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ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



**MY JOB IN 10 YEARS:
THE FUTURE OF
ACADEMIC LIBRARIES**

**SERVICES IN FRENCH,
S'IL VOUS PLAÎT /
DES SERVICES EN
FRANÇAIS, PLEASE**

10

**THINGS
YOU'VE ALWAYS
WANTED TO
TELL YOUR
MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL**

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You never know
what will happen...

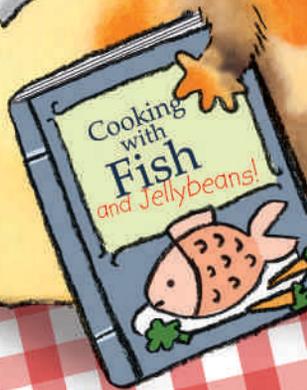


Illustration by Mélanie Watt

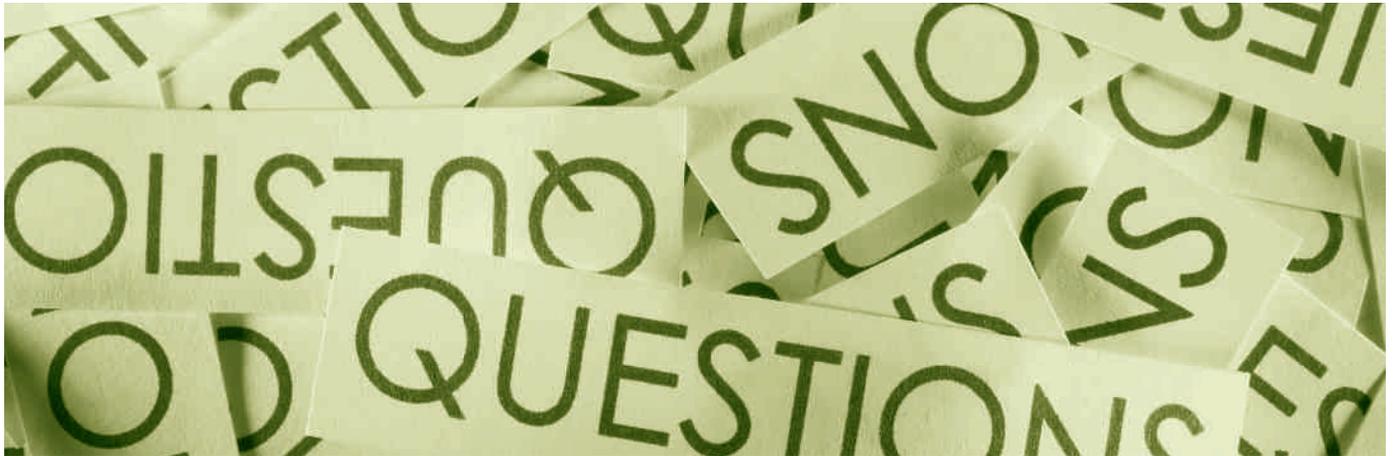


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BY MARILYN WILLIS

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Access is the official magazine of the Ontario Library Association, published quarterly for members as a continuing education service to keep them informed of its activities and of events, trends, and issues affecting the association as well as libraries all across Ontario and beyond. The magazine is a forum for discussion, a place for news, and a source of ideas for the development and improvement of librarianship in the province.



WHAT LIBRARY IS THIS? Send your guess to info@accessola.com and be eligible to win an Education Institute session.

Cover Photo: Andrew Louis (<http://hyfen.net>)



from the editor

By **Wayne** Jones

This issue of *Access* introduces some new initiatives in our efforts to provide even better opportunities for OLA members to read and write about what is most important to you and to the users you serve and represent.

First, we're debuting AccessOnline, the new website for the magazine. I'm excited about this development because it will be a place where we can publish articles which we don't happen to have room for in the printed magazine. Also, the website will provide a brief excerpt from each piece in the current issue, and will also provide links to the full text of the previous issue. Take a look at it at accessola.com/accessonline. I see this as only a beginning: the website won't be simply a place where we provide additional articles, but I do hope it becomes an important entity in itself. I'd like to see it as a locus which can lead you to the printed magazine, and frankly the other way around as well. We're hoping to expand the website in subsequent issues by adding more 2.0-friendly features such as syndicated feeds (RSS), a blog, and of course a space where you can contact us, leave comments, and generally have your electronic say. I'd be very interested to hear your comments on the site, including your suggestions on how we could improve it, what we could add, and so on.

This issue of *Access* also features content in French, something we hope provides a service and useful information to an important constituency of OLA. Unfortunately, space constraints don't permit us to translate all our French text into English (and vice versa!), nor will we likely be able to feature French content in every issue, but I do encourage you to feel free to submit pieces to the magazine in either language or in both. And as always I'd like to hear what you think about what's in this issue.

I'm also happy to say that this issue includes featured contributions from the editors of (almost) all seven divisions of OLA. We do always strive to make the content of *Access* as relevant

We're debuting AccessOnline, the new website for the magazine ... Take a look at it at accessola.com/accessonline.

as possible to the broadest range of membership across the association, and these contributions from the divisional editors will just bolster that effort more directly. In recent years we've routinely had pieces from OCULA, OLITA, OPLA, and OHLA, but starting with this issue we now feature the other three as well and with three new divisional editors: Ian Hunter for Public Library Boards (OLBA), Marilyn Willis for School Libraries (OSLA), and Catherine Seaman for les Bibliothèques francophones (ABO-Franco). Welcome to all!

And finally, a couple of other notes about missing content. There is no OPLA feature in this issue, nor the "Every Book, Its Reader" column, but they will be returning in the fall. In addition, though, you'll notice that there is also no "Tales from the Front Line" cartoon. Alas, the illustrator, Eva McDonald, has decided to take an indefinite hiatus from "Tales."

Wayne Jones is Head of Central Technical Services at Queen's University and Editor-in-Chief of Access (wjones@accessola.com).

So much more than names and numbers, we're now calling it a **Resource Guide!**

The 14th edition of the Canadian Environmental Resource Guide, previously named Canadian Environmental Directory is now available!

As the new name indicates, this reference book is much more than a directory. It includes 4-colour maps, charts, rankings, a chronology, descriptions of environmental issues and prominent researchers, plus valuable profiles of government and private agencies, education and research facilities, foundations, law firms, manufacturers and service providers – over 11,300 ways to access information and knowledge about the environment in Canada (1,238 more listings than the 2008 edition!). The wealth of information in this annual resource guide is essential to any business or agency with an interest within the wide spectrum of environmental issues!

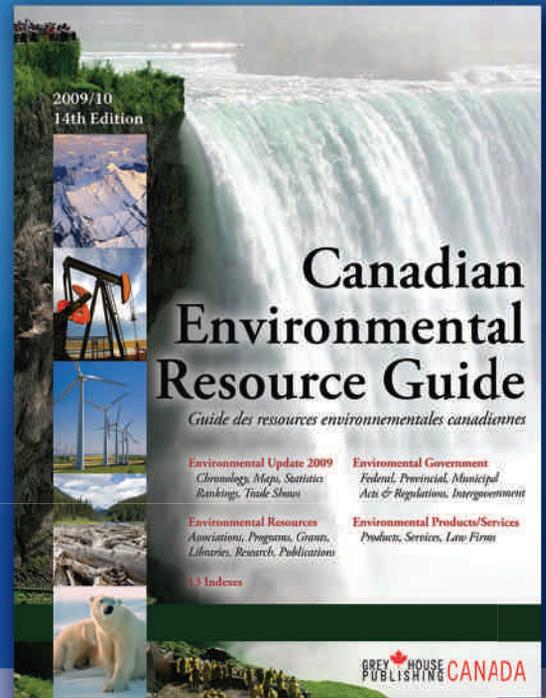
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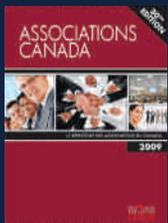
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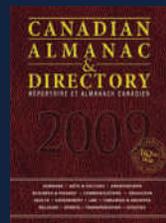
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ontario snapshot

LIBRARY NEWS, PROGRAMS,
AND RECOGNITION



DEEP RIVER SCIENCE TEACHER AND FOOTBALL COACH CHUCK SIMS CHAMPIONS *THE CORPS OF THE BARE-BONED PLANE*. PHOTO BY BEN FLEMING.

Mack Reads!

Mack Reads! is Mackenzie High School's version of the White Pine Reading Program. In order to make the program a school-wide activity, 10 teachers in the Deep River community volunteered to champion one of the White Pine books for 2009. After noticing the attractive celebrity posters available from ALA, organizers asked each teacher to pose for promotional posters. The high-quality photos were all taken and printed by a very capable photography student and posted in the teachers' classrooms and in the library and the halls. These posters not only raised awareness of the library and the Mack Reads! program, but also demonstrated that all kinds of people read novels – not just English teachers and librarians. Each teacher also participated in one of a series of lunch-time book discussions with students.

Student Book Reviews by Podcast

Albert Campbell Collegiate Institute in Scarborough has begun a Podcasting Book Review Club. Many classes partner with the library for project-based learning, using the digital technology available in the school's iMac labs. Five Grade 11 students were selected as the technical team. They wrote succinct reviews of their favourite books, and then, using GarageBand, recorded themselves reading their book reviews, adding music and graphics to create podcasts. Podcasts were posted on an iWeb account, and linked to the school website. The podcasts were launched during literacy month. To watch and listen, go to albertcampbell.org, click on "Library," and then "Podcasts."

Defining the Movement: Innovation and Collaboration at the iSchool

Four recent graduates from the Faculty of Information presented their new initiatives at the TRY Conference on May 5, 2009. TRY is the annual library staff conference for York, Ryerson, and U of T. Their projects focused on community building and knowledge sharing at the iSchool and beyond. Meghan Ecclestone presented the faculty journal. Founded in 2008, the *Faculty of Information Quarterly* is a student-run open access publication that fosters critical dialogue between professionals and academics (fiq.ischool.utoronto.ca/index.php/fiq). Bruce Harpham discussed the iSchool Podcast, which provides free lectures to the information community while providing training to students in marketing, audio production, and new media.



24/5 & 24/7 York:

'Round-the-Clock Study

York University's Scott Library has gone round the clock! – library study space is now available 24/5 on the first floor. This new service was launched in February due to popular demand. The area of the Scott Library includes study space, computers, photocopiers, printers, and group study rooms. The 24/5 study area has proven to be very popular with students. At the end of the last term in February it was common for there to be 60 to 80 night owls studying at 3 a.m.

U of T: 24/7 Service and an Assignment Calculator

The University of Toronto's Scarborough Library (UTSC) opened its doors 24/7 for the first time this academic year, and has held outreach events to promote the service with almost 1,000-student turnout. The library's Assignment Calculator is also new — an online tool that breaks a student's assignment into steps to facilitate time management, research, and writing skills. library.utscc.utoronto.ca



GRADE 9 STUDENTS RESPONDING TO STUDENT PRESENTERS

Genre Fair at Brantford Collegiate Institute

Holding our first genre fair at Brantford Collegiate Institute just goes to show that, no matter how many years one has been in the same job, there are still strategies to increase students' love for reading and to improve overall literacy that can be embraced. I had heard of many of my colleagues holding "genre fairs," but until this school year we had never taken the opportunity to hold one here. This year, the literacy committee agreed that we should try.

I should mention that our school is in a unique situation this year. Because our school is being rebuilt, Grade 9s attend school in the afternoons only and many of their classes take place in a satellite school 2.5 blocks from the main campus.

We divided our Grade 9 students into 12 mixed-level groups of approximately 20 students each. We had six genres – fantasy, historical fiction, mystery, horror, biography, and graphic (which I know isn't really a genre) – presented by two sets of presenters. Each session was 20 minutes long and included an introduction of the speaker, an overview of the genre, a reading from one or two books, and a short time for questions. We included a healthy snack break halfway through.

Our presenters included education students from Laurier University, our principal, one of our custodians, a few senior BCI students, the owner of a local bookstore, and as many vibrant teachers as we could get. The idea was to demonstrate to our students that all kinds of people love to read, and there is no one type of book that is better than another.

It was a great success! The next day several students requested specific titles. Three girls signed out Janet Evanovich novels, thanks to our principal's selected readings. Many teachers dropped in to say how impressed they were with how many students seemed really engaged throughout the afternoon, and our vice-principal said he had never seen our Grade 9 students exit the building at the end of the day in such a quiet, thoughtful manner!

– *Bobbie Henley, Teacher-Librarian, Brantford Collegiate Institute*



Books That Talk Back

The University of Guelph's McLaughlin Library recently stocked its first floor with a different kind of books – ones that talk back. These "books" are actually people who are members of groups frequently subjected to stereotyping or prejudices, or otherwise misunderstood. Over two days in March, the library held Ontario's first Living Library, an event that allows readers to check out a living book and have a conversation with it to increase understanding and acceptance of diversity. The list of 32 living books, all sourced from the university and city communities, included "Canadian Soldier," "Atheist," "Clinically Depressed," "HIV Positive," and "Sri Lankan Conflict Survivor." Event organizers took on the slogan "Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover," keeping with the original ideas of the first Living Library. The concept originated with a group of university students in Denmark who created the event as a tool to overcome prejudice experienced on their campus. McLaughlin Library staff hope to make the Living Library an annual University of Guelph event.

