“Now Hear This!”: Communication in Libraries

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“Can you hear me now?
Well, why not?”

By Tim Mallory

I’ve sent you e-mail, so I know that within seconds my message “pinged” into your e-mail box. Or whatever sound your e-mail client makes. I’m trying to get mine to make a deep “thud”. Do you think that will help?

“You said you sent it, but I don’t see it in Outlook.”

“Is that your work account?”

“Well, yes, but I usually have Facebook open. I read my e-mail on my iPod.”

“I didn’t send it on Facebook—that’s too unprofessional. I used LinkedIn. You’re on there too, aren’t you?”

“Well, my iPod didn’t receive it, but I was out of range, and it doesn’t tell me whether it’s updated or not. Did you try sending it to my official WLA e-mail?”

“I’m not sure. Is that the old WLA e-mail, or the new WLA e-mail?”

“The old one I remember was SquirrelMail. I’m sure it’s not that one.”

“That old one always showed up in my Yahoo! mail. Will this one show up there?”

“I don’t know. They went to a new interface, and now I don’t know how to find out what accounts go where!”

“Did you look at our shared work space on Google Docs?”

“What’s that? I have Gmail but I can’t figure out what else I can access with that login. I was asked for my e-mail account to access the docs, but none of the e-mail addresses I put in seemed to be the right one.”

“You know, you can use Open Docs to create documents that don’t depend on Microsoft Office so you can read it no matter what computer you’re using.”

“I thought that was Star Office.”

“Oh, it was, but then someone bought it, and now they give it away free. The guy who wrote it is now a billionaire and running for the senate.”

“When I tried to open one of those documents someone created on OpenOffice.org and sent to me as an attachment, Microsoft Word was able to open it for me but I got what looked like a hundred pages of comic-book curses on my screen. Isn’t that what Google™ is using?”

“No, I don’t think they’re using curses—some other form of voodoo. It’s based on their concept of grouping like items together. Sometimes it tells me I’ve lost a whole ‘conversation’ when I delete one e-mail message, so I stopped deleting anything. I must have a couple of dozen e-mails from you in there somewhere. They all have attachments, though, so I don’t know which one is not just your signature file.”

“If I put a graphic in there, it would show up as an attachment too, so did you look for pictures?”

“Do you mean a picture that Windows® can open? I don’t have QuickTime® on my computer, so most pictures people send me won’t open.”

“Well, you told me last time you couldn’t open the stuff I sent you that wasn’t in QuickTime®.

“I was using my friend’s iBook and all the QuickTime® stuff would open, but it choked on all the ‘.wmv’ files people sent me. Those were supposedly on YouTube®, but when I did a search for them I got a bunch of weird movies with similar names. There’s a lot of stuff in there you really don’t want people to think you created. Maybe you should get a different name.”

“What? I already have at least six or seven. Every time I try to sign up for something they make me invent a user name because mine is already taken. In addition to forgetting which password goes to which account, now I can’t remember which fake name to use to sign on with for each account.”

“No wonder I haven’t gotten your message! I have the same problems you do. If we each have seven accounts, and seven possible log-ins, and seven possible passwords, according to Wolfram|Alpha the odds are 117,649 to one against successful communication.”

“What’s Wolfram Alpha?”

“Never mind. Just reach your hand over the cubicle wall, and I’ll hand it to you.”

Communication in libraries. Our electronic tools have made it so simple. See you at the water cooler.
“Alki,” a Native American word meaning “bye and bye,” was suggested by Nancy Pryor, Special Collections at Washington State Library, as the title for the Washington Library Association’s journal. “Alki” is also the state motto, signifying a focus on the future.

Alki (ISSN: 8756-4173) is published three times per year in March, July and December, and mailed to over 700 WLA members and interested parties. Print subscriptions are available at $20 per year, or $7.50 per single issue. Contact the WLA office at the address above.

Alki’s purpose is to communicate philosophical and substantive analyses of current and enduring issues for and about Washington libraries, personnel, and advocates, and to facilitate the exchange of research, opinion, and information.

Direct your submission queries to: Julie Miller
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Erratum The table of contents in the March 2010 issue of ALKI incorrectly lists Ahniwa Ferrari as the author of the article “Renew Your Enthusiasm for Children’s Literature with the OLA/WLA Mock Newbery Workshop.” Sarah Nelsen is the author. The ALKI editor regrets the error.
Top Five Reasons to Be the Alki Editor
by Julie Miller

5. The Alki editor is by definition a member of the core constituency—“writers and editors of scholarly books and journals”—of the Chicago Manual of Style, adept at the placement of commas before the conjunctions of compound sentences and after items in a series (see Section 6.18 through 6.56 of the 15th edition). Not sure whether a pronoun agrees with its antecedent? Section 5.35 has the answer. Unclear about the capitalization of a position title? Section 8.21 covers it.

I find it comforting to know that, as long as I have that bright orange book on my shelf, I don’t have to remember all the rules of usage—I can just look them up. (I acknowledge that only an English-major geek would rank this reason in the top five. Guilty as charged.)

4. The Alki editor has carte blanche to attend various gatherings of the Washington library community, from formal to funky. To develop an interesting issue of Alki, the editor has to find a pool of contributors as varied and interesting as the WLA membership—what a great opportunity to meet people who share a passion for libraries! As Alki editor, I have attended WLA Board retreats (and many meetings), WALE and WLA annual conferences, various library programs and events (Big Read, Get Lit!), and Friends’ meetings, in person and online. At each one, I have gathered ideas for Alki issue themes and articles, and I handed out many business cards. It’s very gratifying to approach a presenter after a great conference session and to say, “I edit Alki, the journal of the Washington Library Association. Are you interested in submitting an article?”

3. Okay, it’s just cool to say, “I edit Alki, the journal of the Washington Library Association.”

2. As Alki editor, a lot of people have your back. First, the Alki Editorial Committee is phenomenal. They come from public, academic, and special libraries, representing urban and rural communities. Some are new to library work and bring a fresh perspective to the issues of the day; others bring long experience and a well developed network of contacts in the Washington library community. They help the editor to identify the issues and trends of interest to the WLA membership. The WLA Board is equally committed to making the journal as strong as it can be. They recognize that Alki is a “value-added” benefit of membership, and they are tireless (albeit sometimes tardy) contributors to the journal.

My first issue as Alki editor was also the first issue produced in collaboration with MCA staff, and they have been tremendously supportive. Tammy Reniche, director of design and publications at MCA, is a layout and design savant; she makes it possible for the editor to focus on the content, rather than the mechanics of putting together an issue. (In short, she makes the editor look good.)

Let me now sing the praises of the columnists, those regular contributors who, issue after issue, delight the readers (and therefore the editor) with prose of wit and style. While I am saddened to report that Angelina Benedetti is taking a break from “Solinus,” you’ll find David Wright in his usual spot, and Kate Laughlin serves up an appetizing preview of the PNLA/WLA joint conference in “The Learning Curve.”

1. The Alki editor has the rare privilege of giving voice to the association—the ultimate channel of communication for WLA. When I began my term as Alki editor two years ago, I knew very few members of the Washington library community outside of academic libraries. Through Alki, I am now connected. At its best, the journal embodies a conversation among the WLA membership, and it has been a joy to join into the conversation.

Bo Kinney will be leading the conversation with the next issue of Alki. Bo works in Special Collections at Seattle Public Library, and he recently served as chair of the Reference Interest Group of WLA. As a member of the Alki Editorial Committee, Bo has been a regular contributor. He’s a fine writer and will be a fine editor as well.
Who’s on First?

An Update on Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library District

On May 6, 2010, the Supreme Court of Washington State ruled on Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library, a case in which three patrons of the North Central Regional Library (NCRL) district and the Second Amendment Foundation, a Washington nonprofit organization, challenged the constitutionality of NCRL’s Internet filtering policy. The Supreme Court found that, under Washington’s constitution, NCRL has the discretion to filter Internet content, much as libraries filter print materials through collection development policy and selection practices. The case now returns to the federal courts.

Both sides of this controversial case have supporters from within the library community. According to the Library Journal, the plaintiffs received support from the American Library Association and its affiliate Freedom to Read organization.¹ The Washington Library Association has remained neutral. WLA President Tim Mallory has stated, “There are finely divided issues at stake here, and we respect the well-thought-out considerations and opinions of those on both sides. Taking a stance would paint a broad brush over these distinctions, and we are hoping for masterful strokes that will allow for the prerogatives of local control while still meeting all the requirements of the public good as expressed in our laws.”²

Because Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library has national as well as regional significance, I decided it was appropriate to bring together excerpts from the Supreme Court of Washington’s majority and dissenting opinions, as well as the relevant articles from the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Washington, for this column. Although there is not enough space to print them in their entirety, I encourage you to read the full documents online at www.courts.wa.gov. And if you haven’t read your library’s collection development and Internet access policies lately, you might want to refresh your memory of them, too.

The issue is complex, and the role of the public library within a democratic society is at the heart of it.

Julie Miller
Alki Editor

References
² Ibid.

The following excerpt is from “FACTS” section of the Supreme Court of Washington State’s majority opinion written by Chief Justice Barbara A. Madsen in Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library (Docket No. 82200-0):

In October 2006, following its earlier use of other software, NCRL implemented the “FortiGuard Web Filtering Service,” a widely used filtering service. Using proprietary algorithms and human review, FortiGuard sorts web sites into 76 categories based upon predominant content. The database catalogues over 43 million web sites and over 2 billion individual web pages. It is continually updated. Anyone can ask for FortiGuard to review its classification of a particular site or page by using an electronic form available on the Fortinet site.

A FortiGate unit, which acts as an intermediary between a computer’s browser and the server, is installed at each of NCRL’s 28 branches. All Internet traffic on NCRL’s public computers is routed through one of these units, which filters content.

