, as well as several grocery stores in the area.

We have a group catalog search through OCLC's WorldCat, and we are exploring how we might place holds in the academic libraries. WCC and BTC do not have self-checkout machines, but the public and country libraries have provided them at the "Connections" so that patrons get used to using them--a prelude to the time when the smaller academic colleges will have that capability.

 All of the directors in the group have participated in presentations and poster sessions. We have presented to WWU's Board of Trustees, the Washington Council of Libraries, WLA, PNLA, the Washington/Oregon ACRL Conference, ALA, and IFLA (Finland). We have no official motto but when pressed to put together some powerpoint prose, we can say that our partnership works because
- We enjoy working together
- We--and our staff members--are willing to "play"
- Our meetings are energizing and personally satisfying (we don't take minutes!)
- Our institutions and boards are supportive

Mark Greenberg, the newish dean of libraries at Western, even said that WLC was a draw for him as a prospective director. "Rick (the interim dean) spoke very highly about WLC when I was interviewing last winter, and I looked forward to our first meeting last May." He came to Western for many reasons, but confides, "One of them was so I could be a member of the group!"

I rather like the example used in *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* to define collaboration: "This dictionary is a collaboration of many minds." Similarly, WLC is a collaboration of many (well, usually only six, with some changing of the library guard) minds. And, if I may break out of the group for a minute, I'll tell you that, for sure, my colleagues all have good minds and generous spirits. 📖

Bellingham Public Library sculpture

Patrons checking out

Collaborative Endeavors Can Be Memorable, Energizing and Rewarding

by Tami Echavarria Robinson

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, collaboration means "working jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor." The word comes from a Latin root meaning "laboring together."[1]

I've been reflecting on the years of working with other librarians. While I have worked jointly with different librarians over the years, it has varied significantly from librarian to librarian how much we labored together in an intellectual endeavor. Much of the time we have simply worked side by side toward common goals. But the memorable experiences that come to mind are those when we truly labored together, jointly working in an intellectual endeavor. Those endeavors led to a bonding between us that created long lasting collegial friendships.

The most consistent examples through the years are teaching library instruction together and helping classes of students do research assignments in the library reference area. Librarians at Whitworth University have been doing this cooperatively for the past decade and a half. Those experiences of working together are often collaborative in discussing faculty members' assignments for specific classes and figuring out how best to teach their students. They are usually relatively short hour-long sessions but sometimes can be more than one class session over a semester. Among the librarians, two will work on a particular class and its assignment. By doing this, we have developed team work among us that would otherwise not have occurred and has improved our understanding of library instruction among all the librarians.

At times two of us have presented together, or with librarians from other universities, at conferences. Preparing such presentations is a more in-depth intellectual endeavor, and has sometimes resulted in further collaboration in the writing of articles for library association journals. These kinds of experiences have been intense and protracted enough to lead to a bonding and friendship. When this was repeated yet again with the same people, further bonding occurred. These people are my colleagues and have become my friends. When I have had these pleasurable experiences with colleagues from other universities, these friendships developed over years and across geographical distances. We generally renew our friendships as we meet again at subsequent conferences and through email.

Collaborating on scholarship and writing has not always had the effect of cementing friendships, but it often has worked out this way. Writing an article with another author is a tricky process because it involves melding the writing into one voice. Usually our voices do not sound the same when we speak or write, so careful experienced editing becomes very helpful, as does patience. It is truly an intellectual endeavor that requires laboring apart, then together to achieve one smooth voice. "Collaboration always requires enormous give and take: partners who are willing to give up some control over the product of their labors and flexible enough to adjust to the needs of their coauthors. In the long run, the collaborators' individual efforts must be merged into a seamless paper that communicates in one consistent style and voice."[2] Although not easy, it is a pleasurable challenge, and once achieved is a source of a sense of mutual accomplishment.

> **"My experience with years of library instruction and information literacy provided the pedagogical material and the progression of the tutorials in a manner that fostered learning, while her expertise with the technology made the tutorials come to life."**

Perhaps a more difficult collaborative endeavor has been to make the ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education into information literacy goals and objectives for our own library, then develop exercises for students to do in the library to teach these objectives. As the Coordinator of Instructional Services, our Library Director and I worked to craft these goals and exercises. We collaborated over an extended period of time reworking what we created several times until we were satisfied. This arduous process was truly laboring together and finally resulted in exercises that students could do on their own at a library computer to learn specific library skills. We then adapted these exercises for different disciplines which faculty now use with their classes.

The most enjoyable collaborative intellectual endeavor has been the most recent, however. There is a certain sense of satisfaction I enjoy when it all "comes together." This past summer we created video tutorials that are being used in introductory courses at Whitworth University for basic library instruction and library orientations. Other colleges have also turned to this idea.[4] While we have had

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Tami Echavarria Robinson is the coordinator of Instructional Services at Whitworth University Library.

worked had something in common in each of these instances. The common factor was collegiality.

"Collegiality facilitates the interchange of ideas and produces energy and creativity for librarians... it provides challenging professional opportunities."[3] Collegiality is characterized by cooperative interaction among colleagues. Cooperation leads to striving toward common goals, "working for one another, rather than as individuals competing against one another."[5] Working in collaborative environments with high degrees of collegiality is an energizing and creative experience.

The antithesis of collegiality is competitiveness. Competitiveness is extolled in contemporary American society and it hinders collegiality, unfortunately. Competitiveness promotes self aggrandizement and selfishness and fosters jealousy, envy and distrust. These undermine cooperation, collaboration and collegiality, destroying trust through encouraging the elevation of self as better than others. When I have worked in libraries that have this kind of ambience, I have been less creative in all my scholarly endeavors and found that working collaboratively was discouraged and difficult to do. My creativity and vitality flagged. I produced less scholarship and writing, the less collegial the work environment was.

The more collegial the environment is, the more trusting and sharing fellow librarians are with one another, the higher the morale seems to be in the workplace. Civility and collegiality are continuously needed to make our workplace for congenial. Conversation is the process for realizing collegiality. Sharing information, showing respect and including everyone in the conversation develops trust. Cooperation can flourish. Collaboration can be fostered and good relationships with co-workers can make our careers memorable. Without such an environment the flourishing of our intellectual endeavors can elude us. Collaboration is key to our flourishing. 📖

Notes

1. "Collaborate." Entry 1. Merriam Webster Dictionary. Britannica Academic Edition n.d. Web. September 12, 2013.
2. Harrison Barr, Alice and Mickey Zemon. "Collaborative Authorship in the Journal Literature: Perspectives for Academic Librarians Who Wish to Publish." *College & Research Libraries* 61.5 (2000): 410-419.
3. Echavarria Robinson, Tami. "Collegiality: An Atmosphere for Expanding Intellectual Stimulation." *The Christian Librarian* 46.1 (2003): 13-16. Print.
4. Farrell, Sandy L., Driver, Carol, and Anita Weathers. "Now's the Time: Online Library Orientations." *Community & Junior College Libraries* 17.1 (2011) : 7-14. Print.
5. Jones, Dixie. "Plays Well With Others, or The Importance of Collegiality within a Reference Unit." *The Reference Librarian* 59 (1997): 163-175.