KPL WINS YOUTH COUNCIL AWARD

Who says teens don't use the library anymore? The Kitchener Public Library has announced its KPL Youth Advisory Council recently won the Group Award at the City of Kitchener's 12th annual Kitchener Youth Action Council (KYAC) awards ceremony. The KYAC is a voluntary committee of young individuals who support fellow youth and ensure that young voices are heard throughout Kitchener. The Group Award is given to a group of young people who have made a positive contribution to their community through teamwork and collaboration. KPL's Youth Advisory Council is an energetic and passionate council of 21 young women who care deeply about libraries and work hard to make sure that youth have a voice in the library. While they do a lot of work behind the scenes, you will also see them up in the teen area writing book reviews, helping create displays, and taking out stacks of teen fiction.





MARKHAM'S "MAKE THEM CRY" STRATEGY

Children's spaces at Markham Public Library support its Wow Space Project, the objective of which is to create exceptional, welcoming spaces that delight customers. Markham's goal for children's spaces is to offer a destination for families that reinforces positive associations with the library and reading. The "Make Them Cry" strategy recognizes that play is an important part of learning and contributes to the development of pre-literacy skills. Supporting the idea that children learn through discovery, the toy collection is an integral part of MPL's childhood literacy mandate. An annual toy budget for the purchase and replacement of high-quality, developmentally appropriate toys augments the print collection, adding to customers' enjoyment of the space and encouraging them to extend their library visit. The "Make Them Cry" strategy works: staff have observed numerous children loving the library so much that they cry when they have to leave!

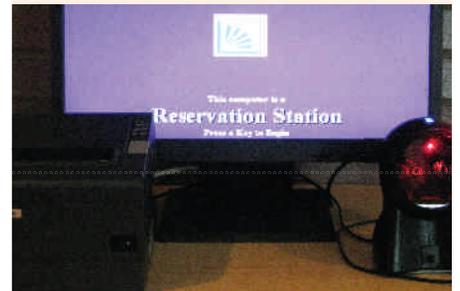


Walking for Young Readers

In a grassroots-driven desire by Kitchener's Library Services Centre (LSC) colleagues to raise money for a Canadian school library in need, LSC staff organized a week-long Walk for Young Readers. The money raised will benefit the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation Public Library. The library is located in Waabgon Gaming, the local First Nation elementary school, and was built specifically as an addition to the school. The library is open five days a week, and works in partnership and shares space with the community literacy program. Numerous LSC staff participated in the walkathon, including Sara Foster, Darian Lajoie Paquette, and Amber Thody, who walked 24.1 kilometres on September 23, 2009. They started from LSC in Kitchener and headed toward their homes in London. LSC raised \$2,500 with the help of staff and the support of various publishers. The Georgina Island Library will now be able to (with the assistance of Selections Services librarians) order books of their choice to supplement their existing collection.

PERTH INSTALLS SELF-SERVE RESERVATION STATION

The North Perth Public Library has installed PC reservation and print management software. It was quickly evident to staff that this software would optimize computer resources and ensure fair and equitable access for all. With minimal staff assistance patrons readily adjusted to and understood the self-serve reservation station. They easily learned to scan their card, select their PC, and retrieve their quickly printed, easy-to-read receipt which provides all needed information.



WRITERS READ AT RYERSON LIBRARY

Ryerson Library recently hosted noted author and former Ryerson faculty member Margaret MacMillan as the latest speaker in its Writers Read author series. "The Writer's Journey: Margaret MacMillan in Conversation" was an informal Q&A led by Ryerson Professor Arne Kislenco, followed by a book signing and reception on the library's newly renovated fourth floor. The Writers Read author series hosts authors with a connection to Ryerson to discuss their latest work and the writing process.

And the Winners Are ...

Close to 7,000 young readers from across Ontario roared for their favourite books at OLA's Festival of Trees, Harbourfront Centre, May 13 and 14. Authors were seen traversing the grounds with a long string of eager and excited book lovers attached – autograph booklets and pencil in hand. Check out the slide show and the list of winning titles on OLA's website.

Libraries and schools, get ready to sign up for the next Forest of Reading Program – titles to be announced in October. The nominated books are selected each year by dozens of OLA members who spend more than half their year reading hundreds of books for the program. Interested in volunteering for the Festival? Check out the website.



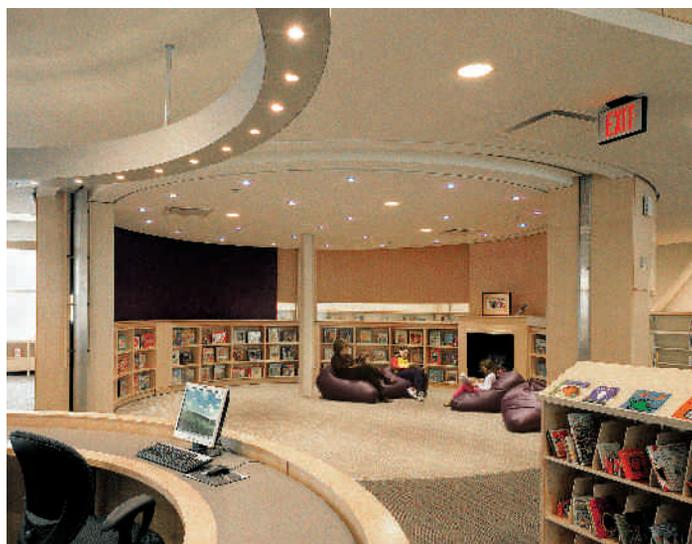
OLA's Library Building Awards

The purpose of the award is to encourage excellence in the architectural design and planning of libraries in Ontario. The award program is open to all types of libraries and can include new buildings, renovations, and interior design, among other factors. Submissions must be received by December 1, 2009. Full details are on the awards section of the website.

On a related story, Greg Hayton, past OLA president, and jury member for previous OLA Library Building Awards, recently received the prestigious Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's Advocate for Architecture award. Greg Hayton, CEO of Cambridge Public Library, was the driving force behind the renowned Hespeler Library designed by Alar Kongats. This library was featured on the cover of Access for fall 2008.

OLA's Awards

The nomination forms are up on the website! Award winners are those who contribute excellence to our profession. Recognition is at Super Conference.



2007 AWARD RECIPIENT PIERRE BERTON RESOURCE LIBRARY, VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

LNG IS OLA'S AND THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY'S PLACE TO GO TO BLOG, JOIN GROUPS OF INTEREST, AND NETWORK ONLINE. VISITORS CAN NOW VIEW POSTS AND STORIES WITHOUT LOGGING IN.



FOR GREG HAYTON'S STORY, SEE PAGE 8

LNG

Library Networking Group – we listened to your comments and have implemented some changes! More members are joining each week. LNG is OLA's and the library community's place to go to blog, join groups of interest, and network online. Visitors can now view posts and stories without logging in – if you do want to post a response or more information to a particular topic, you do need to log in, but registration is free and simple. Check out libraryng.com.

OLA EDUCATION

Super Conference 2010

Step Up Your Passion! is the theme for our next conference. Look for keynote speakers who will inspire you to take action. Super Conference 2010 has a date change for one year only – normally at the end of January, we are featuring the conference February 24-27. Session proposals are in and registration will open in October.

EI

The fall 2009 program is nearing completion, with almost 60 sessions featuring many new speakers. One of the highlights will be the Readers' Advisory Series, developed by the Pan Canadian Readers' Services Committee, with presentations by Joyce Sarricks, David Wright, Robert Burgin, Kristina Parlee, Laurel Tarulli, and many others. Popular online courses – all updated – are returning this fall: Did I Answer Your Reference Question? with Rita Vine; Supervisory Skills for Library Staff, with Cheryl Stenstrom; and Consumer Health and Medical Resources on the Web, with Susan Murray. New courses are in the planning stages.

Attention, Reader Advisors

Mark Friday, October 23, on your calendar for the third annual RA-in-a-Day, to be held in Toronto. Heather Booth, Teen Services Librarian from Thomas Ford Memorial Library, and author Kelley Armstrong are confirmed speakers; others are being finalized. Registration is open!

OCULA is planning its fall Professional Learning Event to be held in Guelph in October. Registration will open in August.

Library and Research Crisis

There has been some buzz in the library world about the National Research Council (NRC) decision to make significant cuts to the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI), but is it really on all our minds as a major library issue? It should be. CISTI is an invaluable research resource for Canada, driving scientific, medical, and technological discovery and innovation that inform academia and business development. Our national science library has been cut by 50 per cent, and CISTI plans to toss off the Information and Intelligence services, document delivery services, and the NRC Research Press into the private sector. The consequences will be serious. Look for a feature article exploring the implications in an upcoming issue of *Access*.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Moving into the 21st Century

By Marilyn Willis

According to recent business reports, first-quarter book sales increased by a surprising seven percent – good news for librarians and the library business. I had a mild sense of satisfaction knowing these increases were the result of the continued work of both public and school libraries. Libraries remain the places to go for resources, whether it be for entertainment or information.

It's true, in this new world of advancing technology, we have a new breed of learners. This new generation is tech savvy and cyber linked, yet statistics reveal increases in book sales and the number of library users. These stats are proof we're all still connected to libraries ... in fact, we now interact with them far more than in the past.

Library staff are key in this new generation's constant hunt for knowledge and entertainment. In the book *The New Learning Commons: Where Learners Win!*, by David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin, and Sandi Zwaan, Loertscher refers to the library as a learning commons – an interactive space with collaborative communities learning together. There is a constant exchange of ideas and information inside these learning commons; a library is no longer simply a static place to procure information.

Library staff collaborate with individuals, small groups, and large connected

communities. The role of the library staff is constantly evolving. In schools teacher-librarians are the centre of this collaborative learning, working with administration, staff, and students. As is shown in a recent study by People for Education, the Ontario Library Association, and Queen's University, *Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario*, there is an improvement in both student success and student attitudes towards literacy in all its forms: "Exemplary school libraries are a central hub of the school. They are prominently placed at the centre of activity and learning. The teacher librarians in such programs commonly collaborate with other teachers in the school, and they find ways to engage the community to best support children's learning."

The study goes on to point out the positive effects of the teacher-librarian regardless of the socio-economic status of the students or the community the library serves. The students see themselves on the shelves of a well-stocked school library and they interact with the resources and the library staff, creating a positive learning community. The staff relates to the new 21st-century learner; their collaboration with the school community gives students the critical literacy skills they need to navigate this new world of information.

The evolution of the teacher-librarian's role has prompted many teacher-librarians to improve their technological skills and stay current with resources to support new areas of curriculum and ministry

initiatives. The teacher-librarian at the elementary level has other teaching duties as well. As a result, theirs is a busy role that requires stamina and energy and the constant quest for new knowledge and skills.

Wikis, blogs, and websites are widely used by teacher-librarians to reach out to students and the community, and to help keep information easily accessible and interactive. Discussion pages on OLA's Forest of Reading books allow students to be involved in discussions about the books they are reading. These reading programs, which range from Grades K through 12, allow students to think critically about what they are reading and to make a choice about which book should win a Forest award. They also have an opportunity to chat with the authors of the books.

Cooperation and collaboration between school libraries and public libraries are key for students as they move through the grades. As lifelong learners, they can utilize all resources when conducting their research and learn how to cite sources appropriately to avoid plagiarism. The Google Generation is learning that cutting and pasting is not the key to good marks; citing sources properly and giving credit where credit is due are important. Having knowledgeable library staff to help them and to model good practices is invaluable.

Knowledge Ontario not only provides students with up-to-date databases, but gives access to qualified teacher-librarians 24/7 to help students with research questions as they are working on their assignments. This is a wonderful example of interactive collaboration that prepares students as lifelong learners.

Working with students in the 21st century is an exciting venture and all library staff are proving they are up to the challenge ... who better to model what lifelong learning really looks like? ■

Marilyn Willis is a library consultant based in Georgetown, Ontario.

MY JOB IN TEN YEARS

The Future of Academic Libraries

By John Dupuis

We're in a very exciting time for academic libraries. The web is changing everything about the way we do business – reference, instruction, cataloguing, liaison, outreach, even the way we hold conferences. However, the changes that the web is causing have not fully taken hold yet, so the profession is in a period of profound transition.



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We need to embrace new possibilities to remain relevant to students in the future, but we can't fully abandon what we've been doing for fear of not meeting the needs of the students we have to support today. We can see the movement to e-books, for example, but students still very much need the print books we currently have in our collections, so the transition has to be carefully managed.