NCRL’s FortiGuard filter is configured to block the following of the 76 categories that can be blocked using the FortiGuard system:

- Hacking: Web sites that depict illicit activities surrounding the unauthorized modification or access to programs, computers, equipment and web sites.
- Proxy Avoidance: Web sites that provide information or tools on how to bypass Internet access controls and browse the Web anonymously, includes anonymous proxy servers.
- Phishing: Counterfeit web pages that duplicate legitimate business webpages for the purpose of eliciting financial, personal or other private information from the users.

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ALKI • July 2010
**Adult Materials:** Mature content web sites (18+ years and over) that feature or promote sexuality, strip clubs, sex shops, etc., excluding sex education, without the intent to sexually arouse.

**Gambling:** Sites that cater to gambling activities such as betting, lotteries, casinos, including gaming information, instruction, and statistics.

**Nudity and Risqué:** Mature content web sites (18+ years and over) that depict the human body in full or partial nudity without the intent to sexually arouse.

**Pornography:** Mature content web sites (18+ years and over) which present or display sexual acts with the intent to sexually arouse and excite.

**Web Chat:** Web sites that promote Web chat services.

**Instant Messaging:** Web sites that allow users to communicate in “real-time” over the Internet.

**Malware:** Sites that are infected with destructive or malicious software, specifically designed to damage, disrupt, attack or manipulate computer systems without the user’s consent, such as virus or trojan horse.

**Spyware:** Sites that host software that is covertly downloaded to a user’s machine, to collect information and monitor user activity, including spyware, adware, etc.

NCRL also blocks the Image Search, Video Search, and Spam classifications, certain specific image search web sites, and the “ personals” section of craigslist.org. NCRL also initially blocked but subsequently unblocked access to youtube.com, myspace.com, and craigslist.org (except for the “ personals” section).

In addition, to qualify for certain federal funding, i.e., discounted Internet access and grants available to state libraries, NCRL is required to certify its compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Pub. L. No. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763A-335 (codified at 20 U.S.C. § 6777, 20 U.S.C. § 9134, 47 U.S.C. § 254(h) (2004)). As explained in United States v. American Library Ass’n, 539 U.S. 194, 123 S. Ct. 2297, 156 L. Ed. 2d 221 (2003) (hereafter A.L.A.), CIPA requires libraries to employ measures that prohibit access by minors to depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or otherwise harmful to minors.

NCRL also has a policy that its Internet filter not be disabled at the request of an adult patron. This means that if material is appropriately blocked under the Internet Use Policy, it is not unblocked upon request. However, if the material is erroneously blocked, it can be unblocked upon request.

Plaintiffs Sarah Bradburn, Pearl Cherrington, and Charles Heinlen are patrons of NCRL who use or have used computers that NCRL has made available to access the Internet. Each claims that access to certain web sites was blocked by NCRL’s Internet filter. Plaintiff Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) is a Washington nonprofit corporation dedicated to issues associated with the constitutional right to keep and bear firearms, with about 1,000 members in the counties served by NCRL. SAF has a web site and sponsors on-line publications, including *Women and Guns*. SAF was advised by a member or members that access to its publication www.womenandguns was blocked on NCRL’s computers. Prior to this lawsuit, NCRL had not received any report that this site was blocked and does not contend that it should be blocked. It is not presently blocked. SAF is concerned about possible future blocking.

Plaintiffs brought suit against NCRL, challenging the filtering policy’s constitutionality and, in particular, NCRL’s decision that it would not disable the filter at the request of an adult (except in the case of a site being blocked when it did not in fact fall within a prohibited category such as spyware, gambling, or pornography).

The following excerpt is the “CONCLUSION” section of the Supreme Court of Washington State’s majority opinion written by Chief Justice Barbara A. Madsen in Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library (Docket No. 82200-0):

**CONCLUSION**

A public library has traditionally and historically enjoyed broad discretion to select materials to add to its collection of printed materials for its patrons’ use. We conclude that the same discretion must be afforded a public library to choose what materials from millions of Internet sites it will add to its collection and make available to its patrons. A public library has never been required to include all constitutionally protected speech in its collection and has traditionally had the authority, for example, to legitimately decline to include adult-oriented material such as pornography in its collection. This same discretion continues to exist with respect to Internet materials.

The plaintiffs’ claims of overbreadth, prior restraint, and that NCRL’s Internet filtering policy is an impermissible content-based restriction all fail to account for this traditional and long-standing discretion to select what materials will be included in a public library’s collection.

We conclude that on the factual record presented to us in the district court’s order on certification, the filtering policy suffers from none of the constitutional infirmities under article I, section 5 claimed by the plaintiffs. However, we acknowledge that the federal court will apply the legal guidelines we set forth in this opinion to the facts of the case.

In response to the question certified by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, we answer that in accord with our analysis in this opinion a public library may, consistent with article I, section 5 of the Washington State Constitution, filter Internet access for all patrons without disabling the filter to allow access to web sites containing constitutionally protected speech upon the request of an adult library patron.

**AUTHOR:**

Chief Justice Barbara A. Madsen

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King County Library System Wins 2010 John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award

By Diane Cowles

Marsha Iverson, public relations specialist at King County Library System (KCLS), was sitting on a bus at ALA Midwinter when she met a member of the jury for the John Cotton Dana Award, whose beaming countenance gave it away. KCLS had won! The library system received a $5,000 check presented by the H.W. Wilson Company at an elegant tea at ALA in June. This annual most prestigious award recognizes and honors outstanding achievement in library public relations.

The “Look to Your Library…Especially Now” campaign was King County Library System’s heartfelt response to the needs of their neighbors—89,000 in their service area—who were newly unemployed or who faced business failures and mortgage foreclosures. The library system provided an outreach program that showcased the myriad resources and information for job searching and other help available at the library—in person and virtually. They opened libraries early, held hands-on demonstrations, workshops, and simplified web searches for brand new library users. Their overall goal was to connect patrons to the information and to make it easy for them to get it.

Key partners in this effort were the media. Because the crisis was global and catastrophic, the news media were hungry. It was, as Marsha Iverson wrote in her application for the John Cotton Dana award, “a teachable moment.” The years of vying for media attention to publicize the library’s wealth of free resources available to the public had passed. Now the media were on board fully with visible and frequent references to the “Look to Your Library” campaign. The coverage—print, broadcast media, and web—was local, national, and international. The hallmark for this unique effort was KCLS’s ability to integrate programming and events to the advertising and public service announcements occurring in real time.

Marsha revels in the realization that the library’s offerings did help so many people when it was most needed. She states that one key ingredient to success was the ability “to channel your audience and target your communications to understand your audience.” It was important not just to tell people what the library had to offer them but also, she emphasizes, to simply “be effective.” For Marsha, it was essential that library patrons who are new to technology be able to effectively navigate the web site within one or two clicks. The campaign’s strategy was to view the library’s resources from a non-user’s perspective, using easily understood terms and easy-to-see buttons such as “Searching for a Job?” or “Bills Piling Up?”.

Within the library system, front-line staff called attention to the changes and needs in patrons as the financial crisis grew. The library staff at Bellevue Regional pulled together all the information they could find on agencies and organizations that could help job seekers. The system began extensive staff training and pulled in community liaisons, Friends groups, and volunteers to help. The library leadership decided to invest in more staff time and energy by opening the libraries with additional hours. Throughout the initiative, the library was careful to make a distinction between offering resources and information to patrons and not guaranteeing jobs. The campaign was a comprehensive, effective, and all-out effort by staff, library leadership, and the Communications Team to address an historic event.

Along with the John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award, KCLS was a finalist for the annual Non-Profit Public Relations Award given by PR News (a professional communications publication), and it won the Telly Award for Video and Public Service Spots. All awards recognize the excellence that KCLS showed in responding effectively to their neighbors in crisis and in need.

Is your library launching an exciting public relations campaign? Now is the time to apply for the John Cotton Dana Award for 2011. Entries must be received by the first Friday in December.

Diane Cowles is Children’s Librarian at the Seattle Public Library’s Beacon Hill branch and a member of the Alki Editorial Committee.

The “Look to Your Library … especially Now” Web page.
Is your library launching an exciting public relations campaign? Now is the time to apply for the John Cotton Dana Award for 2011. Entries must be received by the first Friday in December.

Outstanding in your field?

2011 Competition Invitation and Overview

Sponsored by the H. W. Wilson Company, the John Cotton Dana Award honors outstanding strategic communication for libraries: the art and craft of getting the right message to the right audience at the right time, and getting the right results.

Successful communication strategies incorporate all the relevant tools of the trade, from marketing and public relations to advertising and community partnerships.

The contest is open to all libraries, agencies and associations that promote library service. The only exclusions are institutions represented by John Cotton Dana Award Committee members, organizational units of the American Library Association, and H.W. Wilson Company.

What to Enter
If you’ve discovered innovative ways to promote summer reading or reach out to a new audience, enter it. If you have conducted a successful campaign for a new library or special project, enter it. If you have created an effective awareness campaign, or an innovative partnership that has solved a problem or met a community need, enter it. If you’re proud of your work, and want feedback from top library communicators, enter it.

The jurors will focus primarily on your strategic communication campaign more than the subject, whether the content of the communication is a major event, new project or creative problem-solving challenge. If the subject of your strategic communication campaign is also a brilliant new idea that revolutionizes your library or its role in your community, so much the better!

A strong entry will clearly:
1. Describe your communications challenge—WHY will you need a communication plan, and what will it need to do? (in your Needs Assessment narrative)
2. Design and sharpen your strategic goals, objectives and strategic messages for meeting the challenge (in your Strategic Communication Plan narrative)
3. Detail how you implement your strategic communication plan, and showcase the techniques and materials you use (in your Implementation narrative)
4. Review your results and tell what you learned along the way (in your Evaluation narrative)
5. Demonstrate your strategic communication plan from beginning to end—in a clear, concise visual display and narrative—in a presentation folio or binder with your narrative and your best examples of the products, the campaign and the results.