parts and pieces of these on our LibGuides in the past, this is the first time we have pulled together complete video tutorials for classes linked to Blackboard course pages. Designing what each tutorial should cover and then creating the actual video tutorials was a new experience for me. It became possible by working with a librarian who is more technologically savvy than I and is more familiar with newer technologies enabling the creation of video tutorials a task we could accomplish. My experience with years of library instruction and information literacy provided the pedagogical material and the progression of the tutorials in a manner that fostered learning, while her expertise with the technology made the tutorials come to life. We collaborated together on these for four months, working back and forth between design, scripts and video, creating tutorials that could be used with the exercises we already had. The results made all the work worthwhile. The process of working together was just as worthwhile as we accomplished an intellectual endeavor together. As I've reflected on these different types of collaboration, I have pondered why some of these collaborative efforts were so rewarding and what made that difference. I believe that the environment in which we made that difference. I believe that the environment in which we

eLearning for Everyone: Training Online

by Darlene Pearsall
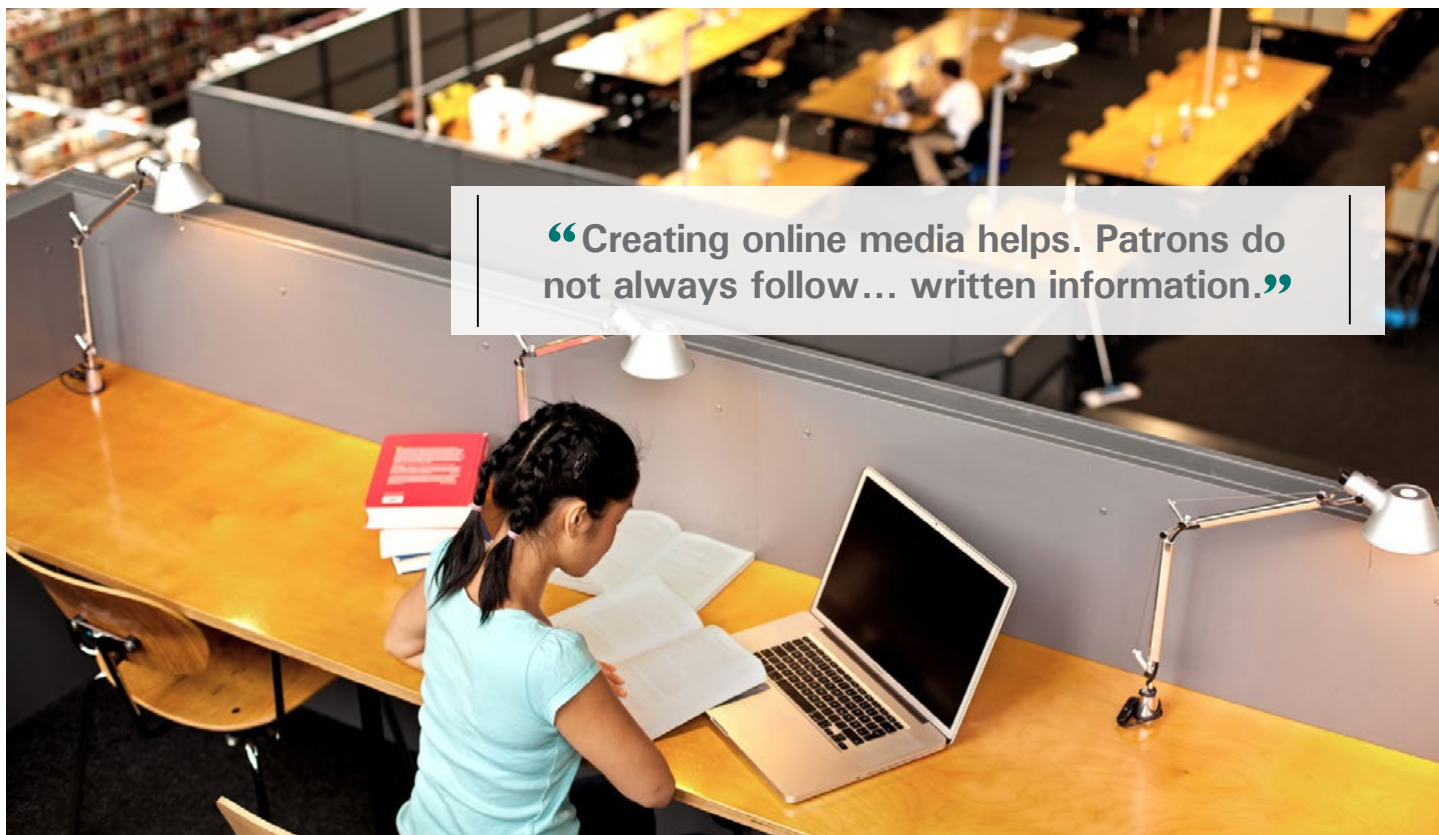
> " Creating online media helps. Patrons do not always follow… written information. "

Many library system administrations are exploring how they can reduce time away from the library, yet cover their staff training needs. Moving to eLearning is a great solution. It allows staff to take training without leaving the building. And if the training is recorded, they can take it anytime.

Over a three week period in spring 2012, the WALT Interest Group (**WA**shington **L**ibrary **T**rainers) taught its first ever online class. The topic? Moving training online!

This online class was an expansion of a session taught at the 2012 WLA Annual Conference held in Tulalip, Washington. Darlene Pearsall of King County Library System, Roxanna Garrison and Ruth Zander from Sno-Isle Libraries, and Nicole Bunselmeyer of Media Designs team taught this three-session class.

The course covered five aspects of planning training, with an emphasis on how to handle topics when teaching online and not able to see the students, or when the training is recorded and you are not immediately available to answer questions or clarify a topic. We wanted this class to 1) model how a live online training could be taught, and 2) give the students a plan and/or completed training

or a module of training when they finished the third class.

Throughout the training we used or referenced sources that were either free or low cost to also demonstrate that online training can be done relatively inexpensively. We used Microsoft's SkyDrive cloud to store our session presentations, student resource documents and a location for our students to upload their sample class work. The instructors did all of the writing, planning and practicing electronically. *We did not meet in person even once!*

Tasks We Converted to Electronic Tools

Raise your hand if... Frequently at the beginning of a classroom class, you ask students to raise their hand to determine the knowledge level of the topic to be taught. Online we used **polls** for this fact-finding mission. It is a great way to get the students familiar with the online tool being used (we used GoToTraining). It gets them involved, and is also a noteworthy way to bring their attention back to the course (remember you are competing with email and the distractions of the back room where staff will frequently take online classes). Here's a sampling of the information gleaned from our polls.

Darlene Pearsall is a Computer Education Developer/Trainer for the King County Library System.

- 64 percent of the participants said they believed that their staff/patrons were ready for online learning
- 50 percent were just beginning moving training online
- 62 percent were using combined in-person and online training in their library systems.

Come to the front of the room... On the last day, we turned the screen over, and each student was given an opportunity to teach electronically. We turned the screen over, and each student was given an opportunity to teach electronically. The student ran the online class: They heard their voices and saw their slides or programs.

Some of the presentation topics covered by our students :
- Inserting page borders in Microsoft Word
- Searching for digital items in BiblioCommons
- Downloading eBooks
- Creating an account
- Placing a hold (the topic used for our online example)
- How to use Novelist

Overview of the Class

We used the ADDIE design structure as our model. ADDIE stands for:
Analyze – We covered surveys and needs analysis to help determine if training is needed. If it is determined that training is needed, what would be the best way to provide that training – a new class, add this topic to an existing class, or would a job-aide such as an instruction sheet be sufficient. As a sample class that could be developed, we gave the option of creating an instructional tutorial on how to place a hold in OPAC (Online Patron Access Catalog).

Students could also come up with their own ideas to create a training class which would be used to work through the class exercises.