The future of academic libraries is a popular topic in the library blogosphere and in the professional journals, and a long bibliography would be easy to compile. One of the best recent examples is David W. Lewis's "A Strategy for Academic Libraries in the First Quarter of the 21st Century" from the September 2007 *College & Research Libraries*. He sets out a clear five-part program for meeting the challenges of the 21st century:

- 1) Complete the move to online collections
- 2) Retire (and preserve) legacy print collections
- 3) Redevelop the library as the campus's prime learning space
- 4) Embed library online resources into teaching, learning, and research activities
- 5) Change the focus from purchasing to curating collections

I'm going to take a bit of a different tack in this article. I'll be looking at the kinds of things that we'll be doing in our everyday jobs as librarians in academic communities and how they will be changing. And not just the things that we'll be doing directly, but also the things we will be supporting and advocating for in our libraries and on our campuses. One of the nice things about the collegial models of academic institutions is that, in a sense, everything is everybody's business: we're all responsible for governance.

The lens through which I'll be viewing our everyday jobs is also a bit different. The concept of a reputation economy is one that is becoming quite popular in internet culture – the idea that the attention that an entity receives in the culture is what is

REFERENCE

The core issue in reference service is helping our patrons with their information needs where they actually are rather than where we would like them to be. Nothing beats face-to-face contact with students, helping them solve their information problem and creating a solid connection between the students and our services. But as their lives become more mobile and distributed, and computing becomes more ubiquitous in their lives, so must the ways we provide reference. Some of the new tools to provide reference are already popular, such as chat reference, instant messaging, and text messaging. Others, such as virtual environments, aren't ready for prime time yet but may be incredibly important going forward.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The core issue surrounding the physical environment of our libraries is making sure that we remain the preferred collaborative

important. That attention is converted into a positive reputation and that, in turn, is converted into some sort of reward.

Richard Akerman, Technology Architect at CISTI, puts it very well on his blog, Science Library Pad. "Attention is the first currency of the digital realm," he writes. "Reputation is the second currency of the digital realm ... To me this means that in the digital realm, you have to stop thinking you're in the XYZ business ... and start thinking that you're in the attention and reputation business" (scilib.typepad.com/science_library_pad/2008/01/the-currencies.html).

What does it mean for libraries and librarians to be in the attention and reputation business? And through that lens, how can we build those libraries while doing our day-to-day jobs, creating the future in our daily routines? Let's take a quick look some of the things we do in our jobs and what the key issues are, and try to see how being in the attention and reputation business affects those everyday tasks.

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and study space on our campuses. We occupy physical space on increasingly crowded campuses where we will continue to have to justify the prime real estate we occupy and to advocate and lobby hard for funds to renovate, repurpose our space, or build new buildings.

Our jobs will be to take the space that retiring print collections and the money re-jigging our collections has freed up and use it to build a wide variety of spaces to satisfy a wide variety of student needs. Those needs will certainly include cafes, group and collaborative spaces, quiet study and reflection, multimedia authoring, casual and relaxing spaces, and some we haven't even imagined yet. At the same time, we have to watch for what I call vision drift. If we ultimately transform ourselves into just another version of the campus student centre, we will have compromised our core value of supporting the academic mission of our institutions.

INSTRUCTION

The core issue is maintaining access to the student bodies in our institution. Right now, we're in a golden age of information literacy instruction. In many of our institutions, we've never been so successful at integrating our instructional goals into academic programs. However, our challenge will be to make this success sustainable. First of all, to maintain and grow our IL programs we'll need to make the case to possibly skeptical faculty and administration that we have our own specialized knowledge and expertise to offer to their increasingly web-savvy students.

COLLECTIONS

The core issue in collections development that we'll be dealing with over the next 10

years is very simple. We have to decide what's worth paying for. As we shift from print to online, from purchasing to licensing and as our users expect more and more to be available on the free web, it's going to be harder and harder for us to decide what is worth spending our limited resources on.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It seems to me that the secret here is to engage our communities like never before. To engage administrators and student leaders, to be front and centre with the faculty we liaise with, and to be at the table when campus-wide IT decisions are made. To the extent that we're doing these things today, we're going to have to really turn it up a notch. In the past, we were able to assume that the entire campus community was more or less automatically engaged and interested in what was going on at the library. No longer. We'll have to take our story to every nook and cranny, every day, each of us to advocate for our place in the institution.

THE LIBRARY WEB

The core issue in building library web presences is not so much finding a key tool or set of online services, because those change as fast as the weather. The important thing is to keep our focus on our patrons and to remember that we build our online presence to enhance their educational experience and not to satisfy our own curiosity or technophilia. At the same time, we must approach the task of building the virtual library with an open mind and a willingness to experiment. If we are trying to anticipate what online communities and environments our patrons need us in, we have to accept that

we might guess wrong. The first challenge is to find ways to get our systems in front of our users amidst an increasingly crowded and chaotic information landscape. The second challenge is to build systems that our patrons will find worthwhile.

THE WAY FORWARD

A lot of what I've mentioned above is stuff we're already doing, or at least trying to do. Each of our institutions is very different, with diverse histories, programs, and student bodies. The exact shape of our futures will be reflected by that diversity. It is by focusing on getting the attention of our patrons and using that attention to build our reputations as information experts on campus that we will build our futures as integral parts of our communities.

It seems to me that the best strategy to prepare ourselves for an uncertain future is to be engaged in imagining the possibilities for the future and, even more, to work towards creating that future. To quote myself from the concluding blog post of my series, "I want to facilitate a future, one that is good for our patrons but one that also has me in it. And I think that's what we should all aspire to in our professional lives, to bringing about the best future we can imagine, for ourselves and our patrons." ■

John Dupuis is the Head of the Steacie Science & Engineering Library at York University. He has been recording his thoughts on the blog Confessions of a Science Librarian (<http://scienceblogs.com/confessions/>) since 2002. John is also currently writing a book for ALA tentatively titled My Job in 10 Years: The Future of Academic Libraries.

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Services in French, *S'il Vous Plaît*

By Todd Kyle

Many municipalities lack the political will to serve Francophones.

The top challenges of providing French-language public library services in Ontario:

- There is no provincial funding for public libraries that provide services in both official languages, even in those communities in Ontario that are mandated to provide provincial services in French. Thanks to the efforts of the Ottawa Public Library, a resolution was passed at the 2009 OPLA and ABO-Franco AGMs, directing OPLA to lobby the government on this issue.
- Compared to English, there is a lack of online resources in French. Until recently, Knowledge Ontario did not have enough funding to provide database content in French, but thanks to funding from the Ministry of Culture, SOLS, and OLS-North, KO now features CEDROM's *L'Actualité Francophone Plus*.
- The importance of providing library services in French is often not recognized. Francophones are an underserved, politically active, and generally appreciative market group. Serving Francophones serves the broad public policy goals of the country, the province, and library boards.
- In communities where Francophones are the minority, there is often not enough French-speaking library staff to effectively provide service, and even to select materials. In some municipalities, human resource policy gives little or no favour to job applicants who speak French.
- Many municipalities lack the political will to serve Francophones. Often, this is because French services are neither mandated nor funded by upper levels of government.
- There are many "flavours" of Francophones in Ontario. There are fully Francophone families, mixed-marriage families, and families where French is a second language. There are children in French-language as well as French-immersion schools. Francophones come from all over the world. Each of these groups has different expectations of library services.
- OLA's French-language division, l'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario-Franco (ABO-Franco), struggles to keep a profile in the profession. Super Conference has featured regular French-language sessions since 2006, but attendance at these events is small. ABO-Franco even encourages membership from non-professionals as well as from "Francophiles." For conference sessions, having English interpretation would be great, but it's expensive.
- There is a lack of books available in French on many topics in the Ontario curriculum, especially Canadian ones like those about the provinces and pioneer life. So even if libraries have the will to purchase these books, the selection is very limited, and French books are more expensive so the budget does not go as far. ■

Todd Kyle is a "Francophile" member of ABO-Franco. He would like to thank the other members who contributed to the writing and translation of this article.

Des services en français, *Please*

par Todd Kyle

Plusieurs municipalités manquent de volonté politique pour desservir les francophones.

Les défis à relever pour fournir des services de bibliothèque en français en Ontario:

- Il n'y a pas de financement provincial pour les bibliothèques publiques qui proposent des services dans les deux langues officielles, même dans les communautés de l'Ontario qui sont mandatées à fournir des services en français. Grâce aux efforts de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa, une résolution a été adoptée lors des assemblées générales annuelles 2009 de l'OPLA et de l'ABO-Franco, chargeant l'OPLA d'exercer un lobbying auprès du gouvernement sur cette question.
- À comparer avec les ressources disponibles en anglais, il y a très peu de ressources en ligne en français. Jusqu'à récemment, Knowledge Ontario n'avait pas un budget suffisant pour fournir des bases de données en français. Grâce à une aide financière du Ministère de la culture, de SOLS, et de OLS-North, KO offre maintenant *L'Actualité Francophone Plus* de CEDROM.
- L'importance de fournir des services de bibliothèque en français n'est souvent pas reconnue. Quoiqu'ils soient mal desservis, les francophones sont un groupe appréciateur et toujours actif au niveau politique. Servir les francophones répond aux objectifs des politiques du pays, de la province, et des conseils d'administration de bibliothèque.
- Dans les communautés où les francophones sont minoritaires, il n'y a souvent pas assez de personnel de bibliothèque qui parle français pour pouvoir offrir effectivement des services aux francophones et pour sélectionner le matériel pour les collections. Dans certaines municipalités, la politique en matière de ressources humaines n'accorde peu, ou même parfois aucun, avantage aux candidats qui parlent français.
- Plusieurs municipalités manquent de volonté politique pour desservir les francophones, puisque les services en français ne sont souvent ni soutenus, ni financés par les niveaux plus élevés du gouvernement.
- Il y a beaucoup de différents « profils » de francophones en Ontario. On y trouve des familles entièrement francophones, des mariages mixtes, et des familles dont le français est la langue seconde. Certains enfants fréquentent des écoles de langue française, tandis que d'autres sont inscrits dans des programmes d'immersion. Les francophones proviennent aussi de tous les coins du monde, et chacun de ces groupes a des attentes variées face aux services de la bibliothèque.
- La division francophone de l'OLA, l'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario-Franco (ABO-Franco), se bat pour demeurer visible dans la profession. La Super Conférence propose régulièrement des sessions en français depuis 2006, mais la participation à ces ateliers est basse. ABO-Franco encourage l'adhésion des techniciens, ainsi que des « francophiles ». Ce serait profitable, quoique dispendieux, d'avoir des interprètes anglais lors des conférences.
- Il y a un manque de livres disponibles en français sur de nombreux aspects du curriculum de l'Ontario, notamment ceux relatifs au Canada, comme les provinces et la vie des pionniers. Même si les bibliothèques étaient prêtes à acheter ces livres, le choix est très limité. De plus, le budget n'est souvent pas suffisant, puisque les livres publiés en français sont plus dispendieux. ■

Todd Kyle est membre «francophile» de l'ABO-Franco. Il tient à remercier les autres membres qui ont contribué à la rédaction et à la traduction de l'article.

10 THINGS

YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TELL YOUR MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

By [Ian Hunter](#)

Library boards in Canada have an interesting relationship with their municipal councils. Once a term, councils appoint trustees to provide “a comprehensive and efficient public library service” for the community. While the boards have this significant responsibility, they do not have the right to directly levy a tax on behalf of the library. It must seek most of its funds from the municipal council.

With the council both appointing the board members (citizens and a few councillors), and providing most of the funds for the library budget, it is only natural that municipal councillors may see a requirement for the board to be responsive to council’s wishes.

The library board, on the other hand, usually has a different perception of its duty. The board sees a greater need to be more responsive to the community, rather than to council, for the provision of exemplary library services.

Most of the time, this difference in perception does not cause any trouble because the library is being well run and there are few complaints from the public.

At other times, however, tensions arise because councillors want a certain action (e.g., internet filters on all public library computers, or severe budget cuts that would affect services), and the board pushes back, joined by library supporters in the community.

Library boards take care to have the best possible relationship with council, since this should pay dividends at budget time, for example. They may, however, be reluctant to address directly their heartfelt concerns about council’s relationship with the board.

In an attempt to improve the board’s dialogue with council, I’ve prepared a list of 10 things library boards would like their municipal council to do or know:

1 Treat the board as a responsible governing board. The board is a legally constituted entity and has prescribed duties and responsibilities. It is not a committee of council.

2 Respect the knowledge and experience of the library board and its CEO (the head librarian). The CEO is a library professional, and the board's only focus is the library. Councillors should take care to avoid the habit of second-guessing library decisions. See item 10.

3 The library CEO is the employee of the library board. The CEO is hired by the library board and is directly responsible to the board, not to the municipal CAO. Yes, the CEO works closely with the municipality on things like library finances, but the library board, not the CAO, does the CEO's yearly performance evaluation.

4 Appoint competent citizens and councillors to the library board. The community needs a well-run library, so therefore find the best possible people for the board, and ensure they get adequate professional development. Strong, independent-minded trustees who can see the big picture are more effective than group-thinkers.

6 Treat the library as an important, essential service for the community, on par with good fire and police protection. When tough economic times drive increased demand for library services, protect its budget.

7 Take care with large capital projects for the library, e.g., a new library branch, or a branch renovation. Too often during these projects, council pushes the CEO and board aside, and ignores their sage advice. This may well result in costly disasters.