Deadline: Entries must be received by the first Friday in December

Questions? Contact JCD Committee Chair Kim Terry: kterry@metrolibrary.org or (405) 606-3750.
Innovative Partnerships between Libraries and Local Governments Can Help to Improve Communities

by Erin Krake

We usually communicate with our city and county managers with one main goal—to insure adequate funding levels for our libraries. We tell them all the wonderful things we do and what a great return on investment we give the taxpayers. In turn, they give us the funding we need to keep it up. But what we really want is to improve our communities—make them stronger, more sustainable, more livable. And, chances are, the managers of our local governments do, too.

Establishing a strong and ongoing relationship with our city and county managers can improve our communities on a broader scale than what we can accomplish through traditional library services on our own. For example, many Washington libraries have positioned themselves as a valuable resource for the unemployed in the last two years. We have offered résumé building software, set up a suite of online resources for job-seekers, taught people how to apply for unemployment benefits, and helped them fill out online applications.

But imagine what else may be accomplished if a library manager and a city manager worked together to bring an entirely new industry into their area by leveraging the library to provide the services to make it possible. In Virginia, the community of Buena Vista did. Working with their city managers, the Rockbridge Regional Library created a call-center program that trains citizens in their service area to become effective incoming call-center representatives. The city actively markets the center and its pre-trained individuals to corporations looking for cost-effective call-center services, and it encourages other businesses to establish their own permanent call-center operations in the area.

A similar initiative sprang from a strong library-city partnership in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Solar Test-Bed Library Project will position the library as the city’s incubator for local solar business development and will stimulate fledgling green businesses. The system will also create electricity, reducing the city’s utility use and carbon footprint.

These programs were made possible by one of nine Public Library Innovation Grants given by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The ICMA is a non-profit organization with 9,000 members that aims to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a multi-billion dollar foundation that granted $3 billion in 2009. Its domestic program seeks to ensure that all people in the United States, especially those with the fewest resources, have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

Together, they developed the library grant program because they recognize the importance of the manager-librarian relationship to create and sustain change. The grants support projects developed by local governments that use their public libraries to address local needs and to provide new services with lasting benefits to their communities. And the resulting programs are a testament to what strong partnerships between our local institutions can bring to our communities.

Half a million dollars went to a total of nine programs that:
- Expanded early literacy programs into clinics, social service offices, and schools;
- Stemmed criminal recidivism in juvenile offenders with a book discussion program;
- Established a computer training and call center to stimulate economic development;
- Designed, installed, and operated a solar-generated energy system within its local economy;
- Raised citizen awareness of hurricane safety;
- Engaged citizens on the benefits of storm water management, composting, local food, energy conservation, and smart waste disposal;
- Provided reference, training, and networking opportunities in local Native culture;
- Partnered teens with law enforcement in a “Wired for Safety” program; and
- Developed college and career development workshops for at-risk teens.

Creative programs like these take more than just seed money and faith. To get to this level of partnership requires long-standing, consistent and meaningful communication with the city management team that goes beyond the funding cycle.

For more information about the ICMA Public Library Innovation Grants program, please visit the ICMA web site, www.icma.org. You can also view grant recipients speaking about their respective programs by searching for “ICMA Public Innovation Grants” on www.youtube.com.

Erin Krake, Librarian at Roslyn Public Library, is a member of the Alki Editorial Committee.
As cooperative projects manager at the Washington State Library, Will Stuivenga leads the WSL's Downloadable Audiobooks project.

Many library patrons enjoy listening to books. Those who have lengthy commutes, or those who travel a lot, or those who jog, or garden, or walk, or exercise, and want a distraction while they engage in these mundane activities, frequently turn to audiobooks. Read a book without turning the pages!

Audiobooks have been around for years. Many libraries carry books on tape or CD. Now that audio formats have gone digital, why not audiobooks? Just like music, audiobooks have moved into the digital age. Downloadable audiobooks, sometimes called eAudiobooks, are recorded books with no physical format. Instead, the digital files are made available for distribution electronically.

The user listens to the book on a computer, or better yet, on a portable listening device like an iPod, a Creative Zen, or a Zune. Increasingly, cell phones, especially the so-called “smart phones,” are capable of playing digital sound objects like eAudiobooks. Many of the new eBook readers like the Kindle or Nook can play at least some audiobook files.

According to WebJunction’s Michael Porter, “Libraries need a new electronic content access and distribution infrastructure.” But until that visionary ideal is met, libraries must deal with the infrastructure they have available to them today, one that typically involves vendors. And that means money—something that libraries don’t always have a lot of.

Technology can also be a barrier. Downloadable audiobooks and portable listening devices represent a technology that while embraced by many in our society, is not yet universal. Many library staff are still relatively unfamiliar with this technology. They’ve probably heard about it, seen it, maybe even listened to it, but that doesn’t mean they are comfortable operating it themselves, or in helping their patrons with it. While most of the larger public library systems in Washington have been offering eAudiobooks to their patrons for several years, many smaller libraries have not. And almost no academic or school libraries had adopted this technology prior to the current project.

Here’s where the Washington State Library (WSL) comes in. The Library Development Program at WSL has as one of its goals expanding access to information in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries. The WSL downloadable audiobooks project is definitely aimed toward that goal. The means to this end include the use of LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funding, provided via the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Under the WSL Downloadable Audiobooks project, libraries are offered the opportunity to subscribe to various eAudiobook packages at a reduced cost. LSTA funds pay at least half the costs for the initial year, and by issuing a statewide RFP (Request for Proposals), reasonable prices have been negotiated on behalf of Washington libraries.

Two vendors, NetLibrary and OverDrive, have been selected for group licensing. The OverDrive option is only available to public libraries without an existing OverDrive subscription, serving a population of fewer than 100,000. The NetLibrary collections are available to all public, academic, and K-12 school libraries in the state. The sale of NetLibrary by OCLC to EBSCO, announced mid-March, added complexity to the license negotiation process.

As of the last week in May, forty public libraries, nine academic libraries (five two-year and four four-year institutions), and over 343 K-12 schools have signed up to participate. The exact number of schools is difficult to calculate because some entire school districts...
“Think It, Ink It”: Reevaluating the Printed Page in the Age of Google

By James Greene

So, here is the set-up: Typical undergraduates charge to and from classes while texting away on their cell phones. They simultaneously carry on “conversations” with several friends, send e-mails, listen to tunes, update their Facebook status, and, oh yeah, there may be some studying going on as well. For some reason they have to enter that giant building in the center of campus—you know, the one with all the books. But on this day, when they enter the library, they are confronted with something they are unlikely to have seen before. Their eyes are pulled away from the 3-inch phone screen as they survey the scene. A gang of ink-stained students in aprons is assembled around a printing press (in this case a small screen-printing rig), engaged in the act of physically printing pages of words and images—right there in the library lobby! The students in aprons clip the wet prints onto a clothesline to dry, and a sign urges students to take a free print.

Hundreds of students witnessed “Think It, Ink It!”, a program that printmaking and English composition students organized for Spring Quarter at Eastern Washington University (EWU). During the months of April and May, student printmakers could be seen at work every Thursday from noon to two-o’clock in the JFK Library lobby on the EWU campus in Cheney. Think It Ink It! was even more successful than originally imagined, with small crowds of onlookers forming around the press each week, many of them returning week after week to score new prints. Extra aprons were brought for those student bystanders curious enough to pull a print themselves.

“Just as the value of vinyl records is not lost on the hip-hop generation, the printed page may very well be the next cool ‘old-school’ artifact, coveted for its unique properties.”

The accumulated printed posters (created with a social conscience by both English and art students) were distributed around the library in a variety of innovative ways. One student created a second clothesline near the exit, another handed them out to passersby, and a few sneaky students found ways to hide printed “Easter eggs” within the stacks themselves—with library permission, of course. The enthusiasm the inky-fingered students showed for the medium was contagious. I could almost hear the gears turning inside students’ heads as they mused on

“Students in printmaking and English composition courses make prints in the lobby of JFK Library at Eastern Washington University.

James Greene is a Lecturer of Art at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, WA. The son of a reading teacher, he is a staunch supporter of the printed page.
Two of the prints made by EWU students for "Think It, Ink It!"

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Producing Library Podcasts
(When It Makes Sense)

by Kara Fox

“New technologies are endlessly fascinating to study, but I continue to believe that the key to productivity lies in understanding people... If we base strategic planning on a deep knowledge of our community’s likes and dislikes, the services we craft can make vital contributions to the life of the community—online or ‘analog’” —from “Mapping Your Digital Community in Five Steps” Computers in Libraries, March 2010, p. 28).

Why & How We Got Started

The Everett Public Library (EPL) has a Northwest History Room, with two full-time historians on staff and outstanding digital, print, and archival collections. For years, EPL historians have been giving live local history presentations and tours in Everett and throughout Snohomish County. These are always popular programs, but they are limited to those able to physically attend them.

In January 2010 The Everett Public Library podcast program received the League of Snohomish County Heritage Organization’s Malstrom Special Recognition Award ‘for the adaptation of new technologies in interpreting local and regional history, producing exceptionally well-documented, accessible and interesting new information beyond the traditional responsibilities of libraries and enhancing special skills of individuals with collaborative efforts.’