Five "W's" and How: As you are analyzing the training, answer the following statements to help assist in determining what and how the training will be conducted.
- Why – Put the need for this training in context of your organization. What performance gap are you trying to fill?
- What – Check out Cathy Moore's Action Mapping. 1) Identify the business goal. 2) Identify what people need to do to reach that goal. 3) Design activities that help people practice each behavior. 4) Identify the minimum information people need to complete each activity. Is training the answer?
- Who – Who are your learners? Determine your audience. What are their characteristics, needs, previous experiences, work experience, etc? The more specific questions you can ask about your participants, the more powerful and focused your training will be. Most of our trainings are targeted for adult learners. How do adults learn best?
- When: they are actively involved in the learning, the material connects with participants' real-life experiences and emotions - past, present or future; and the trainer(s) acknowledges and demonstrates there is care for the participants.
- When and Where – How will the training be delivered? Where will it be held?
- How – How will you deliver this training? Classroom? Online? Job Aid?

Design – Once it is determined there will be a training of some type, plan the class. This section is about mapping out the topics and order of the topics. Storyboarding is one method of completing this process. Storyboard That is a free storyboarding program.
- Objectives – What do you wish to accomplish? For a short training, there should not be more than three or four objectives. Learning activities and training assessment will be based on these objectives.
- Scenarios – Real-life examples help bring the information to life. A patron asks... a short story or scene setting helps put the student back in the library and out of the class.
- Screencasts or Demonstrations – A picture is worth a 1000 words is very true. Showing the students how a task is performed is important.

Develop – After working through which training material to cover, begin developing the class. When developing training, especially online training, it is not true that expensive software is needed to achieve this goal. Some of the free or low-cost tools can be found on the Internet and your computer!

- Jing – a free screen capture and short screencast (less than five minutes).
- Prezi – a free presentation program online.
- SurveyMonkey – The free version allows up to ten questions in a survey.

Don't forget about the tools that most already have at our fingertips--PowerPoint and other Microsoft Office programs.

Implement – Next, roll out the training. Decide how the information will be transferred to your students.

- Do you need a new training or just need to add this topic to an existing training?
- Does this topic really need training or just a job aid such as a quick reference sheet?

If the topic needs training, next, how should it be delivered? Classroom, live online or recorded tutorial or a combination? In determining which method, consider:

- **How quickly does this information need to be distributed?** If quickly, online is a faster method than classroom. There is no travel time and frequently, more students can attend an online class than in person. For example, with GoToTraining we can have up to 200 students, our largest meeting room holds eighty and our largest computer lab fifteen.
- **How long will the class need to be?** If the topic can be covered in 1 to 1 1/2 hours, that is usually too short to make staff travel to a classroom location. However if it will be three hours or more, that can be too long to expect a student to sit in front of a computer with a headset on or worse, holding a phone to their ear.
- **If online, live or recorded or both?** To hold live online training, you need some sort of screen sharing tool where the students can both hear the instructor and see their screen. Many of these programs provide the capability to record the training. If you can record the training, it can then be posted for students who could not make the live session to at least review the training. If you do not have a screen sharing tool (GoToMeeting/Webinar/Training, Blackboard, WebEx, etc.), you can still create a recorded training using PowerPoint.

Of course, for this class, we choose eLearning!

Evaluate – Evaluate the effectiveness of the training. This is beyond the standard "grins and smiles" evaluation form. Look back at the objectives for the course, develop ratings based on the objectives. We used the Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation:

1. **Reaction** – What did you think of the training? Mea-

sures: Customer Satisfaction. This if frequently as far as most class evaluations go.

2. **Learning** – How has the training changed your attitude, improved your knowledge or increased your skills? Measures: Acquired attitude, knowledge or skills necessary to bring the learning gap.

3. **Behavior** – Did what you learn change your behavior? Measures: Ability to apply what has been learned to real world situations.

4. **Results –** Has the training met the organization's objectives **and goals? Measures: Tangible results.**

Epilogue

Overall, the class was well received. Below is a chart of the responses for the questions asked in the class evaluation. We were able to attach the evaluation to the class so the students were asked to complete the evaluation as they logged out of the third session. We also included a link in the follow-up email. We received nine of our thirteen evaluations. Some of the evaluation comments:

- "Knowing how to storyboard and be clear about the purpose of the training."
- "The importance of planning."
- "Creating online media helps. Patrons do not always follow the written information."
- "Sharing the projects and hearing from the others was extremely useful! The presenters were really, really good and the information relayed was well laid out and presented."

📖

Evaluation Results
Average Response Scale of 1 - 5
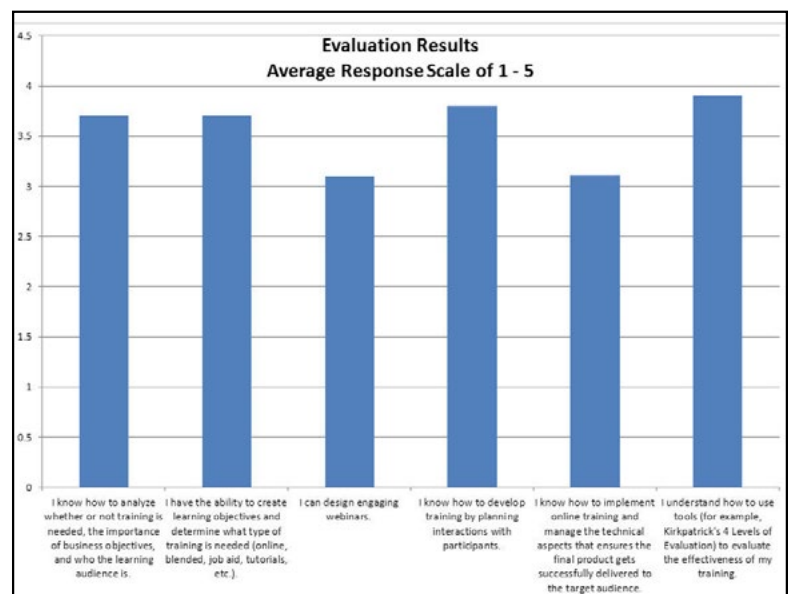
Students' Take-Away: What We Learned From Them

by Adrian Adams Pauw, Caitlin Bagley and Kelly O'Brien Jenks

As part of assessing our information literacy instruction program at Gonzaga University this past year (2012-2013), we gathered research journals from a group of 100 students. The journals were created, one set before and one set following an information literacy (IL) instruction session, by students who told step by step the processes they used to gather information on a research question. Three instruction librarians collaborated in the selection of journal pairs to be used in the assessment and also collaborated in the construction of a tool for evaluation. We then read all the journals. I won't go into the machinations of the assessment in total, but will, in the spirit of noticing the universality of experience when freshman research, share some of our anecdotal observations that appeared thematically.

Things We Noticed While Evaluating Students' Self-Reported Research Practices

Instruction had, at times, the effect of teaching students "where" to search but not "how" to search any better than they were doing before. Students just moved their old research processes to a new place – in this case a university database. If they were thoughtful and critical in their processes using Google before instruction, then they seemed to demonstrate thoughtful and critical processes using Academic Search Complete or whatever database they were using. But if the habit was to throw in a few search terms and pick the first thing that came up on the results page before instruction, they would sometimes carry this right into the university resource. In these instances, they achieved better results almost always because of where they were looking for information, but they did not necessarily display new or improved research skills.

Students structured research in contrived ways, using procedural/extrinsic versus thoughtful/integrated/personally important/intrinsic ways of structuring research. This is the difference between limiting search results by full-text or other database devices rather than using terms/thoughts/strategies to construct/narrow/expand a search.

Students seem to expect a "semantic web" capable of interpreting a conversational search. Good or bad, Google does respond to this type of search with enough accuracy to encourage the practice, but when students try to transfer this research practice to a database, it does not work. We also notice that Ask.com (Ask Jeeves) and Siri have probably influenced this expectation of "natural voice" research in students.