5 Make the time to learn about the issues and concerns of the library, and about the people in charge. Read the meeting minutes. At least once a year, attend a board meeting to get a first-hand appreciation of their work.

8 Trustees must always act in the best interests of the library. Appoint trustees who want to improve, not diminish, library services.

9 All library board members are created equal. Councillor-trustees have no more power than citizen-trustees. The board's authority comes only from its collective decisions, and these are normally expressed on behalf of the board by its chair.

10 Practice good council-board relations. When there's conflict, have discussions rather than sling arrows. For example, talk to the board about the pros and cons of internet filtering before taking a position. Seek points of agreement and find viable solutions to critical issues.

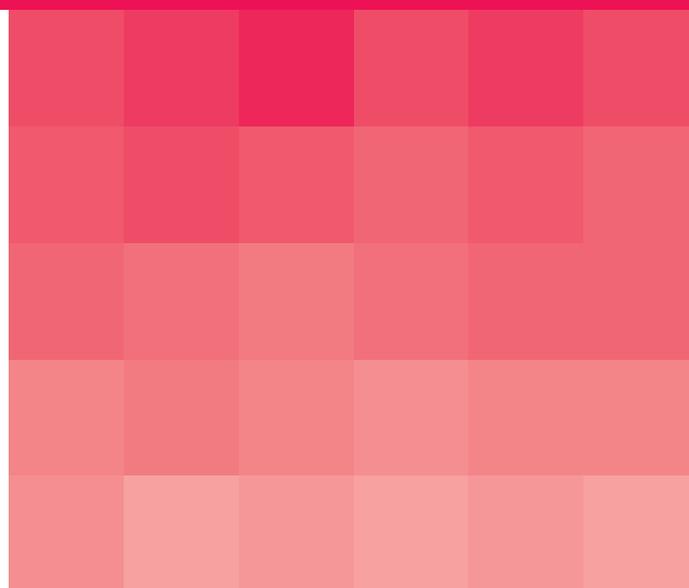
I hope this list will help councils and boards alike. Could the list be longer? Probably! I would be interested in hearing your important messages from the board to council. ■

Ian Hunter is a retired member of the Kanata and Ottawa Public Library boards (1995–2003). An Ontario Library Boards Association (OLBA) volunteer since 2001, he was president in 2004. Ian can be reached at judyian@sympatico.ca.

Communication

in Digital Health Sciences Libraries

By Asha Bajaj



Ideally, digital library communication services enable users to access information within the shortest possible time. But geographical barriers, economic barriers, language barriers, and time barriers are the major negatives to communication of information. These barriers need to be identified and overcome. The need of the hour is a participatory test bed of shared libraries to experiment with new

collaborative web 2.0 technologies, and work with library organizations and vendors to speed innovation in traditional library systems.

Digital libraries can communicate better with online patrons by adopting concepts and technologies from web 2.0 and integrating them into their services. A core concept of web 2.0 is that people are the content of sites: that is, a site is not

DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS, CONSUMER HEALTH WORKERS, AND RESEARCHERS IS THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF DIGITAL HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARIES. THIS ABILITY DEPENDS ON THE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION ON ONE HAND BETWEEN THE VENDORS AND THE DIGITAL LIBRARIES, AND BETWEEN THE DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY PATRONS ON THE OTHER. COMMUNICATION MEANS ACCESS TO THE RIGHT INFORMATION AT THE RIGHT TIME AND AT THE RIGHT COST.

simply populated with information for users to consume, but instead services are provided to individual users partly to enable them to expand their network of friends. It is not enough for the information to be at the users' desktops; it should reach their email programs, their MySpace pages, their IM lists, and their RSS feed readers.

Merging Reference and Community Involvement

In online reference services, all traces of personal information can be removed from the files of electronic interactions between the library and the patron, and these files can then become knowledge-based resources from which all users can benefit. Information from users can also be leveraged to provide metadata in an enhanced catalogue. Users can be encouraged to add their own comments about library materials to catalogue records, and these comments can be made searchable both in the traditional catalogue and in federated searching tools. Furthermore, if these comments are recorded according

to some digital standard, they can then be shared among libraries.

Conversation and Communication

Today, health sciences libraries have successfully designed systems that incorporate electronic outreach services within the national information infrastructure. In addition to web conferencing, workspace is provided for document sharing and for the digital library, with licensed full-text access to medical and nursing journals. The knowledge gap between the health care professional and the layperson is decreasing. For example, the National Electronic Library of Health provides a single information gateway to evidence-based medical information related to management of infectious and communicable diseases, to health care professionals and to the general public. Community health workers, such as public health nurses for example, need access to information while in the field.

More strategies to overcome the challenges to communication of information in digital health sciences libraries include:

- Basing outreach projects on needs assessment and local support
- Providing the same level and quality of information to health practitioners and the public
- Incorporating participatory networking software like blogs, wikis, and RSS feeds into their daily operations
- Establishing a free or low-cost network to overcome the costly technology infrastructure in developing countries
- Resolving the digital divide of inadequate telecommunications infrastructure through research
- Developing a library program as a package of services that include people, collections, document delivery services, training programs, and an ongoing evaluation program ■

Asha Bajaj is the Assistant Editor for Scotts Directories – Medical/Health.

ASK



Creating Online Support for Library Users

By Jennifer Robinson

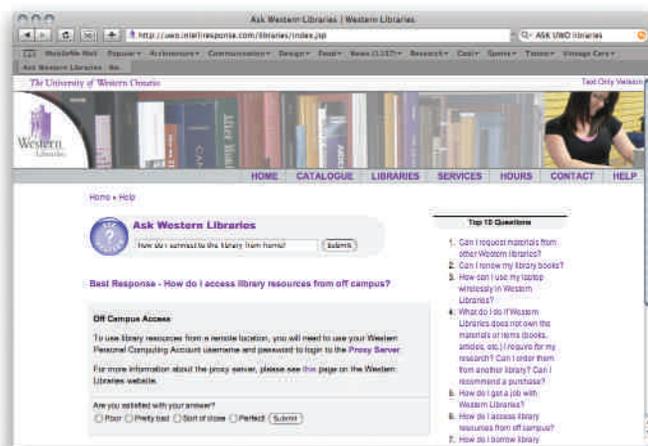
When the Information Technology Services department at the University of Western Ontario approached Western Libraries in the spring of 2007 about creating an “ask” service, the timing could not have been better. For several years Western Libraries had struggled with how to provide effective online support for library users. A common solution, virtual reference, proved unsuccessful as the resources required to run virtual reference outweighed the benefits of the service. Despite this lack of success, virtual reference efforts did provide the library with some useful insights. For example, users of virtual reference tended to ask questions about library facilities and services that could easily be answered via the library website. As a result, improving self-help mechanisms on the library website became a priority. Enter Ask Western Libraries.

Ask Western Libraries (AWL), powered by IntelliResponse, is best described as a searchable FAQ about Western Libraries' facilities, services, and collections. Users type a question into the AWL search box on the library's website and a "best response" is returned for that question. What distinguishes AWL from other searchable FAQs is the ability of the system to anticipate the various ways in which a user may pose a particular question. To achieve this, IntelliResponse administrators, in this case Western Libraries staff, apply criteria to each response stored in the Ask system. The criteria feature of IntelliResponse allows Western Libraries to define the different ways in which users may express their questions, making it more likely that they will be connected to the response they need. For example, if a user is having difficulty accessing library collections from a remote location, chances are she needs information about logging into the library's proxy server. The user may ask about remote access in any number of ways, including "How do I use the library from home?," "Why can't I access e-journals from my office?," or, "Where do I log into e-books if I am in residence?" Western Libraries can include all of the keywords (home, office, residence, e-journals, and e-books) in the IntelliResponse criteria for the response on remote access. As a result, the user who asks, "How do I use the library from home?" is provided with the response, "How do I access library resources from off-campus?" without having to guess at phrases like off-campus, proxy server, or remote access.

But what if the remote user already knows about the proxy server and has logged in? We need to be able to alert users to other possible solutions for their problems, i.e., what they should try next. IntelliResponse does this by allowing the system administrator to suggest related responses along with the best response. For instance, a related response to "How do I access library resources from off-campus?" is "How do I find a password for e-journals?" The ability to link related responses together in the Ask system lets the library create context for users when more than one best response may be appropriate.

Ask Western Libraries currently contains 127 responses on topics ranging from paying fines to finding photocopiers. Since its launch in September 2007, AWL has been asked more than 42,000 questions. Of these questions, 81 percent have been answered: the user has been provided with a best response. Overall, Western Libraries has been pleased with how AWL has managed online customer support. Ask Western Libraries provides consistent information about frequently asked questions and both library users and staff can tap into it 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The system provides natural language searching and does not require users to know library jargon. In addition, AWL requires little staff maintenance.

Despite the benefits described above, unanswered-question reports taken from AWL reveal that nearly 600 reference questions were asked of the system during the first eight months of use.



Despite an escalation feature in AWL that allows the user to send email for further assistance, very few users escalated their questions. It seems that users taking advantage of self-service options that offer an immediate response aren't necessarily interested in waiting for an email reply. Ask Western Libraries does include the option of allowing users to escalate unanswered questions directly to a live chat session, but, given past experience, it is doubtful that Western Libraries will activate this system-wide chat strategy (a.k.a. Virtual Reference) through AWL. Western Libraries has taken steps toward providing chat reference using a more decentralized model that connects users with the appropriate subject librarian or library staff. This new model may be integrated into Ask Western Libraries for a more complete and streamlined online user help experience. Ask Western Libraries is one of six Ask services currently offered at Western and can be found at lib.uwo.ca/help. ■

Jennifer Robinson is Acting Director of the C. B. "Bud" Johnston Library at the University of Western Ontario. She implemented IntelliResponse as Communications and Outreach Librarian for Western Libraries, a role she will re-assume in January 2010.

THE MOBILE WEB

Contrary to popular opinion, the web is getting smaller every day. Really small. The future of the web is happening on small handheld mobile devices. Soon the majority of web accesses will occur via smartphones or netbooks that are “always on” and always with the user. Apple’s iPhone and RIM’s BlackBerry are the poster children for this kind of device, but there are many others available and many more to come.

By **Michael** Ridley

Just as we have learned how to use the web browser as a window for library resources and services, so too will we have to learn how to use the smartphone as the primary device for interacting with our users and for presenting the information they want. Accessing the library through the mobile web isn’t simply a matter of shrinking the screen. Effective use of the mobile environment will require us to rethink how we connect with our users.

Of course, sometimes less is more. Texting is a good example of how the desire for connectivity can overcome limited “band-

width” (the 140-character limit). Libraries have already taken up this challenge and implemented some innovative services using texting or Twitter. However, mostly we have been trying squeeze our existing websites into the smaller, lower-resolution screen. But a smartphone is not just a smaller computer.

While the limited screen real estate may be a disadvantage, there are compensating capabilities which make these devices extraordinarily powerful. With the integration of voice, data, GPS, always-on connectivity, personalization, location-based services, and easy interchanges with other devices (e.g., Bluetooth), we are approaching the kind of “information appliance” that we have long discussed and hoped for.

However, because we are, in large part, in the document business, the mobile web is a challenge. Documents as we know them aren’t compatible with the limited screen size. Accessing these in an effective manner will require us to liberate the content from the container. We must learn how to repurpose and reconfigure the information into a different display or an alternative presentation format.

But formatting isn’t the only or even the most important issue.

Recently I heard Robin Chase, the co-founder of Zipcar (an innovative car-sharing system in the U.S.), talk about the need for national “low-cost data bits” and the promise of mesh networks. She is one of the few voices for the idea of a “public data space” or a free data zone. As an example, aside from the lack of appropriate (and available) hardware, there is no reason why mobile phones can’t simply talk with each other rather than having to go through cell towers or even WiFi access points (i.e., bypass the telecom providers). Such a



IN COMPARISON TO OTHER MAJOR ECONOMIES IN THE WORLD, CANADIANS PAY EXCESSIVE DATA RATES, IN SOME CASES TEN TIMES THE AVERAGE COST.

capacity would enable free communications, a public data space. Another opportunity is to license public use of the so-called “white space” in existing spectrum allocations, essentially taking advantage of unused capacity. The FCC in the U.S. is considering this; no word yet from the CRTC in Canada. As with many new technologies, powerful options are often disabled or ignored because they threaten existing business models or displace current corporate positions.

All this points to an underlying problem: the high cost of wireless data services in Canada.

In comparison to other major economies in the world, Canadians pay excessive data rates, in some cases ten times the average cost. In Japan and Korea, cell phones are used for micropayments (e.g., buying a drink from a vending machine). In Canada the data costs make these sorts of innovations unattractive. While there are some unlimited data plans, they are either expensive or, oddly, not really unlimited. And then there are the roaming rates; using your smartphone while travelling outside the country is almost financial extortion. Some roaming data rates are at the astounding level of \$0.03/KB. That’s \$30/MB or approximately \$150 to transfer an average mp3 file or YouTube video. The roaming agreements between telecom companies are unconscionable and bear no relation to the actual costs involved.