In 2007 we began a strategic planning process that was to include a telephone survey of Everett residents. Because our digital Northwest collections had proved so popular, we were thinking about how we might use other technologies to expand the scope and reach of this very important library service. Podcasts seemed like an obvious possibility, so we used the survey to get a sense of community interest in local history podcasts. Results indicated the interest was there. One of our first projects was a walking tour podcast of the Evergreen Cemetery, a historic Everett cemetery and the scene of a perennially popular Northwest Room tour. Seattle news station KOMO News 4 featured this podcast on Halloween 2008, the day the podcast went live, and it received an award for public education from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in May 2009.

We have also experimented with recording popular library programs, like J.A. Jance’s author talk, and launching a readers’ advisory podcast series called “The Lone Reader.” Written and produced by librarian Cameron Johnson, the Lone Reader offers book essays to promote the library’s collection creatively and to publicize our readers’ advisory services. Every six weeks we record a Director’s Podcast, which is a short recap of library programs and news, written and recorded by Eileen Simmons and produced by Kara Fox.

The most recent podcast project, “Everett Voices,” features oral history interviews with Everett pioneers. Originally recorded by historians David Dilgard and Margaret Riddle in the 1970s, historian Melinda Van Wingen and librarian Cameron Johnson have compiled and edited excerpts to produce thematic presentations on such topics as the circus and firefighting in Everett. As an Everett Herald article recently stated, “The project...is a fascinating peek into the lives of local people during the early 1900s, a time when Everett workers made shingles, not airplanes.”

How to Start Your Own Library Podcasts

To begin, the EPL podcast team researched equipment needs and costs, production requirements, and the best (quietest) place to record in the library. We also agreed on the project management and Web site requirements; this early conversation has helped the program run smoothly from the start.

We ultimately decided to purchase a Marantz recorder (Marantz Professional Solid State Recorder PMD660) and a good-quality microphone (EV Shock-Mounted Dynamic Omni Directional microphone) for recording. We selected Audacity software for editing, which is great free, open source audio editing software. We have since purchased a license for Adobe’s Audition editing software for enhanced editing. These few pieces of hardware and software are the main equipment we use, and they do a great job.

If your library is considering podcasting, the recorder and microphone will be the biggest startup costs. Some libraries and other organiza-

Kara Fox is a librarian at Everett Public Library.

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tions use free telephone recording services or other, less expensive options. However, if your budget allows for about $800 to get started, this is a great set-up for basic, high-quality production.

Production & Going Live

Once a podcast file is complete—after a process of recording, editing, and creating the final mp3 file—we submit each podcast to iTunes and post it on EPL's Web site at www.epls.org/podcast.

In the editing stage, we often use free music and sound effect files from Creative Commons, Freesound, and Sound Click. In cases where we would like to use other music sources in a podcast, we contact the original artist for permission. In every case, we take care to properly attribute the work of any artist we incorporate into the podcasts.

We often create a digital image collection to accompany the podcasts, especially for Northwest history content, either using our pre-existing CONTENTdm digital collections and/or flickr.com, depending on the nature of the podcast and the visual resources we have to support it. We always provide a printable map to go with the walking tour podcasts.

Evaluation

An important aspect of podcasting, as with any project, is evaluation. Why podcast, how to measure success, what do people want to hear, etc., are important criteria against which to measure success and value. EPL had over 6,000 listeners in 2009, which exceeded our initial expectations.

Local history podcasts are a way to make valuable and unique content widely available, whether to someone who missed an in-person program in Everett, Washington, or to someone who just wants to learn about Northwest history in Everett, Massachusetts. In fact, several people have contacted EPL from other parts of the country to tell us how much they enjoy listening.

In January 2010 our podcast program received the League of Snohomish County Heritage Organizations’ Malstrom Special Recognition Award “for the adaptation of new technologies in interpreting local and regional history, producing exceptionally well-documented, accessible and interesting new information beyond the traditional responsibilities of libraries and enhancing special skills of individuals with collaborative efforts.”

But local history isn’t the only reason to podcast. Podcasts can help promote the library’s collection, resources, programs, and services. This promotional aspect has certainly been successful in Everett, with strong listenership, along with media and award recognition. These outcomes assure us that the strategic plan research was correct and that this is a worthwhile use of the library’s time and money for now. I believe library podcasts help put libraries on the map in people’s lives and help them to see libraries as information leaders and innovators in their community.

Lessons Learned

The main things to consider when starting a library podcast program include: the significant amount of time, effort, and knowledge required of several staff for different purposes (several hours per podcast); the quality (and thus resource allocation) you want to achieve with content and production; and the ways in which podcasts integrate with the library’s overall strategic initiatives.

This initiative has been incredibly fun, creative, challenging, and successful. If your library decides to try podcasting, my best recommendation is to be organized, creative, and collaborative. In Everett, school groups, families, teachers, and community members frequently tell us that the podcasts are enhancing their lives by learning about local history in a contemporary format. Listener statistics continue to grow, for our oldest as well as our newest podcasts.

References

2 “Hear the Voices of Everett’s Past” Everett Herald, April 29, 2010.
3 The EPL podcast team is David Dilgard, Kara Fox, Cameron Johnson, and Melinda Van Wingen, with technology support from Kevin Duncan and Doug Oakes, and writing and recording by Director Eileen Simmons and, on occasion, community members.
4 There are countless great sources available for podcast research and development. A few that I found particularly helpful while starting out include http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/ and Podcast Solutions by Michael W. Geoghegan and Dan Klass (Apress 2007).
5 http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
6 http://creativecommons.org/
7 http://www.freesound.org/
8 http://www.soundclick.com/
9 http://epls.org/nw/digital.asp
10 http://www.snocoheritage.org/malstromawards.htm
NEWSBridge is a free news service produced by the Technical Library at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). Developed by library staff members in late 2004 to early 2005, it is loosely based on the Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s ORNL in the News. NEWSBridge delivers headlines each weekday to a subscriber’s desktop, laptop, or mobile device and to the library’s internal and external web sites. While NEWSBridge was designed for our primary customers, PNNL and Hanford Site staff, the news stories have community-wide interest.

Prior to launching the service, the NEWSBridge editing staff spent several months narrowing various search strategies to areas that would be of most interest to PNNL and Hanford Site staff. During this development phase, editing staff also gradually narrowed the sources to those that yield the most relevant articles. As part of the development phase, PNNL staff members outside of the library were asked for their feedback. A Communications staff member provided very helpful and cogent feedback on what sources and types of articles might be of most interest to our targeted audience.

He pointed out the value of giving PNNL staff members news stories about PNNL and how the laboratory and staff are represented in both regional and national news media. For this reason, the same story may run multiple times showing local, regional, and national sources. Other feedback included incorporating stories on local technology businesses and regional technology economic news. Library staff and selected PNNL staff were asked to provide feedback on trial-run issues prior to the public launching of NEWSBridge in February 2005.

PNNL software designers developed a template for creating NEWSBridge issues. The template for input of each day’s news is designed so that the title, Web address, and a short abstract of each article can be easily pasted in that day’s newsletter (see figure 1). The template also enables NEWSBridge editing staff to choose the most appropriate category for each article and a place to credit the source from which the article originates. The article source can either be typed manually into the source field, or it can be selected from an established list. Some news sources require users
“I’m confused on how to look at the articles,” a student asked at the beginning of a recent chat reference session.

The chat librarian, Nancy Huling, wondered what this meant. “Was the student trying to open articles she’d already found? Or was she trying to figure out how to find articles on her topic? Or???”

To get to the student’s real question, Nancy, who is the head of Reference and Research Services at the University of Washington Libraries, had to ask some questions of her own. In this case, it only took two:

“Have you already found articles you want to read?” (she responded that she didn’t know how to use JSTOR or other databases)—that told me that she didn’t have articles and probably did have a subject, hence my next question: ‘What is the topic you’re working on?’ Thankfully, that question elicited the exact information I needed: her topic, which was for a sociology assignment we work with every spring!”

The reference interview—finding out what a patron’s true question is and whether you have answered it—has always been a crucial tool in the reference provider’s belt. After all, it’s not hard to spend a lot of time and energy answering the wrong question. But virtual reference—e-mail, chat, instant messaging, texting, and other online reference services—poses challenges for reference interviewing that make it tempting to skip the process altogether.

When online, many of the natural cues we rely on for communicating are stripped away, leaving reference providers with nothing but the written question itself. Toby Thomas, Seattle Public Library’s Virtual Services librarian, says: “Online, you lack many of the physical and aural cues that help us determine the level, age appropriateness, English language proficiency, mood, urgency, inflections, tone, etc. of messages. It can feel like [a game of] ‘twenty questions’ when you’re just getting started with a reference interview online, because we start from a disadvantage by only seeing the words that are typed in.”

The text-based setting of most virtual reference—chat in particular—poses an additional challenge: you have to be a good typist! Nancy observes that, “despite the use of computers and texting, there are a number of patrons and librarians who do not possess good keyboarding skills and it is a struggle for them to type enough information to be helpful.... I’ve also noticed that typos can completely change the meaning of a sentence: e.g., instead of saying ‘I am now going to recommend some sources’ the librarian types ‘I am not going to recommend some sources.’ You can bet that the patron will decide it’s time to leave the discussion!”

Chat reference can move very fast, and can make reference providers feel that they have to find answers much more quickly than they would at a physical reference desk. As Toby describes it, “In chat reference, you sometimes feel that you need to speed up the interview part and get to the helping part.” But contrary to the expectations of users and reference providers, “what might take just a couple of minutes in person, can turn into a much longer interaction online. For instance, demonstrating how to use online library resources to find articles about a research topic can be done relatively easily in person by showing someone where to click and doing a sample search while they watch. But when we’re helping someone online, we have to provide instructions that are clear and easy to follow, with enough detail that the person can reproduce the search on their own.”