Students describe reading strategies that are useful when teaching research skills. These include skim/glance/read the abstract/read the total document. This was a heartening discovery!

Students confess with remarkable candor their search for "things to back up my thesis" or their desire to find things that "support their ideas."

We observed devolution of critical thinking skills and a reduction in the investment of time to evaluate sources after instruction with some students. What a bummer! In these instances students spent less time researching after an information literacy instruction class and were less likely to analyze and evaluate the results generated by their searches. We have no idea why this happened with these students or what to do about their declining research practices. Thankfully this is a small percent of our students' experiences, and we are pausing for reflection to see what might be an appropriate next step in following up on this.

Some students think sight/cite/site are interchangeable words.

Student searches would be decidedly improved by having better topic selection and better thesis statements. This was a highly charged portion of our assessment conversations because the questions students were trying to answer were so flawed. We are planning to meet again to follow up on ways to teach practices surrounding the construction of a good research question.

> "…students value the construction of complex searches that will lead to small, highly refined results versus starting with a rather broad search and working to refine it."

A parallel conversation involved noticing the ways students use keywords or key terms in the construction of a search. It appears that students value the construction of complex searches that will lead to small, highly refined results versus starting with a rather broad search and working to refine it.

In Conclusion: It was very revealing to read students' self-reported research practices. Aside from the data collected through our formal assessment that was highly informative, these anecdotal observations are providing us with fodder for important instruction conversations. After all, one of the main points of any assessment is to close the circle of practice, bringing back to future instruction new insights and plans meant to improve our next classroom interactions. 📖

Adrian Adams Pauw, Electronic Resources Coordinator Librarian; Caitlin Bagley, Instruction Librarian; and Kelly O'Brien Jenks, Instruction Coordinator Librarian all work at Gonzaga University.

Sharing is Caring: Consortia and Challenges for Shared ILS

by Brent Mills

Our profession puts a premium on sharing and rightly so. We want to share our holdings with the communities we serve in the most effective ways possible. But our communities are growing exponentially, and a single library for one city can often have a difficult time meeting patrons' demands for materials without being part of a broader sharing network. Libraries that band together and form consortia can help offset a variety of resource needs and get help with balancing a variety of loads: financial and mental. One of the ways libraries have increasingly joined together is through agreeing to implement a shared Integrated Library System (ILS), which allows patrons, as well as staff, a centralized location to search and request resources. The Orbis Cascade Alliance with libraries in Oregon, Washington and Idaho is currently undergoing such a transition. The transition to a shared ILS isn't always easy, but there are benefits to be enjoyed—whether using an open source or proprietary solution—for libraries experiencing a broadening of their traditional borders.

Consortia History

The library consortium as we know it has evolved out of necessity and common sense. With individual budgets shrinking, a rational decision is to reach out and pool resources to ensure a broader base of access to materials and services. There are a variety of library consortia on the landscape today, but for the most part they can be distilled into *resource-sharing* consortia and *buying club* consortia. Resource-sharing consortia focus on sharing physical collections in often geographically clustered units, usually with a shared ILS and courier system. Whereas *buying club* consortia focus more on managing the increasing costs of electronic service subscriptions and licensing. As James Wiser mentions in his essay "Playing Well with Others," there are many types of consortia, but "most consortia have evolved by demonstrating a core competency in one of these two areas." [1]

The Cloud and Orbis

For the Pacific Northwest, the Orbis Cascade Alliance is one of the largest consortia with members in Oregon, Washington and Idaho and focuses primarily on academic libraries. They are both a large resource-sharing network as well as a buying club. The Alliance is currently in the middle of an exciting transition to Ex-Libris with Primo as their front end and Alma in the back. But like many ILS migrations, they have had some hiccups along the way. For example, the University of Washington—which is part of the Alliance—recently sent out an email mentioning the new UW Libraries Search interface utilizing Primo won't be in full effect this fall, as was originally planned. The university will be reverting back to UW WorldCat as the main interface. From reading through the letters on the Orbis Cascade website,[2] it looks like Ebsco content accessibility has been a concern. The University of Washington is keeping students in the loop about the status of the migration process using the school's listserv and library website.

The switch to a mostly cloud based library management solution by the Alliance follows a move—by an increasing number of larger libraries and vendors—away from the locally hosted ILS systems. Many support companies or vendors themselves will now host your ILS or system remotely.

The traditional library OPAC functioned as the main interface for search and discovery within the library. Discovery layers, federated search and combinations of internal and external sources are all part of a transition to next generation interfaces—more modular in design than their predecessors. The traditional OPAC is being complemented, overlaid or eclipsed to allow for a greater integration of external as well as internal information venues. Many vendors are jumping on board to offer libraries access to those new solutions. However, there are other, non-proprietary ways, such as open source, that libraries are using to approach collection management and curation.

Brent Mills is the Technical Support Specialist for the Sage Library Consortium. He is based out of the Hood River County Library but works for member libraries in Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon. He is also finishing his MLIS at the University of Washington.

Open Source and Consortia

I work for SAGE, a library consortium serving parts of Eastern and Central Oregon. Comprised of seventy-seven libraries—academic, public and special--it decided, in 2010, to shift from Millennium, its former ILS, to Evergreen—an open source based ILS solution. We also have contracted with Equinox Software for technical support and migration assistance. With an open source based ILS, library staff have access to a wide variety of customizations and enhancements that might not be available to libraries in proprietary relationships with their ILS providers. Edits to the code can be made by the developer community, spurred on by requests or complaints or by a desire for a different sort of functionality. Not just for smaller libraries with similar pockets, the King County Library Consortium in Washington has deployed a modified version of Evergreen for use in their library system.

SAGE—as well as all other Evergreen institutions—receives indirect benefits from a large system like King County joining the Evergreen community. Bug fixes, additional features like a Kids Catalog, better looking graphics and icons as well as general performance improvements have been brought about through larger consortia like King County's involvement in Evergreen. For libraries that want broader control over their ILS, extensive customization abilities, and access to the developer community, an open source based ILS like Evergreen can be a solution.

However, open source ILS solutions for libraries are not the magic pill to cure past and present problems encountered in a library used to dealing with proprietary systems. One of key areas for growth and needed attention for the open source options lie in the support services for these products. Equinox has been a great resource for the technical support staff in SAGE, but training needs extend past the "back room" library staff: the catalogers, tech support and technical services staff. All library staff members can benefit from training on the ILS they share with other libraries in their consortium. Let's not forget about the patrons, as well. So what are some ways in which library staff can be exposed to their library's ILS? Either open source or proprietary?

Training

Libraries are increasingly splitting their time with patrons in digital and physical spaces. Library staff and patrons encounter the library and especially the library's ILS in different ways at different times of the day and from different devices.

A large set of diverse resources presents another challenge: How do patrons and staff interact with the resources? Often today, holdings and library workflows are channeled at one point or another through an ILS. In a consortium setting, a shared ILS can facilitate material requests; give real time inventory across libraries, allow staff and patrons a digital, centralized point of access and much more. Staff is given training on navigating the ILS, but more often than not patrons find themselves maneuvering the ILS alone, online or mediated through the library staff on desk.

It's challenging to offer up-to-date resources and make those resources accessible to your staff. Blog updates, a consortium-wide wiki and listserv community are all ways to do what I'll call "passive training." Unless you're checking in with your staff, how do you know they're reading the updates or need to? The above methods are all important training methods best complemented with a slightly more personal level of ILS and systems training.