The situation is simple: high data rates impede innovation.

It is widely believed that the reason the Kindle has never been marketed in Canada is not because of Amazon’s lack of interest in the Canadian marketplace, but their inability to make a deal with any of the telecom providers to ensure con-

nectivity at a consumer-friendly rate. SMS access to Twitter in Canada was suspended by Twitter itself because of the high costs that would have been borne by their users. So far only Bell has been able to renegotiate a deal to bring it back.

In 2009, a Harris/Decima survey commissioned by the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association celebrated the finding that 72 percent of Canadian households had access to wireless. While this was presented as evidence of deep and widespread access illustrating pervasive Canadian adoption, this number pales in comparison with other G20 countries where these levels of penetration were met and exceeded some years ago (e.g., Germany achieved 85 percent penetration in 2006; France was at 90 percent the same year). Canada is hardly a leader in wireless adoption.

The recent wireless spectrum auction in Canada opened up new opportunities for competition in the marketplace. Hopefully this will translate into the kind of lower-cost services essential to the adoption of the mobile web as the platform for next generation services. As the web gets smaller, its reach grows. The mobile web is the future of the digital library but it remains to be seen if the economic models will allow Canadians to be full participants. I hope we are not relegated to watch from the digital sidelines.

Michael Ridley is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph.

A SIP FROM THE FIRE HOSE

Strategies for Keeping Up with Technology

By **Amanda** Etches-Johnson

I received my first email message from an *Access* reader a couple of months ago. Not only was it an exciting and momentous occasion for me (fan mail!), it also reminded me of an on-going issue with which we all struggle. My reader, let's call him Harrison, admitted to being interested in technology and all things 2.0, but lamented the fact that he just did not have enough time to keep up with all the new tools, tech, and terminology.

"Information overload" is certainly not a 2.0 problem and Harrison is hardly alone. I'd guess that very few of us feel that we have enough time to consume all the information we need to make us truly informed citizens. So, how *do* we keep up? Let's talk strategies.

PLAYING CATCH-UP

The world of 2.0 technologies is fast-paced and ever-changing. One of my favourite tools for getting up to speed on new technologies is the *Explanations in Plain English* series of short videos created by Common Craft (commoncraft.com). Lee and Sachi LeFever use low-tech tools (a whiteboard, paper, and markers) to explain complex technologies in a matter of minutes, providing an excellent introduction to how the tool works and the kind of impact it is having on the current web landscape. Recent videos include *Video Sharing in Plain English* and *Twitter in Plain English*.

Another favourite for getting up to speed on emerging technologies is the *7 Things You Should Know About ...* series published by Educause (educause.edu/ELI/ELIResources/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAbout/7495). As a network whose mission is to promote the smart use of technology in higher education,

Educause tends to focus on the practicalities of new technologies and their implications for higher education.

IT'S ALL ABOUT FILTERING

Blogs began their lives as link-heavy information-filtering mechanisms – early bloggers used the format to present quick posts with annotated links to web content. If you're reading blogs these days, you already know that the format has evolved since those early days, and bloggers now use the tool for so much more than just annotated links. However, blogs are still excellent filtering mechanisms. There are literally thousands of library-related blogs out there (liswiki.org/wiki/Weblogs) and while I wouldn't recommend reading them *all*, reading a few blogs on topics you're interested in can provide you with a reasonably comprehensive view of those topics, filtered by bloggers you trust. And for a filtered view of the wider web, sites like Digg (digg.com) and Reddit (reddit.com) can provide a "sip from the fire hose" without being completely overwhelming.

STEPPING OUT ON THE BLEEDING EDGE

Libraries do a reasonable job of adopting and keeping up with emerging technology, but I don't think it's unreasonable to suggest that we're not on the bleeding edge. While some might argue that we probably *shouldn't* be on the bleeding edge with technology adoption (preferring tested technologies over experimental ones), I do think that it's important that we scan the horizon and do some futurecasting so that we're not caught off guard. Happily, for us, there are a number of approachable resources we can turn to to get a glimpse of "what's next."

One of my favourite strategies is following technology and “idea” conferences online. TED conferences, for example, gather thought leaders from all industries and backgrounds to speak about and discuss “ideas worth spreading” (their tagline). Attending a TED conference would be out of the realm of possibility for most of us, but since all talks are recorded and archived online (ted.com), we still have ample opportunity to be inspired by these thought leaders. Similarly, the Web 2.0 Expo/Summit brings technology leaders together and makes a lot of the conference coverage freely available online (web2expo.com). Additionally, I’ve recently taken to spending a few minutes a week browsing the slideshows on Slideshare (slideshare.net), which is an online network that allows you to share your presentation slides (much like Flickr allows you to share your photographs). A quick glance through Slideshare reveals that library conferences are well covered on the site, as are other technology conferences, camps, and unconferences. While we might not be able to physically attend these gatherings, we’re lucky to have the opportunity to virtually engage with the content.

THE TIME PROBLEM

You’ve probably heard about the 15-minute strategy: carve out just 15 minutes a day to read an article, check your RSS feeds, or read a blog post or two. 15 minutes are not an enormous time burden and might be just enough to learn about a new tool, technology, or issue pertinent to libraries/librarianship. If I could offer one more strategy it would be this: talk to your colleagues. Ask them what they’ve read or learned about recently. It’s a simple, low-tech solution, but one that almost always guarantees that you’ll learn something new yourself.

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Amanda Etches-Johnson is the User Experience Librarian at McMaster University. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, UWO. She gets to explore and teach technology in both of her jobs and that makes her happy. You can find her online at blogwithoutalibrary.net.

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SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

library marketplace

MARKETING,
COMMUNICATIONS,
AND LIBRARIES

DISTRIBUTION DISTRIBUTION DISTRIBUTION

By Catherine Baird

In the introductory article for this column, I encouraged you to share your library's stories and emphasized that marketing was about storytelling. That's fine and well to say (or write), but how does one go about doing this? Let me put my money where my mouth is and offer a few suggestions.

If you're the sole person at your organization working on communications, then you can simply start out by keeping your ear to the ground for some good story ideas. Often people don't realize that the project they are working on or the anecdote that they are telling to their colleagues in the library lunchroom would actually make a neat little story to share with your library's community.

So take it upon yourself to write some of those stories up, tap a few of your colleagues who have excellent editing skills, and before you know it, you'll have a number of gems to work with.

So, what do you do with these stories once you've got them? Just like real estate is all about location, location, location, communications is all about distribution, distribution, distribution. You likely have a news section on your website and you could start by posting your stories there. But don't let your wonderful little story end its life on the library website. Look around you for other channels. Find out who is in charge of news stories for the university or college homepage or for the city website and start submitting your stories to them. Look for community newsletters or newspapers and start building up contacts with editors of these publications. Find out if there is a reporter at your local paper who might write about the library (such as an education reporter).

Think outside the box about who might be interested in your story. We tend to clump together our library audience into one big category and label them as "patrons" or "users" when actually this is a heterogeneous mix of people from all walks of life. Would your story be of particular interest to genealogists, history buffs, or techno geeks? If so, is there a popular website, publication, or blog where you can expose your story to these audiences?

Use your networks and the networks of your colleagues to distribute stories. It's pretty easy to post a link to a Facebook profile or send a link on Twitter, and if your story is good enough, people won't need much coaxing to do this.

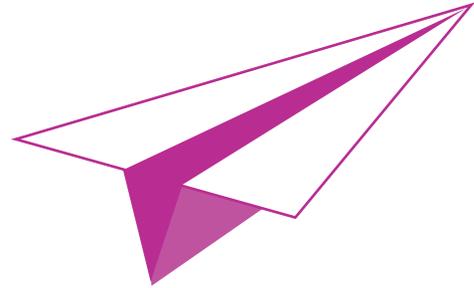
After you get a bit of experience under your belt, you might want to enlist some colleagues who work in different areas of your library to form a team of media writers. The advantage to having an entire team of writers is that you can have your ear to the ground in many different places at once. In addition, a mix of writing styles and different perspectives is never a bad thing. You can meet monthly, every two weeks, or every couple of months depending on how large your organization is and how often you would like new stories to appear. Start your first meeting with a brainstorm of story ideas and then see who's interested in writing what. Group editing may or may not work depending on the group dynamic.

Make sure to keep track of your progress right from the beginning. Start a spreadsheet and track the number of stories you write each month that appear on the library homepage. Note each month how many times your stories appear in other publications and keep track of which ones. How often do you get a call about one of your stories? If your stories help to promote attendance at events or programs, keep track of the attendance over time.

Eventually, you'll start to see patterns as to which kinds of stories have the most traction and you'll identify more and more channels for distribution. Remember that distribution of your story is completely scalable depending on the story itself (all channels might not be appropriate for all stories) and how much time you can devote to getting your stories out there. Of course, first things first ... get writing! It all starts with a story.

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Catherine Baird is the Marketing, Communications and Outreach Librarian at McMaster University Library in Hamilton, Ontario. She can be reached at bairdca@mcmaster.ca.

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WHAT DOES IT TAKE



Reader's Advisory Core Competencies

By Sharron Smith

Anyone who works with readers has the best of intentions, eager to get the right book into the hands of the right reader; however the best readers' advisors know that good intentions will take them only so far. The process of connecting book and reader is complex and it can seem like the more you know, the more you realize what you don't know.

It was for this exact reason that OPLA's Readers' Advisory Committee took on the task of developing a set of RA competencies, key skills needed to ensure consistent and successful reader interactions. The four areas of development are: the reader's advisory conversation, collection knowledge, reader service skills, and reader development. The competencies are posted on the committee page on the OLA website (accessola.com/opla). So what does it take to be a skilled RA?

READERS' ADVISORY CONVERSATION

The cornerstone of this service is the RA interview, or interaction, or more simply the readers' advisory conversation. It is during the interaction between staff and reader that a dialogue takes place, when the advisor learns what is needed to match reader needs and interests and library materials. Solid interviewing skills are essential so that the advisor can clarify the customers' interests, and then make suggestions for materials in a variety of genres, subjects, and formats and at an appropriate reading level. It is critical for the advisor to have an understanding of the appeal factors of books such as subject, treatment, characters, setting, ending, and physical size.

COLLECTION KNOWLEDGE

To connect reader and book, it is necessary to have an understanding of, and familiarity with, the depth and breadth of materials and resources in the branch and/or library system, including material in all formats and media, both fiction and non-fiction. Competency comes from having the ability to use tools and resources such as reading lists, suggestions from the media, schools and community groups, and personal knowledge of current culture. With this knowledge, customized reading lists, read-alike lists, or reading maps, specific to library holdings, can be developed. These lists will mine the depth of a collection and bring to the attention of a reader the resources available for them to explore. Staff must keep abreast of the variety of formats used to tell a story; technology is ever changing and formats are constantly evolving. Finally, while it is essential to know what is in the collection, the skilled readers' advisor should also be aware of current and forthcoming titles and trends.

READER SERVICE SKILLS

A readers' advisor needs to develop and maintain a non-judgmental approach when exchanging information with a reader. This is achieved when there is an understanding of the importance of story and reading in the lives of our current and potential customers. The most successful service delivery will occur in environments where staff, at all levels, are motivated to develop the necessary skills and where a reader-centred focus is encouraged. In these types of situations, staff have ensured that both services and resources are promoted and readers have an awareness of what is available to them.

IT IS CRITICAL FOR THE ADVISOR TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE APPEAL FACTORS OF BOOKS SUCH AS SUBJECT, TREATMENT, CHARACTERS, SETTING, ENDING, AND PHYSICAL SIZE.

READER DEVELOPMENT

One of the greatest pleasures that readers can have is the discovery of a new author; therefore, we must help our customers to develop an awareness of their own reading interests and of the ability to articulate why certain books appeal, as well as to make connections to similar books. Of course, before helping someone else with his or her development, it is important to understand our own reading interests. Do you know why you read? Do you understand the complexity of your interests, needs, and backgrounds? Advisors must be willing to expand their reading tastes, reading beyond the personal comfort zone. All too often, customers believe we have read everything we suggest. Advisors need to promote the tools and resources available to help us help them. The resources in this area of librarianship have exploded over the last decade, and most libraries now have the tools needed to help readers.

ACKNOWLEDGING EXCELLENCE

Many of our colleagues already have highly developed skills in this service area; these are the colleagues we all go to or rely on to help us with the more difficult or challenging interactions. OPLA presents an annual award for Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory: consider nominating someone for this recognition. Readers' advisory is a key service for our customers and this award acknowledges the importance of the service.

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Sharron Smith is the Manager of Readers' Advisory Services at the Kitchener Public Library, the chair of the Ontario Public Library Association's Readers' Advisory Committee, and editor of this column. She can be reached at sharron.smith@kpl.org.

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SE LANÇER EN AFFAIRES

des ressources pour partir du bon pied



By Mahalya Havard

Qui n'a pas déjà rêvé de travailler à son compte, de fonder sa propre entreprise ? Mais voilà, par où commencer une fois que l'on a décidé de plonger ? Mille questions surgissent ... et une recherche dans Google renvoie des millions de résultats ! Le web regorge effectivement de ressources gratuites sur la gestion des entreprises (démarrage, financement, importation / exportation, marketing, recrutement, etc.), mais encore faut-il s'assurer de choisir celles qui diffusent des renseignements utiles, à jour, complets, fiables, et surtout, adaptés au contexte dans lequel on évoluera.