E-mail and other asynchronous questions provide their own pacing problems. Since each response from the patron or the reference provider can lead to a significant wait, reference interviews can be truncated or reduced to a single follow-up or invitation to the patron to write back with further questions, when more complex probing and questioning might really be what’s called for.

Even chat is not truly synchronous. As Nancy explains, “The patron and librarian are sometimes sending messages simultaneously and thus the meaning can be lost—or the back and forth exchange happens so quickly that the librarian can miss some patron dialogue.” According to Toby, the timing of chat responses is an art: “There’s a rhythm that needs to develop when you’re helping someone online so that messages are sequential, and it can be very easy to get out of sync during a chat session. For example, if we ask more than one question at a time, we might not be allowing enough time for the patron to respond to each question. In the virtual reference realm, I think we need to strike a balance between giving time for people to provide us responses to...”
the questions we ask and responding to them regularly enough to let them know that we are still with them.”

Virtual reference has some advantages, too. Nancy pointed out to me that “there are as many barriers and obstacles to conducting the F2F [face to face] reference interview (or dialogue) as there are in the virtual realm. I first recognized this when I helped a student who indicated that his English was poor. His written English was fine and after I’d answered one question, he asked if I could answer a few more. At the end of our conversation, he said he was very grateful for the chat service, since his accent made it impossible for library staff to understand him and he’d given up asking for assistance F2F!”

**Tips for Conducting Reference Interviews Online**

The basic premise of a reference interview is the same no matter the format it’s conducted in: figure out what the patron is actually looking for, and then make sure you’re actually finding it. The following tips and tricks can make the virtual reference interview go a little smoother:

**Communicate clearly.** Clear communication is always important during a reference interview, but it’s particularly important in virtual reference because the patron can’t see what you’re doing. Nancy says, “I usually apologize upfront by saying something like ‘I’m going to need to ask some questions so that I can determine what to recommend.’ And I also thank the patron for being patient (which, of course, helps the person to be patient!).”

It’s particularly important to communicate with chat patrons while you’re searching for information. It’s okay to take some time to perform a search, but just let the person know how long you think it will take, and try to check in frequently to let him or her know how the search is going. “If they don’t get a message from us every minute or two, they don’t know whether we’re actually searching for information or whether the chat software has failed, we’re helping someone else, or we’re just really slow at typing,” says Toby.

**Read the question carefully.** The purpose of a reference interview is to go beyond a patron’s literal question to uncover the true information need. But this doesn’t give you license to ignore the patron’s words. As Nancy puts it: “In live virtual reference, listening = reading. Librarians must read and re-read the patron questions and comments carefully.”

**Be willing to move the question to another format.** Sometimes the best way to get more information from a patron who has asked a question by e-mail is to make a phone call. But, as Nancy cautions, don’t be too hasty to get out of the virtual setting: “If a student asks a hairy research question through chat, the student should not be lectured on why this isn’t a good medium for that question. Rather, the provider should offer some initial assistance and indicate that further work is needed and follow-up will be necessary. The patron should never be made to feel he/she used poor judgment in electing to ask a question through chat/IM.”

**Find out the timeframe.** In all types of virtual reference, it’s crucial to find out what time constraints a patron is under. Don’t assume a person is in a hurry just because he or she is asking a question online. But make sure to find out—there’s no sense spending two days crafting a response to an email question if the patron needs the answer within the hour.

Both Toby Thomas and Nancy Huling are of the opinion that reference providers should not assume too much about patrons’ expectations. “I think we believe that patrons want immediate answers, and in fact we do see that from time to time,” says Nancy. “But we’ve found that most students—and other patrons—simply want guidance in how to get started on their research, and they are also perfectly happy with follow-up.” “I do think that people tend to expect a chat transaction to last a shorter amount of time sometimes,” Toby told me, “but generally patron expectations are the same whether in person or online. People want quick and friendly help—and of course information that helps answer their question!”
Library Legislative Day in Olympia 2010
by Jennifer Wiseman

On Wednesday, March 3, about forty library supporters from all corners of the state and all types of libraries descended on Olympia to participate in the Washington Library Association’s annual Library Legislative Day.

Knowing that the Legislature was dealing with considerable budget shortfalls this year, it was a priority on Legislative Day this year to support and advocate for the Washington State Library (WSL). With the WSL facing a significant budget reduction, participants worked hard to convey the value of the WSL’s resources and services to local community libraries, as well as the importance of the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds that the WSL receives.

In the end, the State Library was able to maintain the federal Maintenance Effort requirement necessary to receive federal funding. Ultimately, engaging our legislators produced positive outcomes, raised awareness about libraries, and enhanced our ability to establish and sustain a long-term relationship with key elected officials.

Jennifer Wiseman is Public Services project manager at King County Library Systems and also serves as coordinator for communications for WLA.

Library Advocates Storm the U.S. Capitol!
by Kristie Kirkpatrick

Representatives from Washington State recently celebrated Library Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. As part of this national event and rally, library supporters from across Washington and the United States gathered on June 29 at the U.S. Capitol to hear speakers and cheer in support of libraries!

To make the most of the advocacy effort, the Washington Library Association pulled together a team of representatives to inform our state’s congressional and senate offices about libraries. Besides sharing statistics and stories from our state, they discussed federal topics that included LSTA funding, literacy, broadband and telecom issues.

Representing Washington State in the congressional visits were: Tim Mallory, WLA President and Adult Services Coordinator at Timberland Regional Library; Kristie Kirkpatrick, Federal Relations co-coordinator and Director of Whitman County Library; Cher Ravagni, WLA Councilor to the American Library Association and Public Services Librarian for The Seattle Public Library; Susan Hildreth, City Librarian for The Seattle Public Library; Dr. Julie Miller, Interim Dean of Libraries at Eastern Washington University; and Mary Carr, Dean of Instructional Services at Spokane Community College.

Back home Rand Simmons, WLA Federal Relation’s other co-coordinator oversaw Advocacy Day efforts that included tweets, e-mails, and calls to Washington’s congressional representatives and senators. Washington’s Federal Library Legislative and Advocacy Network (FLLAN) made these contacts. Washington’s FLLAN consists of 26 library administrators and supporters who serve as the primary point of contact on federal issues related to libraries. These folks work year round conveying the library position to congressional representatives and senators from our state.

If you would like to be involved with federal advocacy effort, please contact the WLA’s Federal Relations team of Rand Simmons at rand.simmons@sos.wa.gov or Kristie Kirkpatrick at kirkpatr@colfax.com.

Kristie Kirkpatrick is co-coordinator of WLA Federal Relations and director of Whitman County Library.
Downloadable Audiobooks for Washington Project Report

registered as a single entity, instead of listing their schools individually. Most of these libraries went live with NetLibrary collections during the month of April.

The NetLibrary collections are from the highly regarded audiobook publisher Recorded Books and are unlimited use, subscription-based collections. This means that these collections—over 1850 titles in the “Core Adult Collection,” over 760 in the “Children and Young Adult Collection,” over 550 in the “Academic Collection” and 125 in the “Audiolibros (Spanish Language) Collection”—are always available, never checked out. Checkout periods are set to three weeks, but this doesn’t prevent additional checkouts.

Libraries that choose OverDrive will join the existing Washington Anytime Library group, organized and previously managed by the Whatcom County Library System. Management of this consortium is moving over to the State Library as part of the statewide project. Sixteen public libraries have selected this option, although ten of them are purchasing one or more NetLibrary collections as well. The OverDrive libraries are currently scheduled for launch at the end of July.

Most of the titles in the Washington Anytime Library are available on a single-title, single-use basis. That is, if a particular book is already checked out, no one else can download that title until the original checkout period has expired. Users can select either a seven- or fourteen-day checkout period. While multiple copies of popular titles are purchased, patrons may need to place holds and wait for especially popular titles. Single-use titles will also be added to the NetLibrary collections in future.

As a part of the promotional efforts surrounding this project, WSL launched a public portal Web site in April. Located at www.sos.wa.gov/library/eAudiobooks/, the portal provides information aimed at both the public, and library staff. For the public, the portal provides links to the Web sites of every Washington public and academic library offering e-audio books to their patrons, regardless of whether or not the library is part of the statewide project. The site also links to useful information on how to download and transfer eAudiobook files from the vendors. It provides links to recommended devices, help for MAC users, an FAQ, and also links to free eAudiobooks and eBooks on the web.

For library staff, there are links to project news and updates, help with each vendor, promotional and marketing materials, information on training, and basic project information including pricing, how to join, and more. Everyone is encouraged to visit the portal and to send suggestions for its improvement.

Schools and libraries can still join the project. For more information, please visit the portal site, or contact Will Stuivenga: will.stuivenga@secstate.wa.gov or (360) 704-5217.

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SAVE THE DATE!

WLMA/WALE 2010
CONFERENCE

October 14-16, 2010
Doubletree Hotel
at Sea-Tac, WA

The banquet speaker will be renowned author, poet, screenwriter, filmmaker, and stand-up comedian

Sherman Alexie
Helen Scholtz and the staff of the Bellingham Public Library Children’s Department were honored this March by Mayor Dan Pike with a Mayor’s Arts Award for their role in the continued success of the Library’s Annual Children’s Craft Fair. Now in its 42nd year, the Children’s Craft Fair gathers creative kids to the Bellingham Public Library one day each summer to market their homemade crafts and services. All items must be priced $4 or less – offerings include hand-dipped candles, cat toys, foam swords, jewelry – even rice krispie treats shaped like sushi. The library provides the place, the inspiration, and some publicity, and the kids do the rest. “Each year I am amazed at the creativity and enthusiasm of the children. I never fail to find treasures that I’m excited to purchase. I have attended over 28 fairs, and it is always fresh and new,” says Scholtz.

Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA, is pleased to announce that Patricia Cutright has joined the James Brooks Library as dean of library services, as of April 1, 2010. Ms. Cutright earned her Masters of Librarianship at the University of Washington and has over twenty-five years of library experience, including sixteen years experience in library administration. Most recently, she served as director of libraries at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, and from 1986-2004 she served first as electronic resources librarian and ultimately as director of Pierce Library at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, OR. She also served as chair of the Oregon Orbis Library System during its merger with the Washington Cascade Library System to form the academic libraries consortium, Orbis-Cascade Alliance, and chaired the Connect-Oregon CORE committee that successfully lobbied the Oregon legislature to provide funding for electronic library resources in that state. Everyone at the Brooks Library looks forward to working closely with Ms. Cutright.

Through a Renew Washington grant, Fort Vancouver Regional Library District launched its “Get Job Help @ Your Library” program in February. Helpful tools for job seekers include live-chat job coaching and résumé review service; résumé-writing software; an online service that helps users explore career options; netbooks for extra computer time; classes on résumés and cover letters, and a Job Lab staffed by volunteers. Patrons are grateful to learn about new job resources and receive extra time on the computers. “Very helpful, right place at the right time for me!” is a typical comment about the program.

Watch it grow! Thanks to joint sponsorship with The Miller|Hull Partnership architects and an anonymous gift, construction of Fort Vancouver Regional Library District’s new Vancouver Community Library is being documented with time-lapse video. Four video segments are now posted at www.fvrl.org/aboutus/Main_Library_Project.htm, starting with the foundation in October 2009 and leading to recent completion of the building frame. The 83,000 square-foot building is on track to open to the public in June 2011.

John Sheller, King County Library System, donated a copy of Irish Seattle to Dublin Public Library director Deirdre Ellis-King in February. John returned to Dublin for a visit on the 15th anniversary of his job exchange with a Dublin librarian in 1995.
On April 29th, the King County Library System (KCLS) Nonprofit and Philanthropy Resource Center (NPRC) exhibited at the 16th Annual Washington State Nonprofit Conference at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. Seven hundred attendees and seventy exhibitors participated in the conference. Speakers included Governor Christine Gregoire, author Dan Pallotta, and Kristin McSwain from the Corporation for National and Community Service. The KCLS exhibit described our services, grants databases, and Web site. Since each exhibitor was asked to provide a raffle item, we offered a one-hour free consultation about grant research. To make it more enticing, we provided one gift certificate in paper and one made completely of chocolate. That certainly got attention and brought people to our exhibit!

The Boeing Charitable Trust awarded a grant to Pierce County Library System’s Early Learning program to determine the effectiveness of the early learning training provided by the Library to licensed in-home providers. The “Our Kids are Ready for Reading In-Home Child Care Training” grant duplicates the successful project from Carroll County, Md. The project demonstrated that deliberate training to child care providers on the six skills of early learning measurably increased the early literacy skills of the three- and four-year-old children in their care.

Spokane Public, Spokane County, and Whitman County Libraries recently received sponsorship funds from the Foundation for Early Learning (FEL) to bring presentations by author Kelly Milner Halls to area youngsters. Milner-Halls is the author of The Dinosaur Parade, Saving the Baghdad Zoo and other popular children’s books. All three library districts work closely with the Foundation for Early Learning, helping to promote literacy as members of the Early Learning Public Library Partnership (ELPLP).

The Tacoma Narrows Rotary Club's annual auction featured a Fund-A-Need for the University Place Library Campaign. Bidders generously and enthusiastically raised paddles totaling $34,500 to fund fun, moveable furnishings and an innovative cyber bar in the teen space for the new University Place Pierce County Library. Library Executive Director Neel Parikh, Branch Manager Cindy Bonaro, and Pierce County Library Foundation board member Dr. MaryAnn Woodruff made a compelling presentation and motivated the 250 guests. The University Place Library Campaign Committee’s goal is to raise $750,000 for enhancements in the construction of the library, which is scheduled to open in 2011.

Whitman County, Neill Public, and Latah County (Moscow, ID) Library Systems recently received a $6000 Inland Northwest Broadcasting Grant through a program called, “Supporting local programs and events through broadcasting.” The grant provides 300 radio advertisements to spread the word about Summer Reading. Because all three libraries share the same theme, “Make a Splash, Read!” through the National Collaborative Summer Reading program, advertising together works well. Friends groups from all three libraries sponsored the application.
January 25, 2010 saw the inauguration of a long-awaited, national, voluntary certification program for library support staff/para-professionals. This certification defines a standard of excellence that allows library support staff to demonstrate competencies and achievement in a program that is officially recognized by the American Library Association and increases access to continuing education opportunities. American Library Association-Allied Professional Association President Camila Alire affirms, “This certification program was much needed for support staff in multi-type libraries across the country. Along with support staff, I am excited that it has finally come to fruition. I encourage library administrators and support staff to take advantage of this program.”

The very first library support staff member in the nation to complete this new program is Washington’s own Georgette Rogers, circulation supervisor for Liberty Lake Municipal Library in Liberty Lake, Washington, and current president of the Washington Association of Library Employees (WALE). Mrs. Rogers began working on the certification when it was a new effort of the Western Council of State Libraries, an interest group composed of twenty-two states that actively promotes the improvement of library services in states west of the Mississippi River.

That program was ceded to the American Library Association in 2009, under whose direction Georgette finished her requirements for the Library Support Staff Certification (LSSC) and was awarded her certificate in January 2010. “The program was tough and required more time than I’d initially thought—ten months—but I learned a lot in every aspect of library operation,” reports Rogers. “Since then, I’ve had many occasions to apply what I’ve learned. The LSSC is a very needed program, especially for those of us who usually deal only with the more technical aspects of the library. It helped me gain a broader prospective of library work and philosophy.”

Georgette completed her Library Technician degree in 1994 at Spokane Falls Community College when it was under the direction of Sue Bradley. In 2004, she was hired by the City of Liberty Lake as the circulation supervisor of the fledgling library and has been instrumental in its notable success since.

Georgette’s letter of congratulations from Jenifer Grady, staff liaison of the Library Support Staff Certification Program (www.ala-apa.org/lssc), commended her “...on being the first to complete the LSSC Program [and] being a leader in the field.” As a result, Rogers has been asked to be a spokesperson for the program and will appear at various library conferences over the coming year to talk about her experience and the value of the LSSC Program.

The City of Liberty Lake and the Liberty Lake Municipal Library are very proud of Georgette Rogers, not only for her singular achievement, but for her perseverance in pioneering a certification that has been sought for many years by library support staff nationwide.

The LSSC is open to any library support staff person with a high-school diploma or its equivalent and the equivalent of at least one year of full-time experience in a library within the last five years. Applicants do not have to be a member of the American Library Association.
Steampunk Friday at Mount Vernon City Library

On April 23, Brian Soneda, director of the Mount Vernon City Library (MVCL), wrote to the ALKI editor: “I LOVE my staff. MVCL is like most other libraries in 2010, we’re struggling to meet the needs of the public as our usage is higher than it has ever been and our funding is under constant stress. It can be draining but my staff with no input from me (other than bemused tolerance) works on making sure things are kept as light as they can be. Today was ‘Steampunk Friday’ at the library. Twice today I have been good naturedly berated by patrons for not getting dressed appropriately (I’m wearing a purple dress shirt and tie, so it’s not bad, just not on-theme). So if you decide to do something in Alki along the lines of ‘How libraries deal with Hard Times’ feel free to use this.”

Pierce County Library System Executive Director Earns National Award

The American Library Association (ALA) gave its top award for service to children to Neel Parikh, executive director, of Pierce County Library System. ALA named Parikh the 2010 winner of the Sullivan Award for the Public Library Administrators Supporting Services to Children.

Parikh is the seventh winner of the award, provided by former ALA President Peggy Sullivan. ALA presents the award to an individual who demonstrates exceptional understanding and support of public library service to children while having administrative responsibility in a public library.

Pierce County Library has become a leader in providing early learning training and support.

2011 WLA Conference Proposals

Do you have a great program idea for the 2011 WLA Conference? I know we haven’t even been to the 2010 Conference yet, but it’s already time to start thinking about programs for next year. The theme is Libraries Take Flight, and it will be held in Yakima on April 6-8, 2011.

The conference session and pre-conference proposal forms will be available on the WLA conference website beginning June 28. Proposals will be due by August 30, 2010.

The conference committee looks forward to hearing your ideas and reading your proposals!

Mary Wise, 2011 WLA conference chair
to register, generally for no cost. In these cases, the item is marked in the template and a red “R” is generated next to the source in the published newsletter. Very occasionally sources requiring a paid subscription are used in order to show how stories about PNNL and/or the Hanford Site are being covered by various media. Editing staff also follow several Twitter sites for news stories.

NEWSBridge topic categories include PNNL in the NEWS, Hanford Site, DOE (Department of Energy) around the U.S., Energy/Science Policy, Northwest Science & Technology, National/International Science & Technology, Security, State & Regional, Community and Workforce—Health & Safety as well as an Other category for articles that do not easily fit into one of the other categories. (see figure 2). Only the topics that have stories included will appear in the published issue on that day. The categories are hyperlinked at the top of the Web page so that a reader can quickly get to the section(s) of interest.

To avoid an overly long issue, there is a limit of 22 total stories per day with no more than six in each category. The Workforce topic area is an exception, where no more than four articles are included. Sometimes these categories have a glut of news, so editors use their judgment to select the best of the stories.

In addition to the policies already noted, the editorial staff needed other ground rules. NEWSBridge is published at a consistent time each day, five days a week, so readers know when to expect it in their mailboxes. Three members of the NEWSBridge editing staff “produce” the daily newsletter. Each performs the same basic core searches so that the issues are consistent from day to day. Articles chosen are from reputable sources, and generally opinion pieces or editorials are not used except in two categories, PNNL in the News and Hanford Site. News articles about research that has been published in journals or posted on a journal’s Web site are not included. Blog stories are included if they are from a major newspaper and are not simply an opinion piece.

