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Introduction

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Introduction

December 10, 2008 turned out to be a pretty significant day for me. Not only was it my birthday, but it was also the first meeting of the group that would eventually draft the OLA Vision 2020 statement. This group had been carefully selected to be small and nimble in number, but powerful in impact. It included people from every geographic area in Oregon, people who did all different kinds of work in Oregon’s libraries. There were recent library school graduates, and seasoned professional veterans.

The meeting that day—as we figured out how we were going to accomplish the thing the board was asking us to do, to draft a statement that could serve as a vision document for OLA and for Oregon libraries in the next decade—was energizing. We asked ourselves questions like “how will we be relevant in 2020? And “how will you tell your story? What will that story be?” We brainstormed ways to involve as many people as possible in our process. In *Sharing Visions/Sharing Stories* I talk about the many voices that are reflected in the final Vision 2020 statement.

We also thought a lot about the amazing things Oregon libraries have done in the last few decades. The Vision 2020 statement does not represent a break with the past; it builds on the work done by those who created Vision 2000, and Vision 2010. In *The Dream of a Statewide Catalog*, State Librarian Jim Scheppke shows the importance of that connection. His call to action takes us back to a Vision 2010 mandate that embodies the Vision 2020 theme of collaboration. The time has come, he says, to “sweep away” the barriers preventing holders of valid library cards from using those cards in any Oregon library.

In *Why Collaborate*, Caleb Tucker-Raymond reflects back on his experience with another Vision 2010 project—the statewide virtual reference service known as L-net. Caleb shows why our visions can never be static, why they need to be flexible and dynamic and why we must actively reflect on what we can learn from our users, and from our own experiences.

Both of these projects, the statewide library card and statewide virtual reference, show how much collaboration and sharing have become a part of the culture of libraries in Oregon. These are themes that resonate throughout Vision 2000 and Vision 2010, and I believe they are the core themes of Vision 2020. I would argue that by pushing Oregon libraries to collaborate on specific projects, like L-net, those earlier visions not only reflected a commitment to collaboration that already existed but they also helped to entrench the idea that collaboration is an essential part of what we do in Oregon.

Michael Baird, Michele Burke and Kate Rubick sat down earlier this spring to talk about collaboration and what it means to them as instruction librarians. I think a lot of people hear “collaboration” or “sharing” in libraries and they think collections—how can we collaboratively give our users access to more stuff? And as Jim Scheppke points out, sharing our stuff is something we do really well in Oregon. Kate, Michele and Michael, on the other hand, are exploring what it means to share ourselves—to share our expertise and the products of our daily work as librarians. This is an exciting way to think about sharing, and one that perfectly embodies the spirit of collaboration as it is articulated in Vision 2020.

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OREGON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Terry Reese and Karyle Butcher have put an incredible amount of energy into the question of how can Oregon's university libraries share their expertise and resources. In *Doing More Together: Building New Partnerships to Bring Library Services to the Unserved* Terry describes two projects designed to do just that. The *Oregon Digital Library* offers a model where larger institutions can help smaller cultural institutions increase access to the rich collections they house. The *Libraries of Oregon* portal is intended to strengthen the connections between Oregonians and their libraries while extending access to statewide resources to those currently without access to library services.

I spent part of December 10, 2010 with OLA President Rob Everett, OLA President-Elect Robert Hulshof-Schmidt and Oregon State Librarian Jim Scheppke in front of the Oregon State Library board reporting on the results of the Vision 2020 process. The two years separating those two birthdays were sometimes challenging but always made fulfilling, interesting and exciting by the constant connections we were making with librarians around the state. The OLA Vision 2020 statement embodies the values it articulates. It is the product of collaboration, made stronger by the various voices that contributed to it. It was created by librarians with the freedom to be visionary, supported in that work by their employers and communities. And it describes a 2020 where Oregon libraries are active, essential parts of their communities.

Guest Editor

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