Le monde de la gestion peut paraître complexe, voire obscur, aux yeux des non-initiés. Il n'est pas question ici de recenser de manière exhaustive toutes les ressources pertinentes disponibles, mais plutôt de répertorier un certain nombre de sites web incontournables, qui présentent autant de conseils et d'outils conçus pour venir en aide aux entrepreneurs, qu'ils soient nouveaux, débutants, ou même expérimentés.

On peut se réjouir du fait que les institutions gouvernementales abordent la question du démarrage d'entreprises, car leurs sites web s'avèrent d'excellents points de départ. En plus d'être riches en information, ils présentent souvent la particularité de produire l'information dans les deux langues officielles. On peut aisément basculer d'une langue à l'autre en cliquant sur le lien « English » (ou « Français », selon le cas), qui se trouve habituellement dans le menu au haut de l'écran.

ENTREPRISES CANADA – SERVICES AUX ENTREPRENEURS entreprisescanada.ca/gol/cbec/site.nsf/fr/index.html

Ce portail très complet constitue la première source vers laquelle se tourneront les entreprises canadiennes et les entrepreneurs qui se lancent en affaires. En effet, Entreprises Canada se veut un « point d'accès unique aux services, programmes et exigences règlementaires relatifs aux entreprises des gouvernements fédéral, provinciaux et territoriaux. » Le contenu du site est continuellement mis à jour, et les renseignements et outils proposés sont adaptés aux besoins des entreprises.

Outre le Plan d'affaires interactif, il faut absolument se prévaloir du Système d'aide au démarrage d'une entreprise (SADE), qui regroupe tous les renseignements essentiels sur la mise sur pied de divers types de commerces: dépanneur, gîte touristique, restaurant, salon de beauté, établissement de soins pour personnes âgées, etc. En guise de complément, il ne faut pas oublier de consulter le Réseau Entreprises Canada, au bas de la page, pour obtenir des renseignements spécifiques à une province ou un territoire.

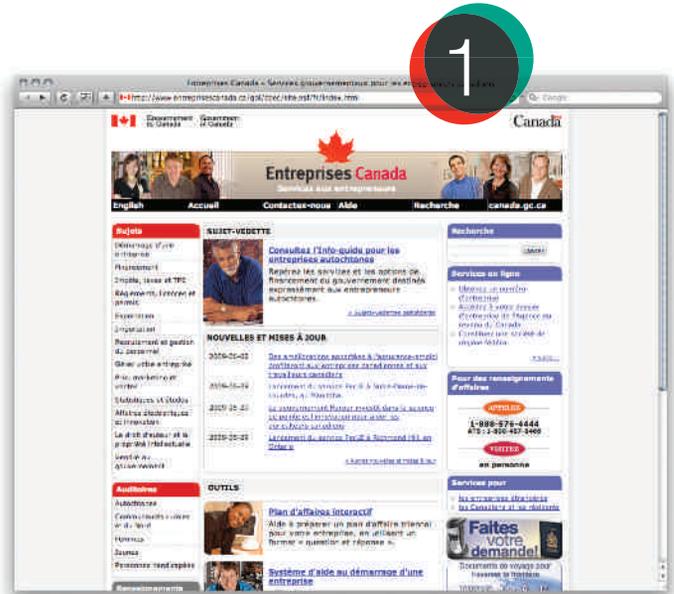
Le menu de navigation, à gauche, permet d'accéder directement à un sujet, si l'on s'interroge sur un aspect précis de la gestion d'entreprise, par exemple, « Financement » ou « Règlements, licences et permis ».

Enfin, Entreprises Canada offre aux entrepreneurs de nombreux services en ligne, comme remplir des formulaires électroniques ou obtenir un numéro d'entreprise.



SERVICEONTARIO – SERVICES POUR ENTREPRISES
ontario.ca/fr/services_for_business/index.htm

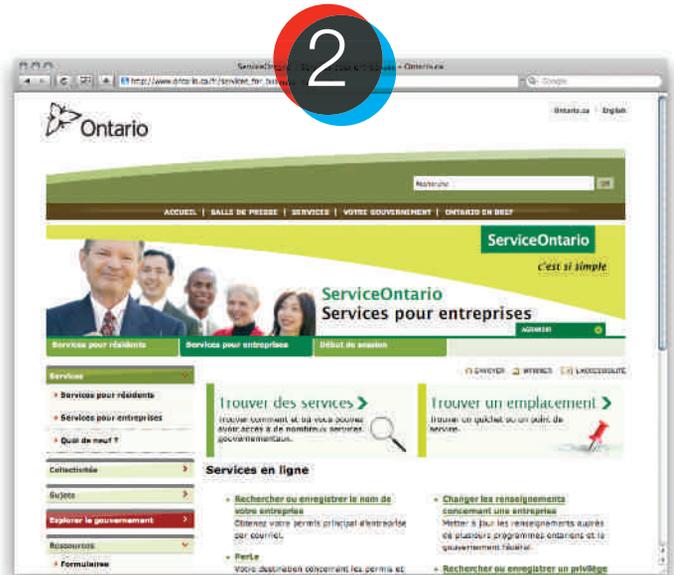
ServiceOntario constitue la porte d'entrée aux différents services offerts par le gouvernement de l'Ontario. Une section s'adresse spécifiquement aux entrepreneurs: Services pour entreprises. Cette section présente des liens vers les divers services accessibles en ligne, par exemple, enregistrer le nom d'une entreprise, effectuer des paiements de taxes, obtenir des renseignements sur les permis et licences pour entreprises.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE
entrepreneurship.com/index.php

Le Centre d'entrepreneuriat, créé par le Centre de recherche et d'innovation d'Ottawa (Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, OCRI), aide les entrepreneurs à prendre des décisions éclairées. Le site vise trois clientèles en particulier: les personnes qui souhaitent se lancer en affaires, les jeunes entrepreneurs, et les entrepreneurs qui aspirent à développer leur entreprise. Le contenu de chacune de ces sections s'adapte à la clientèle ciblée, que ce soit au niveau des FAQ, des tutoriels, ou des outils proposés.

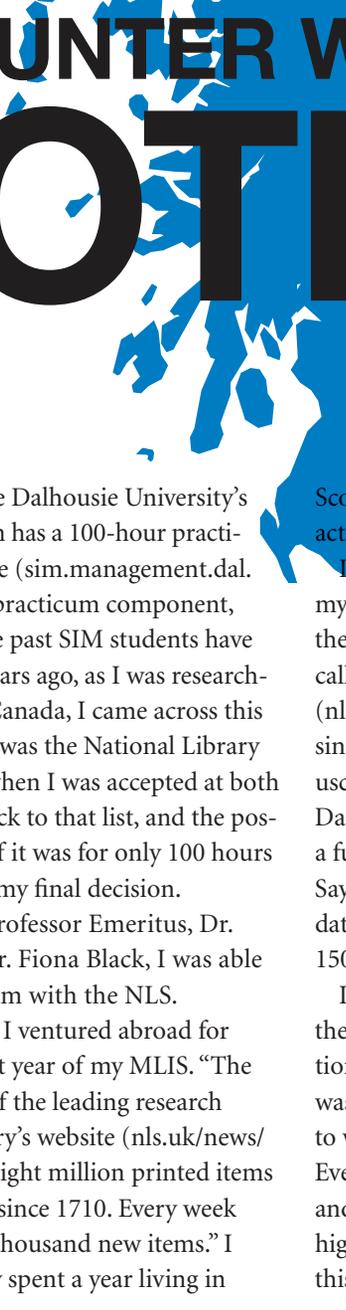
Dans le menu de gauche, sous « Entrepreneurship Centre », on trouve aussi des sections qui s'adressent à tout type d'entrepreneurs. Le bulletin électronique *EntrepreNews*, par exemple, traite de sujets variés comme les contrats écrits, les entreprises familiales, la protection des données, le réseautage, ou encore la gestion du risque. Autre outil très pratique: une base de données d'experts – on peut y effectuer des recherches par mot clé et par catégorie (Sales, Networking, Marketing, Accounting, etc.). Il convient aussi de mentionner les fameux « success stories », qui ne peuvent qu'inspirer, motiver et, pourquoi pas, faire rêver les entrepreneurs!



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AN ENCOUNTER WITH DARWIN IN SCOTLAND

By *Emily Landriault*

Similar to other library programs, the Dalhousie University's School of Information (SIM) program has a 100-hour practicum component. The school's website (sim.management.dal.ca) provides information about this practicum component, including a list of the locations where past SIM students have done their practicums. About four years ago, as I was researching the different MLIS programs in Canada, I came across this list and saw that one of the locations was the National Library of Scotland (NLS). I have to admit, when I was accepted at both Western and Dalhousie, I thought back to that list, and the possibility of working at the NLS (even if it was for only 100 hours of unpaid work) helped me to make my final decision. Once at SIM, and with the help of Professor Emeritus, Dr. Norman Horrocks, and the Dean, Dr. Fiona Black, I was able to arrange the details of my practicum with the NLS.

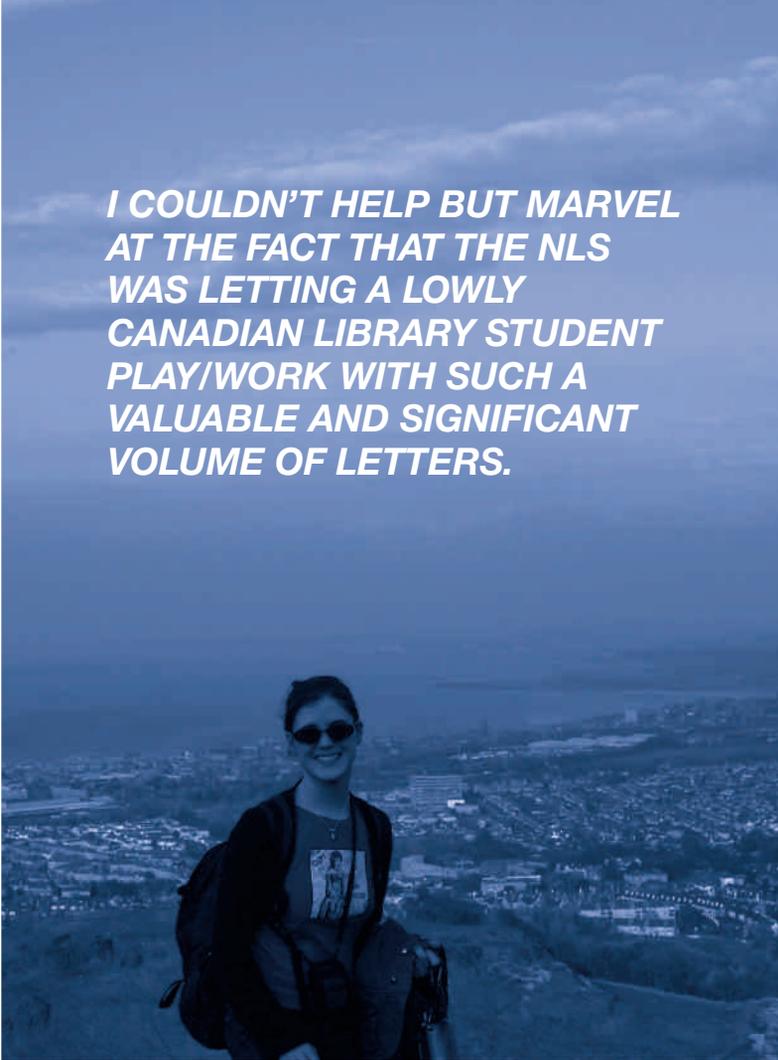
It was with much anticipation that I ventured abroad for three weeks the summer after the first year of my MLIS. "The National Library of Scotland is one of the leading research libraries in Europe," reports the library's website (nls.uk/news/press/murray0304.html). "It houses eight million printed items and has been a Legal Deposit library since 1710. Every week it collects more than four and a half thousand new items." I should mention that I had previously spent a year living in

Scotland and was therefore less interested in doing tourist activities and more interested in working in the library.

In completing my practicum application, I had listed one of my interests as archives, and as a result I ended up working on the John Murray Archive (JMA). The JMA is a large and historically significant collection (fonds), newly acquired by the NLS (nls.uk/jma/index.html). There have been seven John Murrays since the 1700s, the second and third of whom published manuscripts by the likes of Jane Austen, Lord Byron, and Charles Darwin. In 2006, with the help of the Scottish government and a fundraising campaign, the NLS purchased the entire archive. Says the library's website: "The letters, journals and manuscripts date from 1768 through to 1920. In total there are more than 150,000 items."