However "active training" is a more involved process. It requires more time than the passive options. Phone calls, help desk ticket systems, screen sharing, and site visits are all interactive ways that staff can get answers to questions about how the library system works—or doesn't. Not everyone needs the same level of insight or knowledge about the way their ILS or library software works, but creating some time during a library in-service or training day for software training can be an effective way to slip in ILS training where time might be otherwise limited.

How often does a library patron approach you wondering why a book won't check out or how to place a hold on an eBook? Even a basic level of ILS training for staff members is an empowering experience when faced with those sorts of questions. 📖

Notes

1. Wiser, J. "Playing Well With Others: New Opportunities for Library Consortia." *Theological Librarianship: An Online Journal of the American Theological Library Association* 5.2 (2012): 43-47. <u>https://journal.atla.com/</u>. Web. 9 Sept. 2013.
2. http://www.orbiscascade.org/index/ebsco-and-ex-libris

Mills (tall guy in back) with some of the Hood River Library District staff.

Building a Sustainable 2.0 Community for Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

by Elaine Hall

The students and alumni of San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) have developed a Learning 2.0 program, "23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni: Essentials for Success," to build alliance among students and alumni for lifelong learning and professional development. Hosted by SLISConnect, SLIS's student and alumni association, this program is unique in that it is created for SLIS students and alumni by students and alumni, fosters solidarity as well as asynchronous learning, offers digital badges as rewards for module completion, and involves more than thirty-five student and alumni volunteers. With three target audiences–new students, current students, and new LIS professionals--the modules presented in this program offer a mix of technologies, resources, and tools for social networking, time management, presentation development, career development, research, and more. Other library or LIS schools can also build a collaborative and sustainable Learning 2.0 program as a way to engage the community on multiple levels and foster lifelong learning.

Learning 2.0 Extends LIS Education

LIS education provides graduates with the resources necessary to help libraries adapt to the transformative and technological needs of our libraries[1]. While LIS education provides the essential foundation required for professional librarianship, Partridge, Lee, and Munro emphasize that librarians in the 2.0 world also need to be "business savvy….have good project management skills….should be outcome focused and able to multitask and manage their time well."[2] While these skills are developed throughout the student's academic experience, there is no specific resource or guide that supports students in the process.

Learning 2.0 programs allow participants to take ownership of their learning by asynchronously accessing learning modules that assist in one's own discovery and learning process. Learning 2.0 also supports a concept of learning through exploration, or "the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving."[3] Stephens and Cheetham further emphasizes that "the Learning 2.0 model combines play and opportunities to explore new spaces into a unique approach to self-directed professional development."[4] The goal is self-directed learning that is accessible, fun, and explorative while supporting a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development.

Learning 2.0 Encourages Collaboration between Students and Alumni

The idea behind the 23 Things project for SLIS students and alumni was formed as a result of a group Learning 2.0 assignment that, I, along with five other SLIS students completed during a spring 2013 Transformative Learning and Technology Literacies course, taught by Dr. Michael Stephens. During the course, we explored the original 23 Things Learning 2.0 project developed by Helene Blowers, of the Public Library of

Charlotte Mecklenburg County. Blowers[5] believed that by allowing her staff to become exposed to emerging technologies, they would be better able to serve their patrons with these new technologies. This exposure to the Learning 2.0 model combined with my passion to build collaborative opportunities for SLIS's 100 percent online community fostered the idea of the 23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni: Essentials Tools for Success program.

Launched in July 2013, this Learning 2.0 program offers 23 weekly modules to introduce specific online technologies that have been recommended by SLIS students and alumni for academic and professional success. Three target audiences, broken down by three distinct segments, were identified for the program:

- **Segment 1: New SLIS Students:** resources essential for new student success
- **Segment 2: Professional Development/Project Assistance:** resources focused on networking, job searching, developing presentations, and professional development
- **Segment 3: New LIS Professionals:** essential resources used by LIS professionals in the field

What makes the "23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni" particularly unique is the collaborative effort of students and alumni throughout the program's development. SLISConnect became an ideal organization to host the program because its community includes both SLIS students and alumni. Several project meetings ensued amongst the SLISConnect board members to develop the program's vision, audience, and required resources. As a result, it became evident that the program would require collaborative efforts of not only SLISConnect board members, but also of the students and alumni who would actually build the program through a variety of volunteer roles. This included project managers who would oversee the project and manage volunteers; site administrators who would build the platform using Wordpress and Buddypress and establish security procedures for maintaining user access and permissions, approving site activity, and addressing spam issues; program outreach managers who would utilize social media and email distribution lists to promote the program; badge developers to create the program logo as well as individual badges that would be awarded for module completion; and a variety of volunteer roles specific to actual module development.

The real integrity of the program lies within the collaborative volunteer roles within each module. With a total of five volunteers per module – project manager, module developer, two module reviewers, and a module correspondent–each module goes through an extensive development process of instructional design modeling, critical review, site testing, and assessment before being launched. Here is a description of the specific roles involved in the module development process:

Elaine Hall is a WLA member and a MLIS graduate student at San Jose State University. She lives in Arlington, Washington and is pursuing interests in academic libraries, emerging technologies, information literacy, and research.

Module Builders: Module builders create a 20-30 minute tutorial on a specific student-alumni recommended technology or resource using Wordpress. Module templates and instructional design guides are provided.

Module Reviewers: Module reviewers critically review and test modules prior to its launch to assess the clarity of instructions, engagement with the technology, and ability to complete the module within a 20-30 minute segment. Assessment criteria are provided.

Module Correspondents: Module correspondents interact with participants during its launch week to answer questions, offer support, encourage participation, and congratulate participants for completing the module.

Digital Badge Creators: Digital badges acknowledge understanding of the technology, resource, or tool of each module and are awarded to participant upon providing evidence of module completion and understanding.

At the time of writing this article, the program has more than 35 volunteers contributing to the program with many of them offering to fulfill more than one role or work on multiple modules. Students and alumni have identified that the value of participating in this Learning 2.0 program includes the ability to gain additional experience with Wordpress, digital badges and technological literacies; build evidence for their e-portfolio; learn how to apply their skills in real-life scenarios; and help build a strong, supportive, and interactive alliance for SLIS students and alumni.

"I'm interested in participating in this program both so that I can begin participating in real-world collaborations that can help the LIS community as a whole. I feel like most of my schoolwork up until this point has been specifically geared toward a class or professor's requirements, and I'd really like to start creating things that are more universally useful." --SLIS Student

Program Sustainability

The sustainability of "23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni" is grounded in the program's ability to collaborate with its users and volunteers. Michael Casey commented that a successful "community should be involved in the brainstorming of new ideas and services, they should play a role in planning for their services, and they should definitely be involved in the evaluation and review process."[6] To foster a community of SLIS students and alumni within the 23 Things program, module recommendation forms are integrated throughout the 23 Things site, surveys are distributed to both gather ideas for upcoming modules as well as to vote on the final list for inclusion, and bimonthly "happy hours" are conducted online to hear back from the SLIS community on determining focus, identifying needed technological and learning modules, and developing the next phase of the program.

Stephens demonstrated his vision for the future of libraries as a "space where users will connect, collaborate, create, and care."[7] The "23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni" program is grounded in this philosophy. This program connects students and alumni together to offer support, guidance, and learning on the tools needed for academic and professional success in the LIS field. The program fosters collaboration and creativity as students and alumni work together on program delivery and act as "guides and co-creators"[8] in the learning and discovery process. And finally, the program, and its contributors, care. Students care about owning their paths for success and sharing their knowledge and alumni care about giving back and remaining engaged in their LIS community. "I think any extra modules or ways to assess SLIS skills is great and much needed. This program can boost confidence when someone might not know where they stand after graduating or what they need to work towards before graduating. It is also a great example of new programs LIS professionals can build for their community to promote the profession and learning." --SLIS Alum

Dig into Reading: Great Programming through Networking
by Susan Hart

When Josephine Camarillo, the children's and young adult librarian for the Ellensburg Public Library (EPL) asked for my help writing a list of the contributors to thank for this year's Summer Reading Program success, the list kept growing and growing like a magic bean in a fairy tale. Its impressive length illustrated not only the rich variety of the library's offerings, but also the commitment of our patrons to supporting its community.