The library maintains a searchable two-week archive on its Web site. On the administrative site—where the issues are developed—there is a searchable archive of all issues ever published. This archive helps to insure that news stories are not repeated from one week to the next, and it enables editing staff to find out where articles on a particular topic have been included in past issues for consistency. The archives can also be used as a reference tool to retrieve news stories on a particular topic.

NEWSBridge (http://libraryweb.pnl.gov/newsbridge/) is available to anyone with a connection to the Internet. It is available via the Web or users can subscribe to it by e-mail (see figure 2) or via RSS feed. NEWSBridge is also on Twitter. Users can follow NEWSBridge on Twitter at HTLNEWSBridge or opt to subscribe to twitter’s RSS feed of HTLNEWSBridge’s tweets. Currently there are 600 e-mail subscribers, including 232 who are not PNNL staff, and the Web site received 68,286 visits in 2009. The Web site is crawled daily by Internet robots and spiders (e.g., Google, Bloglines, and Yahoo). NEWSBridge feeds are also found on PNNL intranet and SharePoint sites, and the news service is featured on PNNL’s external Web site. Feedback has been very positive, including that NEWSBridge provides the daily news in a compact, easy-to-read format and that its “fascinating and globally relevant articles” are read every day.

![Figure 2. E-mailed version of NEWSBridge](image-url)
The Learning Curve

Feasting on Professional Development

by Kate Laughlin

If you’ve never visited Victoria, BC, on Canada’s beautiful Vancouver Island, I bet you’ve hungered to go. If you have had a taste of this vibrant city, you’re probably looking for an excuse to go back for another helping. Now’s your chance! This year, instead of the traditional April annual conference of the Washington Library Association, WLA has joined forces with the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) to present *No Library Is an Island*, the 2010 PNLA/WLA Conference, August 11-13 in Victoria (2010conference.wla.org). This is an especially exciting event for PNLA as they celebrate their 100-year anniversary.

These longtime organizational colleagues have conspired to create a veritable feast of professional development opportunity blended with a sumptuous buffet of personal adventure. PNLA President Samantha Hines observed that “with this being a joint conference, WLA members will get more for their money. You’ll get all the great things you expect from a WLA conference, plus sessions presented by library workers from across the Northwest, including an international influence from our Canadian location and attendees.” I’ll take one of everything, please! Glancing over the conference menu, I draw your attention to some of the tastiest items, starting with appetizers and sampling our way to the dessert. Don’t worry—business and pleasure are well paired at this conference!

Nothing whets an appetite for library learning like savory Preconferences. On August 11, choose from a half-dozen, half-day workshops pulled fresh from the oven. If you’re counting training calories, you might like to snack on just one of the six 3-hour workshops. But if you plan to gorge on your education, I recommend complementing a morning Preconference with one in the afternoon, leaving time in between for lunch at one of the Inner Harbour’s many fine eateries. Mix and match to meet your current cravings, or allow me to suggest one of these Preconference pairings (found at 2010conference.wla.org/pre-conferences/):

- **Displays that POP!: Marketing your Library**
  - pairs well with
  - “What’s the Big Idea?”: Introducing Math & Science Concepts to Young Patrons

- **Holding Difficult Conversations the Humane Way**
  - Bullying in the Workplace: Awareness and Prevention

- **Technology Petting Zoo: Free Tools for Instruction and Presentation**
  - pairs well with
  - Getting Connected: Tech Tools for Readers’ Advisory

After a delicious day of expanding your mind, you can look forward to the evening *Meet & Greet* event where old friends reunite and new friends are made. Be sure to grab some of those friends afterward when you enjoy “humorous takes on librarianship and the foibles of our professional life” with the *Society Gaius Julius Solinus V. Washingtonius* (more commonly known as “Solinus” or Society Gaius), a quirky and fun WLA tradition since the 1970s. Please remember that “due to the prestigious nature of the event, requests-to-present made any later than 8:29 pm on August 11 will not be accepted.”

The event starts at 8:30 pm. For more information or to submit works of creative research, e-mail kirstedw@kcls.org or lburdick@sno-ide.org.

Hopefully that won’t stretch too late into the evening, though, because you will not want to miss Thursday morning’s *Welcome Breakfast with keynote speaker Robert Sawyer*. This futurist is the only writer in history to win the premier science fiction awards in the United States, Canada, China, Japan, France, and Spain. As a speaker, Sawyer’s specialty is “extrapolating today’s scientific, medical, technological and ethical concerns into the near future” (www.sfurriter.com). That’ll work up an appetite!

Don’t worry about overindulging at breakfast, since you’ll burn it off with a mental workout in three separate continuing education sessions throughout Thursday and then again on Friday. With **over forty sessions to choose from**, all the basic brain-food groups are covered. Presentation is so important, and the *Connections and Collaborations* track is likely to be the special *du jour*! WLA Conference Program Chairperson Laura Tretter, remarked that “collaboration is more important to libraries than ever before.” And with the conference theme being *No Library Is an Island*, this track seems especially fresh! But attendees will find something for all tastes, spanning topics from Digital Information and Technologies, to Freedom and Access, to Leadership and Development, to Serving Adults or Youth, and even an *A La Carte* section for those special delicacies.

Kate Laughlin is the WLA program coordinator.

Continued on next page
Speaking of delicacies, you’re sure to be served a fine meal during the PNLA Young Readers Choice Award Luncheon on Thursday. If you don’t plan to attend the oldest children’s book choice award in the U.S. and Canada, then you’re invited to Lunch in the Exhibits, where attendees have a chance to mix and mingle with many of the companies and organizations that support the work we do in and for libraries. At press time, early commitments had come in from AWE, BWI, EBCSO, Ingram, Montel, National Network of Libraries of Medicine, OCLC, Polaris, Recorded Books, ServerLogic, Tech Logic, TLC, University of Alaska Press, Washington State Library, World Book, and many more, with additional exhibitors committing every day. If you miss the opportunity at lunch, you get another chance during the Exhibits Reception on Thursday evening.

Thursday evening’s reception is followed by PNLA’s Corks & Cans event, which originally started as an “informal committee charged with organizing events that would be conducive to study and research at a local brewery.” Mission accomplished! Corks & Cans will be held at the Canoe Restaurant-Brewpub, located in an historic 1894 building with a striking western exposure along the Harbour.

We’d hate for anyone to become peckish in between the Conference’s main courses. Be sure to visit the Conference Program Showcase just outside the Exhibitors Hall during Thursday’s breaks. On display will be some of the best and brightest in library programs, trainings and tools, exhibited by your colleagues from libraries and organizations throughout the northwest.

Friday promises to keep you hungry for more, as the day kicks off with an array of breakfast options. For those not attending either the ALA/PNLA Breakfast or the CAYAS Breakfast, this will be another opportunity to explore the Inner Harbour, which has many fine bakeries and outdoor cafes. Be sure to fuel yourself up for another mind-expanding day of professional development!

In addition to the educational sessions throughout Friday, there will be a WLA Awards Luncheon that will include brief PNLA and WLA Business Meetings. While this meal is sure to please your taste buds, it won’t compare to the treat of seeing some of your real buds honored for their efforts and accomplishments. For those not planning to attend this luncheon, you’re once again invited to Lunch in the Exhibits!

After the final breakout session on Friday, you won’t want to miss the Dinner Banquet with keynote speaker Clyde Ford. Named a “Literary Lion” by the King County Library System for 2006, 2007, and 2008, Ford is a recipient of the prestigious Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Legacy Award in contemporary fiction and the Independent Publishers Award for best thriller. He is equally regarded for his explorations and writing in the areas of mythology and psychic healing (www.clydeford.com).

After a few days of feeding your brain, by Saturday morning it’s time to reward yourself with something a little more decadent! The Planning Committee has baked up a trio of conference desserts for your pleasure. Which will you devour?

- Join your colleagues for a tour of Butchart Gardens. Established in 1904, this world-renowned garden occupies more than 50 acres with over 1 million flowers and plants. Finish off your visit with amazing treats at Afternoon Tea. Bus leaves the Empress at 10 am and will drop you back at the hotel by 5 pm. Cost is $80+ tax. To register call Gray Line tours at 1.800.663.8390 and mention you are with the PNLA/WLA Conference.

- Spend the day on a Cowichan Valley Wine Tour savoring Vancouver Island’s best vintages. Visit three wineries, plus lunch at Merridale Ciderworks and cheese tastings at Hilary’s Cheese in Cowichan Bay. Bus leaves the Empress at 9:30 am and will drop you back at the hotel by 5 pm. Cost

Continued on next page
is $99 + tax. To register email Chemainus Tours (jim@chemainustours.com) and mention you are with the PNLA/WLA Conference.

- Spend an afternoon Whale Watching with Victoria’s renowned “Prince of Whales” charter company. They lead memorable eco-adventures sighting incredible Orca, Minke, and Humpback whales, eagles, sea lions and more. Tour leaves from Victoria's Inner Harbour at 10 am, and will have you back on the dock by 1 pm. Cost is $87.50 + tax. To register contact Prince of Whales at 1-888-383-4884 and mention you are with the PNLA/WLA Conference.