I was placed under the supervision of the project manager of the John Murray Archive, who was responsible for the promotion and exhibition of the archive, as well as its website. As he was not a librarian, I was periodically sent to other departments to work more closely with librarians, archivists, and curators. Everyone I met was extremely welcoming and enthusiastic, and the overall morale of the organization seemed to be quite high. There were two reasons, I suspect, which contributed to this feeling. First, the library employees worked on flex time,

I COULDN'T HELP BUT MARVEL AT THE FACT THAT THE NLS WAS LETTING A LOWLY CANADIAN LIBRARY STUDENT PLAY/WORK WITH SUCH A VALUABLE AND SIGNIFICANT VOLUME OF LETTERS.



When I spent time with the curator of the archive, I was given what I felt were amazing tasks and responsibilities. I was given a box full of letters written by the Scottish poet James Hogg, and directed to put them in chronological order, foliate them, and make an inventory. Although it was an easy task, the tiny, intricate nineteenth century writing was a challenge to read. My next task was to organize a large stack of Charles Darwin's letters, which were not bound in chronological order. I was to find the chronological order of the letters and to make an inventory; this proved an unexpected challenge. I quickly learned that Darwin, who studied and collected a large amount



which meant that they had to work a certain amount of hours a week, but could do so whenever they wanted, provided it was between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. And second, because of this system, and because we were in Scotland, drinking a few pints on a very leisurely lunch break was not uncommon! As a Canadian of small stature, I have to confess that it was a little difficult for me to participate in this practice. Where some hearty Scottish library employees seemed to be completely unaffected and work-ready after two pints, I knew that if I tried to do the same thing, I would be falling asleep on priceless archival documents! As with many of the buildings in Edinburgh, the National Library is built into the arch of a bridge. This means that the building has many more underground levels than it appears to from street level. On my first two days of work, I was taken down into the depths of the third and fourth basement levels, and shown some of the gems of the archive. In Canada, I've had the opportunity to see some amazing special collections, including first-edition Oscar Wilde plays and a book gifted to the Library of Parliament by Queen Victoria in memory of her late husband. In the JMA, however, I was allowed to see the letter in which Darwin pitched the idea of *The Origin of Species* and the diary of Lady Caroline Lamb, in which she referred to Byron as "mad, bad and dangerous to know."

of species, not only felt a need to start many of his letters with the phrase, "I am much obliged ...," but also felt no obligation to date any of his letters. I was therefore left to match each original letter to transcripts found in the Darwin Online Correspondence Database, where previous research had been done to determine the dates that the letters were written. I couldn't help but marvel at the fact that the NLS was letting a lowly Canadian library student play/work with such a valuable and significant volume of letters.

The whole experience of being in Scotland and being allowed to work with historically important archives was highly rewarding. In my second year at SIM, as I compared my practicum to those of other students, I found that my experience had been unique. It had allowed me to learn both about libraries and about myself in a way that others who had remained in Canada hadn't. And for the rest of that year, first-year students were coming up to me, wanting to know how they too could do their practicum at the National Library of Scotland.

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Emily Landriault is a Reference Librarian with the Library of Parliament.

NANO TECHNOLOGY AGE

Safety Issues in our Libraries
and Beyond

By Edith Arbach

Nanotechnology is the set of theories and techniques allowing the production and manipulation of very tiny objects, the size of atoms. Nanoparticles, the building blocks of nanotechnology, have a size of 100 nanometres or less (a nanometer is one billionth of a metre). Nanoparticles are so tiny that they can be manipulated only by light, fluids, or chemical reactions. In the last few years nanotechnology has expanded rapidly in all fields of research, including industry and medicine. Nanoparticles have been used in the production of more than 800 products such as iPods, iPhones, building materials, paints, medical instruments, drugs, clothing, detergents, sunscreens, cosmetics, toys, and home entertainment products. They are also used as food additives.

Libraries are not exempt from the nanotechnology invasion. Research on coating paper with zinc oxide (ZnO) nanoparticles for their antibacterial effects is now underway. It is expected that this technology will be applied in the papermaking industry in the next decade, therefore affecting all new print materials in libraries. In addition, nanoparticles are now being used in electronic inks and in the manufacturing of electronic papers, the main components of e-book readers. Nanochips are also being used in our desktop computers, and will soon be extensively used in almost all electronic and wireless equipment.

Questions about nanotechnology safety are everywhere. Because of their extremely small size, nanoparticles can go into

parts of the human body where other materials can't. Potential routes of exposure include inhalation, oral, and dermal.

Inhalation is the main hazard of nanoparticles exposure. Once inhaled, nanoparticles travel to the lungs, and from there to the circulatory system and other organs. Studies have demonstrated that inhaled nanoparticles cause platelet deposition in the arterial vessel walls leading to cardiovascular diseases. The size of nanoparticles plays an important role in their distribution in the circulatory system. Nanoparticles of 100 to 200 nm will localize in the inner regions of the blood vessels while 500 nm particles will migrate to the aorta, the main artery of the body. Inhaled nanoparticles can also migrate from the nose to the brain, thus affecting the central nervous system.

The unique properties of nanomaterials which make them attractive for industrial and medical applications are the same which make many of them hazardous. Some of these unique properties are the size, reactivity, shape, agglomeration, and solubility.

One of the most frequent questions in libraries is: What are the health concerns associated with nanoparticles?

When inhaled, ingested, or used on the skin at certain doses, nanoparticles have increased accumulation in the organism in comparison with larger particles; and once accumulated, they may not be cleared completely. Since nanoparticles are very

reactive, they may react with the chemicals of the cells and alter DNA, causing mutations. Research on rodents has shown that carbon nanotubes, used in many nanotechnology products, can cause fibrosis and lung inflammation.

Toxicity of some nanomaterials is due to contaminants which adhere to their particles' surface during their transport or creation rather than from the nanomaterials themselves. Engineered nanomaterials are now being coated to decrease contamination.

The environmental effects of nanoparticles receive special attention. While some non-biodegradable nanomaterials may accumulate in the environment, toxifying bacteria and aquatic species, others have the potential for pollution detection and reduction.

Development of new products using nanotechnology is growing at a much faster pace than research in the field of its safety, and nanotechnology advocates admit that some classes of nanomaterials can be hazardous under certain conditions.

So, nanotechnology is no different from any other technology where the benefits may outweigh the risks. It has unlimited promising applications, mainly in the fields of the environment and the treatment of deadly diseases. In the past we have

worked with dangerous technologies such as those used in nuclear medicine, but until the hazards of nanoparticles are well known, the utmost caution is critical.

Reliable information on nanotechnology for advanced researchers is available in specialized databases such as SciFinder Scholar, Medline, SCOPUS, and the Web of Science. For the general public and lower undergraduate students, reliable information on nanotechnology can be found at the following sites:

National Research Council Canada

(nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/randd/areas/nanotechnology_e.html)

Nanowerk (nanowerk.com/spotlight/spotid=984.php)

National Nanotechnology Initiative (nano.gov)

Canadian NanoBusiness Alliance

(nanotech-now.com/Time-for-Action.PDF)

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COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN THE ELECTRONIC ERA

Library book selectors must deal with many pressures created by the increasing glut of book titles for more cross-disciplinary research areas in ever-tighter budgetary conditions.

Monograph pricing did not create the budget crisis that academic libraries are experiencing, but it is in the monograph budgets that most libraries are forced to seek the solution to budget cuts. Effective tools to make selections that help librarians serve the research and pedagogical needs of their institution are therefore more essential than ever.

Library book vendors such as YBP, Blackwell, and Coutts offer a variety of tools to match individual titles to library selection policies in their approval plans. These tools are a great help to selectors but what they cannot do is to guarantee that titles selected will actually be read. Various studies indicate that 50 percent, and sometimes as many as 80 percent, of titles acquired for a research collection are never circulated.

As e-books become more acceptable to faculty for research and teaching purposes it is clear that e-book services offer many new opportunities for library selectors to adjust their selection strategies and choices to more closely match the use made of books by their patrons.

Some libraries have experimented with their vendors to offer patron-driven acquisition. This model allows patrons to search the catalogue for records of titles that the library has not purchased and to purchase the title automatically when it is read.

Clearly this model aligns title selection with actual usage and some studies show that circulation is improved fourfold – and, despite the fear that it would result in the selection of a mass of low-value or ephemeral titles, patron selections actually appear to match selection policies as much as 92 percent of the time.

Patron-driven selection remains, however, a blunt and risky budget tool to offer more user-focused selection support for librarians. Rather than develop such a blunt tool, ebrary has chosen to focus on the real underlying issues that librarians have expressed to us.

We view patron-driven selection and acquisition as one option within a suite of services that apply the amount and quality of data it is possible to mine and apply from our e-book platform to the more targeted selection of books. The intelligent

application of this data is the next horizon in selection support whether it is used to support decisions by library staff or to allow patron choices to drive selection.

YBP and Blackwell Book Services (the two leading book vendors in North America) have both selected ebrary as the electronic platform through which they will deliver e-books to their customers. Their choice will not only help them to fully integrate electronic books into their print approval plans, but will enable them to take advantage of our rich usage data to create the selection support of the future.

Baker & Taylor's recent selection of ebrary as its digital platform for the academic market will enable them to add data on changing usage patterns from library e-book use and that of peer institutions to improve their bibliographic profiles. This data can then be combined with patron profiles to allow different classes of user (faculty, graduate students, or undergraduates, for example) to recommend or even purchase titles directly according to the permissions set for them by selectors and fund managers.

Ebrary's vision is not to introduce patron-driven acquisition as a gimmick, but as an option that is supported by complete services that allow the librarian to set the dials on their dash-

board to support their diverse user needs and refine their selection strategies accordingly. These tools will become increasingly valuable as cross-disciplinary study becomes more widespread and the formal indexing schema struggle to keep up with the evolution of disciplines.

Ebrary's partnerships aim to combine the core value of the book vendors in supporting selection and purchase of content with the core value of the ebrary platform in improving the discovery and integration of content into research and teaching.

Understanding users helps improve services. The integration of data on e-book usage and patron behaviour into the sophisticated tools built around bibliographic services is the new horizon that ebrary is pursuing with its partners to develop these exciting opportunities for the academic library community.

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Leslie Lees oversees ebrary's content acquisitions, collection development, and content marketing, and works with the executive staff to develop and drive global strategies. He has more than 20 years of experience in the publishing and information industry.

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DOES THE CULTURE OF AN ORGANIZATION AFFECT INFORMATION USE?

By Chun Wei Choo

A great deal of effort has been put into developing systems and other means to manage institutional information, sometimes without a clear understanding of the organization's information use patterns. When thinking about the relationship between an organization and its information-related activities, two questions come to mind. First, does the information culture in an organization have an impact on how information is used? Second, is there a way to identify information behaviours and values (IBVs) that denote and differentiate an organization's information culture? To answer these questions, three colleagues and I completed a research project to explore the link between information culture and information use in organizations (Choo et al. 2008).

Three Canadian organizations participated in the study: a legal firm (L), a public health organization (H), and an engineering company (E). In each organization, all employees, including professional, managerial, technical, and support staff, were invited to take part. L is one of the largest Canadian-based national law firms, employing about 1,700 staff. H is a Québec-based public organization in the field of health science, with about 550 employees. Its role is to develop scientific knowledge and transfer it for use in health policy, research, and training. E is an engineering firm based in Ontario. With 150 employees, it specializes in the creation of aviation simulators for training pilots and technicians on jet aircraft and helicopters.

The primary method of data collection was a web-based questionnaire survey, generating 698 responses. Most questions

were presented as statements that respondents rated on a scale of one to five, designed to identify five sets of IBVs:

- Integrity** (using information in a principled and trustful way)
- Informality** (trust and use of informal sources)
- Transparency** (openness in reporting information)
- Sharing** (providing others with information)
- Proactiveness** (actively obtaining and applying new information)

The main variable under consideration was "information use outcomes," which was addressed with questions on the impact of information use, the adoption of new ideas, and information sharing.

Our analysis found that there were different sets of IBVs for each organization, thus implying that the organizations were differentiated by distinctive information cultures. The information culture of L was characterized by Integrity, Transparency, Sharing, Proactiveness, and Informality; the information culture of H by Transparency, Proactiveness, and Sharing; and that of E by Sharing, Integrity, and Proactiveness.

When it came to sharing information with people and groups outside the organization, both L (law firm) and E (engineering company) had much lower mean scores than H (public health agency). One might assume that this reflected the mandate of H to transfer its knowledge to its external partners and stakeholders. H also showed the highest means for the Transparency factor, with an emphasis on encouraging

openness. In contrast, Transparency was not extracted at all in E, perhaps an indication of the strong commercial impetus that was driving this company. Informality (the use of informal sources) as an IBV was found only in L, and it is tempting to conjecture that this was due to the importance of personal networks in the legal profession. The lowest means were for the Integrity factor in organization E, with a low score suggesting that it was common in that organization to control information for personal advantage.

Having found consistent as well as distinctive profiles of IBVs in the three organizations, our analysis then revealed that each IBV was correlated with positive information use outcomes (i.e., higher levels of information use impact and creativity). Looking at their combined effect, the set of IBVs of each organization was able to account significantly for the variation in information use outcomes. Among the IBVs examined, the information values relating to Proactiveness and Sharing had the largest impact on information use outcomes.