Even with a significant forty-four percent increase in participation this year, the total spent was slightly less than what was budgeted for summer programs. While it's true that it is a time of change for most libraries, as economies, political climates and rapidly evolving technology can challenge resources, libraries may find that their most valuable and stable resource is its social capital. Social capital is the relationships or networks established between people that create greater capacities for trust, problem solving and the ability to work together[1]. Because of dynamic community relationships or social capital, the Ellensburg Public Library was able to have a highly successful Summer Reading Program for 2013. The number of registered readers was 790, and program participants totaled 1745.

There are many examples of library community involvement this summer. One, a cupcake enterprise that grew its social capital by donating coupons as reading prizes, directed excited youngsters and a lot of family traffic into a new business. Children's literature inspired the decorations with results like Beatrix Potter bunny-cakes! Another valuable artistic offering was the "Brown Bag Lunch Series" presented weekly for all ages. The organizer, a music professor at Central Washington University, wants her students to engage in the community (creating connections), have opportunities to teach, and get more performance experience. Children in the audience were encouraged to dance and move, parents heard about available lessons and upcoming concerts, and everyone had free opportunities to enjoy live music that is usually reserved for a stuffy concert hall.

As a city department, the EPL will often ask other city departments to contribute to programming. In the past, the police department, the fire department and animal control services have participated. Because of their involvement, this year teens swam in the public pool at midnight, and youngsters gawked over the impressive display of heavy equipment from the Public Works Department. The burly equipment drivers were able to network with the public in a new way and directly receive the full-force awe of children enchanted by big rigs (that dig!). Who knew a sewer sucker could be so cool?

"Can I drive the backhoe next?"

An alliance that many libraries heavily rely upon is the volunteer. We really need and appreciate our remarkable teen volunteers at EPL. Not only do we benefit from their enthusiastic willingness to work each week, but we also get to help support their goals and dreams as our relationships develop. For example, volunteers Leslie Bourne and Grace Pearson, a duct-tape artist and a creative writer, were instructors for Creation Stations, a program where teens explore artistic mediums. While EPL and the teen participants benefitted from Bourne and Pearson's presentations, what they gained was a confidence grown by sharing talent with peers, organization of thought and materials required for teaching, and a valuable experience of connecting with their community in a new way. Additionally, EPL has fabulous duct-tape art now on display! It is a cycle of win-win-win for everybody.

Finally, an extraordinary example of social capital's value is the efforts of first grade teacher, JoAnn Duncan. Recognizing how much children need to regain academically each fall after a summer of not reading, Duncan champions the Summer Reading Program by rallying school enthusiasm with friendly competitions. For in-

Susan Hart works as the youth services assistant for the Ellensburg Public Library.

"Duct tape bracelet anyone?"

stance, the first class with all students signed up gets a pizza party. This has evolved into an informal competition between all of the elementary schools. And, this year more teachers have joined Duncan to privately purchase a van. With the help of private donors, librarians and many others, the van was filled with children's books. In order to keep their students reading, this van traveled a regular weekly route checking out books to children throughout the summer. Summer programs and van routes ran separate from school programming and regulation. "It was fun to have spontaneous play and learning without paper work and evaluations," said Duncan.

A traditional economic model might regard this self-made book mobile as competition for the Ellensburg Public Library. From the perspective of a librarian who promotes access to information and literacy, these efforts are in alignment with our goals and are an inspiration. From an even broader view that sees a community's health as reliant upon active networks with similar purposes, such efforts like the book van and the Summer Reading Program of 2013 are the evidence of a vital and engaged community.

Notes

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Libraries are transformative learning spaces where the tools and resources for learning, community engagement, public service, play and exploration will not only steadily change, but will require the commitment of its professional library staff to continuously explore emerging technologies, social media trends, and the needs of their community. This commitment to lifelong learning and ongoing professional development is the foundation of why Learning 2.0 programs like 23 Things have proven so successful worldwide.

"23 Things for SLIS Students and Alumni: Essentials Skills for Success" has experienced great success and popularity amongst the SLIS students and alumni as a means to easily adopt new skills for both academic and professional success. As we near the end of the program's initial 23 Things, which will conclude December 11, 2013, students and alumni are asking for more. And so we will enter a new collaborative process as we develop a new vision for the program. Will we extend beyond 23 Things? Will we add new segments or refocus our program for targeted areas of focus? The answers to these questions and more are being explored and will be determined through the collective and collaborative efforts of SJSU's SLIS students and alumni.

Notes

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Understanding Your Library's Public Access Technology Usage

by Samantha Becker

Washington Information School (iSchool) librarians know that access to public computers and the Internet are popular and increasingly necessary resources among their patrons. But most librarians only have a general impression of how patrons use their library's technology. They glean insight from over-the-shoulder glimpses of patrons' computer screens and cull basic statistics about the number of sessions they host. But without a richer, more accurate picture of how library technology is used, librarians lack important information that can help shape services and result in better outcomes for patrons and their communities. With 344 public library outlets serving nearly seven million people, librarians across Washington face the challenge of providing technology services to a growing and increasingly dynamic population. In addition, how patrons use technology services at the library may vary significantly across the state.

Communities in Eastern Washington are likely to seek out different services than communities in the Seattle area. Therefore, it is critical that library staff have the tools to understand the unique technology needs of their communities so they can improve services for patrons.

Such a tool exists, and it's free.

> **" "…without a richer, more accurate picture of how library technology is used, librarians lack important information that can help shape services and result in better outcomes for patrons and their communities. "**

How the Impact Survey is Already Improving Technology Services
A research team at the University of Washington Information School has developed the "Impact Survey," an online service designed to help public libraries in the U.S. assess how their communities use technology at the library, and how that has had a positive impact on the lives of their patrons.

The Impact Survey grew out of the 2009 U.S. IMPACT Study, the first large-scale U.S. study assessing how people use technology services at public libraries. The study was conducted by researchers at the University of Washington iSchool in partnership with the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings of the study were published in the 2010 Opportunity for All report, which showed how individuals and communities benefit from technology services at public libraries. To augment the survey results, researchers developed a supplemental web survey and enlisted libraries across the country to help collect responses through their websites.

In 2009 and 2011, eighteen Washington library systems, from Yakima to Bellingham, participated in the U.S. IMPACT Study and surveyed their patrons using the supplemental web survey. Collectively, these library systems serve more than 5.5 million Washingtonians. These libraries yielded a high-response rate from their patrons – 2,211 in 2009 and 4,820 in 2011. This provided their librarians with rich data that illustrated how their communities benefitted from their technology services. In appreciation for their help with the research, these eighteen library systems received polished reports detailing the survey responses provided by their patrons.

In response to the overwhelming positive feedback from participating public libraries, the research team at the iSchool developed a more sophisticated and cost-effective version of the survey tool—the Impact Survey—and have made it available to all U.S. public libraries for free through 2014. The survey focuses on how patrons use technology in education, employment, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, eGovernment, civic engagement, eCommerce, and social inclusion.