As you digest all this information, remember that there are assorted ways to reach Victoria. The Victoria Clipper is certainly a fast and convenient way to embark from Seattle and arrive at Victoria’s Inner Harbour within easy walking distance of the Fairmont Empress and the Conference Centre. But it is one of the pricier options and you’ll want to have a good plan for getting in and out of downtown Seattle (www.clippervacations.com). By carpooling with other attendees, you can greatly reduce your travel costs. Most of the ferries allow you to make online reservations, which can also streamline your plans. Embarking from Port Angeles, WA, you can take the Coho Ferry and either bring your car aboard, or leave it in one of the very inexpensive lots nearby. The ferry delivers you to the Inner Harbour, so no car is necessary. Aside from being very walkable, there are buses, rental bikes, even horse drawn carriages! But if you turn this into an extended trip with family or friends, bringing a car can allow you to explore bountiful Vancouver Island before or after the Conference (cohoferry.com).

Other good options if you're planning to bring your car to Victoria are to catch a WA State Ferry out of Anacortes, WA, or take a BC Ferry out of Tsawwassen, BC (www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries or www.bcferries.com). Keep in mind that in both cases, you will arrive in Sidney, which is about a 20 mile drive to Victoria.

For all your additional conference cravings, visit 2010conference.wla.org. I look forward to seeing many of you in Victoria this August.

Bon appétit!
WE CONCUR:

Justice Susan Owens
Justice Charles W. Johnson
Justice Mary E. Fairhurst
Justice Gerry L. Alexander

The following is an excerpt the Supreme Court of Washington State’s dissenting opinion written by Justice Thomas Chambers in Bradburn v. North Central Regional Library (Docket No. 82200-0):

The question before this court is whether, consistent with our state constitution’s free speech protections, a public library can actively restrict adult access to websites containing constitutionally protected speech. The question is easy to answer: of course it cannot....

The majority assumes that there is some constitutional equivalent between removing the filter and removing, often after considerable time, a particular site from the list of blocked sites. But, as Justice Stevens noted, filtered Internet content is akin to having “a significant part of every library’s reading materials ... kept in unmarked, locked rooms or cabinets, which could be opened only in response to specific requests.” Am. Library As’n, 539 U.S. at 224 (Stevens, J., dissenting). I do not accept they are constitutionally equivalent.

I agree with the majority that public libraries have no responsibility to have any particular text in their collection, though of course the decision to exclude a text cannot be made for a constitutionally prohibited reason. But censoring material on the Internet is not the same thing as declining to purchase a particular book. It is more like refusing to circulate a book that is in the collection based on its content. That would raise serious constitutional concerns. Cf. Lorang, 140 Wn.2d at 24. I also agree that libraries in this state are not necessarily public forums, though I disagree that we should be deciding on this record whether these particular libraries have become public forums by their own policies and practices. Cf. Sanders, 160 Wn.2d at 209-10. But it is the freedom to read, not whether libraries are public forums, that is the issue before us.

North Central Regional Library’s Internet filters reach admittedly constitutionally protected speech, and, we are informed, it “does not and will not disable the filter at the request of an adult person.” Simply put, the State has no interest in protecting adults from constitutionally protected materials on the Internet. These policies do exactly that. The filter should be removed on the request of an adult patron. Concerns that a child might see something unfortunate on the screen must be dealt with in a less draconian manner. I respectfully dissent.

AUTHOR:
Justice Tom Chambers

WE CONCUR:
Justice Richard B. Sanders
Justice Debra L. Stephens

Washington State Constitution

Article 1 Section 5

FREEDOM OF SPEECH. Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right.

The Washington State Constitution may be read online at www.leg.wa.gov/LawsAndAgencyRules/constitution.htm.

First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Constitution of the United States may be read online at www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html.
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**SOURCE OF APPEAL**

Judgment or order under review

**JUSTICES**

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<tr>
<td>Barbara A. Madsen</td>
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I’d Rather Be Reading

Libraries: A Survival Story
by David Wright

With budgets, hours and jobs getting slashed in publicly-funded libraries across the country, many librarians’ minds have been wandering to one of our favorite areas of sometime inspiration and frequent concern: the future of libraries. Could it be that the current downsizings and “right-sizings” will turn out to be more than just the fallout of a bad economic season, but the lasting effects of our shrinking relevance in the public’s view? Amidst the proliferation of new gadgets and networks for accessing and sharing information, are libraries losing the battle for hearts and minds? Are we witnessing the end of a golden age of public libraries? Amidst uncertainty about our changing role in society and library futurists’ conflicting views, let us remind ourselves of some certainties that may be working in our favor in the years ahead.

Ten or twenty years from now, we will still cherish our need for Story in all its forms. This is one of our species’ defining traits, crucial to how we make meaning and understand the world, and it won’t be going anywhere soon. The books and reading craze, going strong for several centuries now, can only continue to grow as new formats are added to the old. We’ll still be enjoying such newer fangled forms as movies and audiobooks as well, plus maybe a few things nobody’s thought of yet. As physical barriers fall, the range of available works is growing, leading to an increasing diversity of choices. When it comes to navigating this perplexity, readers will continue to rely heavily on various peer and interest groups, and—if we don’t completely blow it—they might just rely on libraries as well.

The branding work is already done. Although it is a prejudice not so widely held by card-carrying members of the information sciences, if you ask the proverbial man-in-the-street what libraries are, they’ll tell you that’s where the books are. Despite decades of efforts to identify and legitimize ourselves as purveyors of Information, our enduring brand with the public is Reading. We should be thankful for this common perception, for it is precisely those taxpayers who have bought into the library-as-information-center mantra who now love to compare us with buggy-whip factories in the comment streams of our own struggling blogs. Yes, theirs is a myopic view that little reflects the value of our skills and the depth and nature of the citizenry’s rights and needs in an increasingly privatized information economy. Yet the glib sense that Google has made libraries obsolete is taking hold among a growing segment of the middle class, and our mayors and city councils are listening.

But wait: isn’t library usage up these days? It sure is, and to hear library leaders talk about it in the media, this increase is due to all the information we’re doling out to newly unemployed job seekers. Important stuff, no doubt, but this isn’t where our rising circulation statistics are coming from. The public library

“Let us bring to bear all of our professional curiosity and smarts to become better and more consistent at the challenging practice of helping the book find its reader, the reader his or her book.”
Continued from previous page

boom is happening right where the majority of our business has always been: the Story business. We are preservers and purveyors of fiction, non-fiction, kid’s books, graphic novels, audiobooks, movies: this is what keeps our doors open. If we do not adequately serve the needs of readers (and by readers I include listeners and viewers), we fail to capitalize on a tidal wave of free marketing brought to us courtesy of the recession and may lose all those new patrons as soon as the economy improves and they refresh their accounts with Amazon and audible.com. At this crucial juncture, we need to stop taking our primary clientele for granted. To remain viable, we need to serve our readers.

I don’t mean just buying more materials: we’ll never be competitive with retailers when it comes to availability of the latest hot thing. But we have one commodity that is pure gold in today’s marketplace: impartial expertise. We lose sight of what a big deal it is to cultural consumers that a librarian or reader’s advisor doesn’t work on commission and isn’t trying to sell them anything. Even better if that librarian knows what they’re talking about and has good customer service skills. And there’s one in their own community, another vital selling point for a species that persists in space and time, that increasingly values locality, and that persistently desires contact and interaction with other people, however mediated. The public already thinks we’re smart, but are we book smart? Every time we fail to serve a cultural consumer’s need for guidance, we confirm the public’s suspicion that we are a pricey luxury, rather than a valuable resource that can improve their quality of life.

If libraries do not wish to face the rude awakening recently visited on print journalism, we need to reinvest in adding value to our core business with readers’ services and reader’s advisory in all its forms. We must seek to be hosts and facilitators for the various constellations of readers both within and across our communities, in person and online. Let us bring to bear all of our professional curiosity and smarts to become better and more consistent at the challenging practice of helping the book find its reader, the reader his or her book. Readers services cannot be a sideline specialty: it must be front and center on our masthead, and something we expect of all our librarians. Let us start taking browsers as seriously as we do information seekers, and make our catalogs not just utilitarian junctions to be got through, but happening places to hang around in. Let us celebrate Story and its role in our lives and communities.

Let’s recommit to reading. It just might save us all.

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For information, contact Paula Swan at 509-533-3809 or paulas@spokanefalls.edu

http://library.spokanefalls.edu
WLA Thanks Our Institutional & Business Members

**Business Members**
- Eastern WA University Friends of the Library
- Federal Way Libraries
- Friends of Liberty Lake Library
- Friends of the Aberdeen Timberland Library

**Institutional Members**
- Asotin County Library
- Bellingham Public Library
- Big Bend CC Library
- Clark College Library
- Clover Park Technical College Library
- Columbia County Rural Library Dist
- Eastern Washington University Libraries
- Ellensburg Public Library
- Everett Public Library
- Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
- Gonzaga University/Foley Ctr. Library
- Highline CC Library
- Holman Library/Green River Community College
- Jefferson County Library
- King County Library System

**Friends of Libraries**
- Friends of Whitman County Library
- ORBIS Cascade Alliance
- Washington State School for the Deaf

**Libraries**
- Kitsap Regional Library
- La Conner Regional Library District
- Longview Public Library
- Lopez Island Library
- Lower Columbia College
- Mid-Columbia Library
- Neill Public Library
- North Central Regional Library
- Orca Island Library District
- Pierce College Library
- Pierce County Library System
- Puyallup Public Library
- San Juan Island Library
- Seattle Central Community College
- Seattle Public Library
- Sedro-Woolley Public Library

**Additional Libraries**
- Skagit Valley College/Norwood
- Sno-Isle Libraries
- Spokane County Library District
- Spokane Public Library
- Stevens County Rural Library
- Timberland Regional Library
- University of Washington Libraries
- Upper Skagit Library
- Walla Walla Community College Library
- Walla Walla County Rural Library District
- Washington State Library
- Washington State University - Vancouver
- Whatcom County Library System
- Whitman County Library
- Yakima Valley Community College
- Yakima Valley Libraries