To summarize, our research showed that the part of organizational culture that deals specifically with information – the values and norms that people have about creating, sharing, and applying information – has a significant effect on informa-

tion use outcomes. The study suggested that it is possible to systematically identify behaviours and values that characterize an organization's information culture, and that this characterization could be helpful in understanding the information use effectiveness of all sorts of organizations, including private businesses, government agencies, and publicly funded institutions such as libraries and museums.

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Dr. Chun Wei Choo is a Professor at the iSchool at the University of Toronto. He has advanced degrees in information studies, engineering, and information systems. His main research interests are information management, information seeking, environmental scanning, organizational learning, and the management of information technology.

REFERENCE

Chun Wei Choo, Pierrette Bergeron, Brian Detlor, and Lorna Heaton. (2008). Information Culture and Information Use: An Exploratory Study of Three Organizations. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 59(5), 792-804.



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John Cage (1912 - 1992), U.S. composer of avant-garde music.

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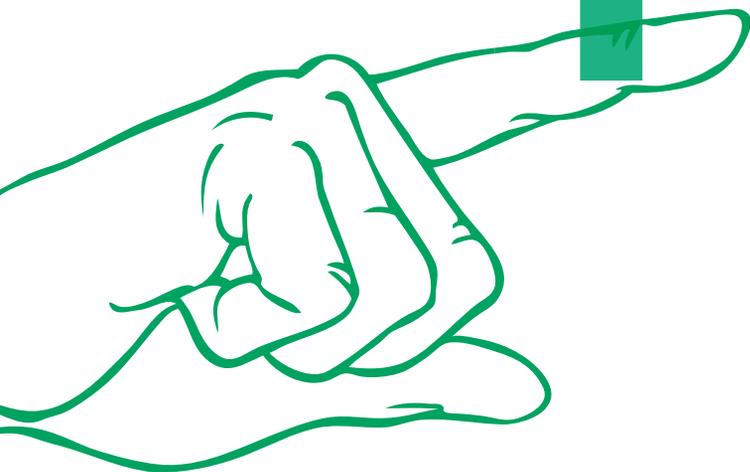
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STUDENTS LOOK AT THE LIBRARY
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THAT BOOK PERSON



Northern Adventures in Librarianship

By *Erica Sum*

The only kind of person who is bored in the North is a boring person. It's an answer I'm tempted to give when asked about the boredom I must have experienced during my seven-month volunteer placement as a school librarian in Inuvik, a tiny aboriginal community of 3,000 in the Northwest Territories just south of the Beaufort Sea. I admit I am a city girl accustomed to the diversity of people, amenities, and activities a city provides, but in between reviving a non-functional high school library, learning about two fascinating aboriginal cultures, and adjusting to small town life and Inuvik's extreme climate, I had little time for boredom.

Despite its size, there is a lot of room in Inuvik to dream big. There are many opportunities to effect positive change and to be creative. On the day I arrived to work at my placement with Samuel Hearne Secondary School (SHSS), I took one look at its un-staffed library – a drab room with an aged and damaged collection of mouldering books and not much else – and immediately asked the principal if I could revive it based on my previous work experience. The principal was incredibly supportive of my ideas despite the fact that I had not yet entered library school. In fact, he gave me full rein to plan and manage the project, and afforded me a great deal of freedom.

I knew my time was limited and there was much to do. I'll admit I was unsure of how to proceed. But by the time I left, I had convinced the Beaufort-Delta Educational Council to hire a part-time librarian, developed the library's strategic plan, raised \$23,000 (in less than a month!) for the library budget, and of course bought many new acquisitions. With the feedback and assistance of staff, student volunteers, and supportive Northerners, we successfully weeded and shelf-read the entire collec-

I EVENTUALLY BEFRIENDED MANY LOCALS IN TOWN, AND MET AMAZING INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORTED THE LIBRARY'S REVIVAL AND THE INUVIK COMMUNITY.

tion, repainted the space, ran a nationwide book drive netting *hundreds* of suitable books, and held a successful youth/elder exchange program in conjunction with Ingamo Hall and the Inuvik Youth Centre. The library has since hosted a Scholastic book fair, and run time management workshops for students. Plans to implement computers and library software are underway.

If there is one thing I have learned about librarians from this project, it is that we work in a field populated by generous professionals. This generosity is a rare quality and is what makes me look forward to working with librarians after graduating. I would never have been able to achieve any of the project's goals without the guidance and expertise of so many who took the time to advise me. In keeping with the frontier nature of the North, there were no policies, best practices, or even basic guidelines to follow. The situation was unheard of: the library had not been functional since the 1990s, there were no new acquisitions, computers or multimedia, the card catalogue was in disarray, and the space was being used as a detention room. This situation presented an incredible opportunity to build a library from scratch, to allow it to become whatever the SHSS community wanted it to be. The student body at SHSS is a far cry from a typical southern high school in their cultural backgrounds, interests, and literacy levels, so we focused on creating a learning media space catering to students' specific needs.

To gain the information I needed to promote and develop the SHSS library, I became the queen of cold calls. Armed with a Torontonians aggressiveness and my spreadsheet of contacts, I would doggedly track individuals down, constantly calling and meeting people in order to fight the inertia that I was warned would be a major obstacle to accomplishing goals in the North. There were many days when I felt like my job description was the organized harassment of others, or that my work was at times an exercise in failure.

Ultimately, my aggressive outreach and persistence paid off in ways I couldn't have envisioned. I eventually befriended many locals in town, and met amazing individuals who supported the library's revival and the Inuvik community. Even though the library I worked in was not public, I quickly learned the vibrant role a librarian can play in a small community. I knew my reputation had been established when a small boy introduced me to his friend with, "She's that Book Person!"

The volunteer experience was many things to me. I often think of Inuvik as a place of bipolar extremes. At times it was shocking and at others, mundane despite major cultural differences. Some tasks were remarkably easy, and others almost impossible. There were events of lightness and play, when others were tragic and intense. You can have so many kinds of experiences; I promise that you'll never have to have boring ones.

.....
Erica Sum is a first-year Masters student with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information. For more info, please visit profiles.tigweb.org/esum.



WAY TO GO, NEW GRADUATES! NOW ABOUT YOUR CAREER ...

By Maggie Weaver

Throughout my career as a library technician, I have always been lucky enough to have employers who have recognized the value of professional development. I, in turn, have always appreciated the fact that my employer valued me enough to “invest” in me. ’Tis the season for graduation, but with the ending of that chapter begins a new chapter, titled *Your Career*.

When I first came to Canada many, many years ago it was common to be asked, and to ask, “Where are you from?” In Toronto, even many, many years ago, we were mostly from somewhere else (excluding my husband, a Canadian homesick for snow).

The new Canadians I’ve met in recent years are more likely to want to talk about the future, their plans, what they’re doing now, what they came to Canada for, and what their plans are for their children. They’ve had to think hard about that, as they’ve made a major lifestyle change.

The first paragraph of the chapter *Your Career* comprises a résumé, describing your achievements to date and (often only implicitly) your current skill set. In describing who you are now, your résumé explains the path by which you arrived here. It is essentially a “looking back” document. But in this early chapter you should also be thinking hard about where you want to go to. Find a mentor to help you, just as new Canadians find a sponsor – this is too important a jumping-off point to tackle without a coach. Review your co-op or intern experiences, this time thinking more about the culture or style of the environ-

ment; maybe ask your supervisor on those assignments for further insights.

If you’re coming to a life chapter titled *New Direction*, somewhere in the middle of the script, you can use your annual performance review to think about the future, and use a colleague or your boss as coach. If the upcoming chapter is titled *Retirement*, then here too you may need objective input, most likely from your family.

Life is a park. There are well-marked roads and paths to the park, but once there the kids and dogs rush around apparently chaotically. Look carefully though – every participant in park life has a recognizable path: Frisbee players, joggers, soccer practices, nannies and strollers, people watchers. Even dogs have preferred trees, and squirrels have regular escape routes. Every soul that goes to the park sees it not as a destination but as an opportunity.

In my downtown city area, our park is also about neighbourhood. There’s a bulletin board, an annual fair (celebrated by Dennis Lee), our own fire engine called Patricia, trees commemorating locals, and a fox. It is the place to meet your neighbours by arrangement (dog-walking) or by accident. My jogger husband and I formally met our neighbour (also a jogger) in the park when she blurted out, “Oh, I didn’t recognize you with your clothes on!” Until then we knew her only as “Sweetheart,” which her husband called to her at the door every morning as he left for work.

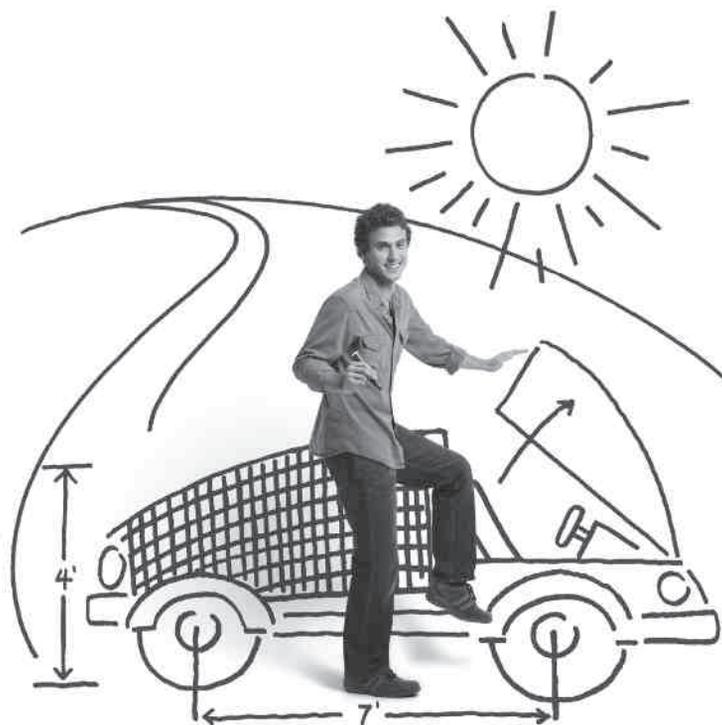
Where I grew up there is a common – a huge area at the top of the Cotswolds, fringed by villages like trim around the edge of a vast lampshade. Each part of the common is known by the name of the adjacent village: Rodborough, Amberley, Minchinhampton, etc. There are many roads up to the common from the villages, and a few roads through it. The common is “owned” and shared by the people: quarries for local stone, picnickers, cows, golfers, Girl Guides, more cows, and in the summer the occasional rock concert and druidic ritual. No dogs though, because of the cows. The common is less intimate than the park, but still an important part of life there.

For some, your career will be a park, with the same or similar players. The paths there will be clear, and there will be established routes within the park that the regulars know and respect, and the dogs and kids will be tame. For others, your career will be a common, the link to meeting new players in new villages. The paths there will be clear, but the expanse to cross will be wider, the routes will be less well established, the villagers will be friends you haven’t met yet, the cows (and cow-pats) will be more hazardous.

THE COMMON IS LESS INTIMATE THAN THE PARK, BUT STILL AN IMPORTANT PART OF LIFE THERE.

Both parks and commons are about shared experiences. Think about who you would like to share experiences with – neighbours known up till now only as Sweetheart, or villagers offering new experiences. With a friend, plan the chapter called *Your Career*, or the next chapter titled *New Direction*.

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“THE FIRST SHALL BE

By **Wayne Jones**

We want to revamp this last page of *Access* in future issues of the magazine, and we're looking for a volunteer to become the new editor. And, speaking of issues, that's what we want the content of this page to focus on: issues in the news that affect libraries and librarians and all library workers in Ontario, things that libraries are doing or things that are being done strictly outside of libraries but which have a significant impact on our work. Hot topics, controversies, matters on which there are perhaps many opinions and on which you could provide a special perspective.

Ideally, we'd like someone to edit the column in the sense of soliciting others to write pieces for individual issues. You would decide on the topic and find a writer among the OLA membership or beyond – someone you know about, someone you've seen at a conference, a colleague or mentor, or someone you don't really know much about except for the fact that they could write well on your topic. And perhaps sometimes you could write the column yourself.

Your commitment would be to solicit a piece for each of the four issues of the magazine published during the year, 750 words (that's about a page and a half single-spaced), and, very importantly, by the deadline. We'll add your name to the editorial board and make sure that you're well informed about when everything is due so that production runs along as smoothly as possible. You don't need to have previous experience in this kind of editing, or a huge corpus of writing experience either, but enthusiasm for the assignment is essential!

So, how do you indicate your interest in being the editor of this new forum? Send me an email with a brief description of how you would see the content of the page changing and developing – and, more specifically, what would make a good topic for your debut column in the fall issue.

Bonus question: Would the title “The Last Word” still fit or do you have a new one?

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Wayne Jones is Head of Central Technical Services at Queen's University and Editor-in-Chief of Access (wjones@accessola.com).

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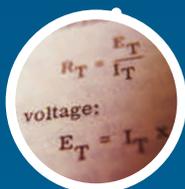
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