Advancing Libraries Through Community Insight
Collecting patron-level data is a key part of any library's internal

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Samantha Becker is the U.S. IMPACT Study Research Project Manager at the University of Washington Information School.

| Run the Impact Survey at your library | SO THAT YOU CAN | Learn about your library patrons' unique digital needs | SO THAT YOU CAN | Make smart decisions about internal strategies and resource allocation | AND CAN | Effectively advocate for support and funding for your library's technology services | SO THAT YOU | Provide high-quality technology services to patrons and improve digital inclusion in your community |

planning and strategy process. According to the Edge Initiative, (http://www.libraryedge.org) a national public library assessment program that evaluates and supports technology service improvement, surveying patrons and stakeholders is a key step in assessing community needs and advocating for new resources, projects and public support. This includes asking patrons about the technology services at the library.

Capturing this type of information is critical if libraries are to continue to provide useful services and positive outcomes for patrons. Further, having data to compare from year to year can help libraries identify trends, evaluate performance and create improvement plans.

> " **The survey focuses on how patrons use technology in education, employment, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, eGovernment, civic engagement, eCommerce, and social inclusion.** "

Survey provides libraries with small snippets of HTML code they can insert into their websites. The code creates "hot links" to buttons, banners, and/or links that direct patrons to the survey, which is hosted at the iSchool.

Results are available the day after a library has completed its survey period. Not only do libraries receive a clean dataset of their survey responses, they also can choose among a variety of attractive preformatted reports, including handouts, articles, and presentations, all populated with local results and ready to take directly to community leaders, funders, and staff.

Comprehensive support for using Impact Survey is available to libraries five days a week. iSchool research assistants are trained in every aspect of the service. They're available to walk library staff through hosting the survey, to help promote the survey with patrons, and to help library staff understand the reports and use them for advocacy and internal planning.

Demonstrating Your Library's Value Has Never Been Easier
Even as states like Washington rebound from the economic recession, funding for many libraries continues to be a struggle. The Impact Survey provides librarians and their supporters with the data they need to quantify the value of technology services and make strong arguments with local decision makers who in today's policy environment are more likely to respond to data than they are purely anecdotal evidence.

Surveying Patrons is Fast and Easy
The Impact Survey is designed to get data into the hands of busy librarians quickly and easily, saving them the time and costs associated with writing, programming, analyzing, and reporting an in-house survey. The Impact Survey's questions have been written and validated by the iSchool's research team so that librarians can be assured that the questions are relevant, valid, and reliable. Implementing the survey locally is as easy as copying and pasting, and can be done by most libraries in a matter of minutes. The Impact

Public libraries in Washington can learn more about the Impact Survey and how to run the survey at their own libraries by visiting www.impactsurvey.org. The survey will be free until Oct. 1, 2014. After that, libraries will be asked to contribute a small annual fee that will directly support maintenance of the Impact Survey and its services.
📖

People and Places

Thanks to a Paul G. Allen Family Foundation/
Faye G. Allen Library Program grant, children in
kindergarten through third grade will build science
and learning skills through a Science to Go program-
-to be launched next year--at **Pierce County Library
System.** The $175,000 grant is the single largest
donation to <u>Pierce County Library Foundation</u>. This
two-year grant funds an eighteen-month position
for a librarian, who will coordinate a community
advisory committee to design curriculum and
programming. It also provides 2,000 science-related
nonfiction books, 550 backpacks, science kits, and
outreach to Bethel, Franklin Pierce and White River
School Districts.

The Pierce County Lakes District community
celebrated 50 years of service last August at the
Flora B. Tenzler—now **Lakewood Pierce County
Library**—building. More than 350 people partici-
pated in a day-long celebration with library and
community leaders, music, refreshments, and family activities. Residents
shared library stories in a book at Lakewood Library and on the library's
Facebook page, viewed historical photos, news articles and more in the
library's gallery, and heard a historian talk about Lakewood and the
library. The American Library Association, American Institute of Archi-
tects, and National Book Committee awarded the Tenzler Library with
a First Honor Award in 1964.

Photo courtesy of Melissa Ng

Lakewood Pierce County Library celebrated 50 years of service with fun events for all ages.

Early Learning Public Library Partnership, Foundation for Early
Learning and **Pierce County Library System** partnered to sponsor a
free hands-on science and learning event outdoors at **Sumner Pierce
County Library** this summer. More than 100 children and 65 adults
tried hands-on outdoor science, technology, engineering and math
activities in the company of many books. Families and friends gathered
and selected books and activities from stacked, lightweight cubes that
form what is called a UNI. The UNI project won the 2013 National
Book Award's Innovation in Reading Award for fostering a stronger,
more prominent culture of reading and learning at street level.

Photo courtesy of Melissa Ng

Sumner Pierce County Library brings learning outdoors with the UNI project, which emphasizes STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics).

Dear Ms. Dewey

by Kirsten Edwards

Kirsten Edwards

Every so often Ms. Manners is called upon to arbitrate a question of library etiquette. The dear lady does her best, but she isn't always savvy to the realities of modern library life. For example, one librarian wrote in to ask her advice about the polite way to handle patrons who snap their fingers, whistle, and shout, "Hey! Library Lady! Over Here!" Ms. Manners was understandably outraged: those rudesbys need to learn the difference between a public servant and a personal slave! or words to that effect. Perhaps Ms. Manners is unaware that in today's high-demand world of Free! Library! Internet Access!, the patrons circle the computer terminals like wolves around a limping caribou. It's as much as his computer time is worth for the beleaguered library patron to get up and cross the building to ask the staff member at the service desk for help.

> ❝ **Perhaps Ms. Manners is unaware that in today's high-demand world of Free! Library! Internet Access!, the patrons circle the computer terminals like wolves around a limping caribou.** ❞

One day soon, a combination of roving reference staff and computer communication technology will obviate the dilemma. Until then: there's Ms. Dewey.

Dear Ms. Dewey,
Our library is located near seismically active fault lines. After the last quake, the library was a real mess. What gives?
-- Nettled in Nisqually

Gentle Librarian,
They were using the Richter System. While generally inferior to the Dewey Decimal System, many teenagers and small children seem to prefer it, if their bedrooms are any indication.

Dear Ms. Dewey,
Last rainy season, a large hairy library patron came in one morning, complaining that his car seat was wet and muddy. I managed not to say, "how nice for you," and offered him the multi-page completed "holds" printout from the recycle bin. He seemed grateful, but just before we closed he came back, thanked us, and returned the dripping wet, muddy sheets to the circulation desk. What should I have done?
--Deluged in Duvall

Gentle Librarian,
Say "You're welcome," while blocking with the nearest trash can.

Dear Ms. Dewey,
Patrons say to me all the time, "I don't suppose you could help me, but I'm looking for a book. I don't recall the title or the author but it's about this high," and they hold up their hands maybe nine inches apart, "and kind of thick."
--Perplexed in Puyallup

Gentle Librarian,
You have two options. The first: Lead the patron to the children's section: point out all the picture books and readers.

When not impersonating a library manners guru, Kirsten Edwards is a teen services librarian at the Duvall and Carnation Libraries in King County, WA.

I'd Rather Be Reading

Engage! With Classic Science Fiction

by Audrey Barbakoff

Audrey Barbakoff

My lifelong passion for reading was nurtured in a basement stuffed with shelves groaning under the weight of my father's old science fiction paperbacks. You know the ones I mean – those books with hideous abstract sepia covers, or worse, cartoonish action shots of well-endowed women being rescued from tentacled aliens, or macho military men with ridiculously oversized guns, or both.

It's easy to overlook these classic science fiction books. But crack open the cheesy covers (thankfully often updated in later printings) and the words inside can be powerfully relevant. Their brilliantly-crafted characters and worlds ask ethical questions about man's choices that are as poignant and thought-provoking as ever. These are timeless explorations of the intersection of technology and humanity, and of what it means to be part of the latter in the most extreme of circumstances. Furthermore, many are excellent, sophisticated read-alikes for some currently popular titles for teens and adults. That's handy, because I want to recommend these books to everyone I meet!

Post-apocalyptic books may seem like they've taken over our shelves lately, especially in the wake of the mega-popular *Hunger Games* series, but the end of the world has never really felt closer than it did during the Cold War arms race. Brilliant writers of the time imagined the world after nuclear war in works like *Alas, Babylon* by Pat Frank, *On the Beach* by Nevil Shute, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller, Jr., and one of my all-time favorite short stories, *Fermi and Frost* by Frederik Pohl. Though it's disease, not detonation, that ravages the world in *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart and Clay's Ark, an installment in Octavia Butler's Patternist series, I love them for the same reasons.

Other dystopias explore what will happen not if our society ends, but if we let it reach its extremes. These twisted futures have long been a popular vehicle for examining the outer reaches of human ethics and emotions, which makes for extremely captivating stories. For a truly bleak and highly compelling vision of an authoritarian collectivist future, don't miss *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin; it is one of those books that has stayed with me for years after reading. Cyberpunk fathers Neal Stephenson and William Gibson venture into edgier, technology-mediated, fragmented futures in *Snow Crash* and *Neuromancer*, respectively. Some writers choose instead to examine the effects of technology on just a few people, rather than a whole world. I cry my eyes out every time I try to describe *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes, so you're just going to have to look it up yourself. When it comes to examining our possible futures, however, for me nothing holds a candle to Isaac Asimov's genius *Foundation* series, in which a mathematician realizes that the behavior of large groups of people is highly predictable and creates a plan for the entire human universe lasting thousands of years.

> **"…nothing holds a candle to Isaac Asimov's genius Foundation series, in which a mathematician realizes that the behavior of large groups of people is highly predictable and creates a plan for the entire human universe lasting thousands of years."**

Hollywood has taken a shine to adaptations of science fiction and fantasy works, which creates an opportunity for us to rediscover those books and others like them. With *Ender's Game* (itself a sci-fi standard) making its big-screen debut, Orson Scott Card's story of a child soldier will find itself with legions of new fans. If you're avoiding Card's works because of his infamous personal beliefs or just tired of waiting on the holds list, Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, a political tale of battles with alien "bugs," is a clear read-alike. I personally prefer *The Forever War* by Joe Haldeman, which explores what it means to fight for a way of life only to come home and realize it no longer has a place for you. John Scalzii's excellent Old Man's War also deserves a mention, though it may be too early to call a book from 2005 a classic. For those who prefer dragons to dungeons, who love Eragon and Seraphina, science fiction's answer to you is Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonriders of Pern* series.

Audrey Barbakoff is an Adult Services Librarian at Kitsap Regional Library. She is a 2013 Library Journal Mover & Shaker, a 2013 ALA Emerging Leader, and a lifelong proud science fiction nerd.
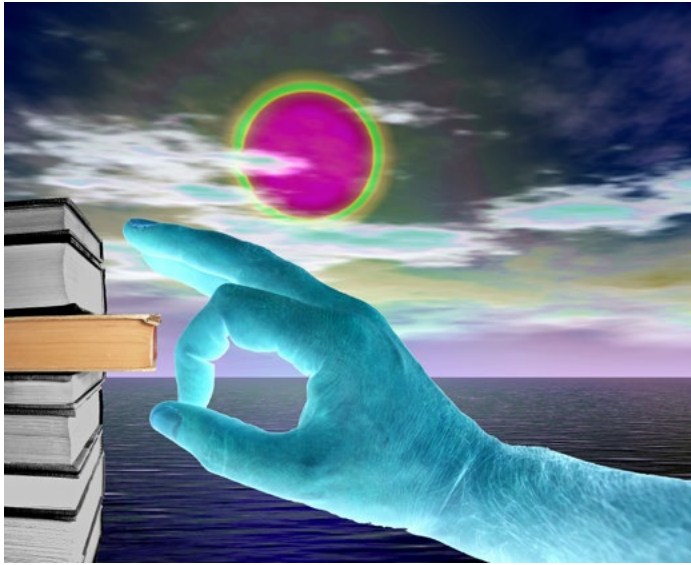
Many of the books I've mentioned so far focus on humans, but when most of us think of science fiction, we think of alien creatures and planets. To me, the best alien books are the ones that use the contrast to push us to consider what humanity truly means. Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* examines the meaning of gender by introducing us to a race where gender is fluid. James Tiptree Jr., a master of the science fiction short story, dissects sentience and instinct in a very unusual way with *Love is the Plan the Plan is Death.* In David Brin's *Uplift* series, a species' place in the galactic hierarchy is determined by the species it has "uplifted," or helped evolve into sentience. Sometimes the most interesting aliens are the ones we do not see; Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama* explores how humanity would react to the appearance of a silent alien ship, while Larry Niven's *Ringworld* takes us to an artificial planet of unknown origins. And if the phrase "winter is coming" chills your Game-of-Thrones-loving bones, try Brian Aldiss' *Helliconia* series, set on a planet where seasons last for hundreds of years. My favorite of all of these, however, is a book I read first as a teenager, which has remained a lifelong favorite. It is the story of a biological human, raised by Martians and finally returned to Earth, human but not: *Stranger in a Strange* Land by Robert A. Heinlein.

Although there are still so many wonderful books left unmentioned, I'll have to stop myself here unless WLA offers me space for a 3000-word tribute to *Audrey's Top Classic Sci-Fi Picks*. I hate to leave out fantastic, life-changing authors like Vernor Vinge, Philip K. Dick, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Greg Bear, but I hope you'll discover them for yourself. 📖

Solinus

These books are too skinny to meet your patron's criteria. Guide them through the media (CDs, DVDs, computer programs, etc.) and point out that they are all not books. Thus having narrowed the search down, encourage the patron to browse the remaining 100,000 or so titles at their leisure: "Enjoy!" Alternatively, you could take the patron to an OPAC and pull up any book record entry. Point out the author and title links. Explain that these and other hyperlinked parts of the record (such as the subject) have been indexed and are searchable. Then show him the dimensions note. Explain that if you only had the available funds to build (or purchase) the expensive staff time and/or software to create the necessary computer tools, you could help the patron search by the book size (and approximate thickness)!

Then hand him a copy of your latest bond issue flyer.

Dear Ms. Dewey,
Recently a patron walked up to me at the circulation desk. I saw that she was carrying one of the laminated "Out of Order" signs we attach to our computers when they're not working. "What does this mean?" she asked. I explained that it meant the computer was broken. She then left the desk and went straight back to the broken computer and tried to use it! Ms. Dewey, at first we placed these signs directly over the broken computer's monitor; but patrons just flipped them aside. Then we taped them down, top and bottom: but they tear them off and bring them to the circulation desk. What's a librarian to do?
--Vexed in Vashon

Gentle Librarian,
Take the keyboard, too.

Dear Ms. Dewey,
Our meeting room is next door to the children's room. Recently three little girls came up to the reference desk to complain that the grown-ups were "too loud" and that they "couldn't read." What should I have done?
--Quieter in Quincy

Gentle Librarian,
Jump for joy? Afterwards, take the little girls to the meeting room where you can all gently encourage the adults therein to "use your indoor voices." Count your blessings: Opportunities like this one don't come along every day!

Gentle readers: Are you also perplexed in this fast-changing world of technological change, social media chaos, and shrinking budgets? Do you yearn for Ms. Dewey's sage advice? Don't direct them to kirstedw@kcls.org. She'll only use them for *Solinus* fodder. 📖

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