

OLAQ

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OLA Quarterly



Professional Development

Above and Beyond: Facing Your Fears at the PNLA Leadership Institute

The Adventures of a Part-Time Librarian

A Day in the Life of a Special Librarian

One Year Down

Get Your Virtual Reference Skills Through L-net!

NWCentral: Your Gateway to Continuing Education Through Collaboration

What Else Can I Do With an MLS Degree?

The "Social" Way to Learn Online: Learning 2.0 @ Multnomah County Library

Academic Libraries after Print

Getting a job at Eugene Public Library

Management Bliss: The Unexpected Joys of Being a Library Manager

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**Upcoming
Issue**

Winter 2008

*Disaster
Preparedness*

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OLA Quarterly is indexed in *Library Literature*.

Professional Development

WANTED:

Seeking well-rounded and enthusiastic librarian for entry-level, temporary, non-tenure position. MLS and subject masters required, preferably in quantum physics; must speak, read and write at least three obscure languages; demonstrated experience in nanotechnology preferred.

Should have a full portfolio of publications, presentations and patents. Experience working with international media; expertise in plumbing and custodial arts; must be a gourmet chef and possess a commercial driver's license.

Schedule is evening and weekends only. Contact library HR for supplemental questions, FBI background requirements, and to schedule a lighting-speed civil service exam with Alec Trebeck.

IT'S TRUE:

Oregon libraries sometimes want the impossible. Competition for full-time library positions in Oregon can be fierce, and it can be disheartening to work hard on a lengthy application and not even receive an interview.

This Quarterly looks at library employment from many different angles. Carolee Hirsch exposes the inner workings of the hiring process and offers tips to help land the job that's right for you.

Job hunters and comfortably employed alike will benefit from learning about the wide range of jobs in libraries. Lori Wamsley, Lisa R. Todd, and Perri Parise explore alternatives to the traditional full-time librarian position, while Pam North makes the case for moving into management.

Regardless of one's employment status, library staff everywhere need to try new experiences, invest in their skills, and learn more about themselves. Roberta Richards, Emily Papagni, Angela Weyrens, and Mike Larsen all discuss growth opportunities outside the normal workday.

Kevin Moore reflects back on his first year as a librarian, while Allen McKiel looks forward to the future of academic libraries and the skills that library staff will need to possess.

Want to know what library directors want? We asked a number of public and academic library directors what they are looking for in new hires. A sampling of the answers are sprinkled throughout this issue. Not surprisingly, the valued qualities are the same regardless of library setting, technology or subject expertise: comfort with change, innate curiosity, a passion for service, and excellent interpersonal skills were on everyone's list. Not a single person mentioned nanotechnology or baking skills. Keep an eye on the Contributions section in future issues of the OLA Hotline at <http://olahotline.wordpress.com> for the complete library director interviews.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Guest editors

Stephanie Miller & Abigail Elder
Multnomah County Library

Skills you are looking for in new librarians

I'd say more than skills, to the degree possible, I'm interested in less tangible things like attitude (excited about the future, good humor, collaborative), judgement, flexibility, curious—interested in learning new things.

—VAILEY OEHLKE
Deputy Director
Multnomah County Library

OLA Q

Above and Beyond:

Facing Your Fears at the PNLA Leadership Institute

by **Angela Weyrens**
Central Library
Stack Services Administrator,
Multnomah County Library

I swung the flashlight nervously in front of me, illuminating dense trees, rocks, and an ice-covered brook as I crunched along the gravel path to the hidden chalet. It was past midnight, prime time for mountain carnivores to be out and about. “Every step,” I thought, “might be covering the approach of a hungry bear.” Freezing in the dark, hundreds of miles from home, I carried only a bundle of tear-stained papers clutched to my chest, and a plastic flashlight to defend myself.

Although this sounds like an episode of *Fear Factor*, it’s actually a scene from the week I spent at the 2006 Pacific Northwest Library Association Leadership Institute at Tamarack Resort in Donnelly, Idaho. I was traipsing through the forest in the middle of the night after working for hours on our group’s homework assignment: to write a comprehensive mission statement for 32 representatives from school, public, academic, and medical libraries from across the Pacific Northwest.


While not every activity I engaged in entailed this sense of drama, it was pretty intense. The tear stains on the papers, for example, were real. During small group work one afternoon, I realized one of my strengths was also one of my greatest weaknesses: I hold myself to perfectionist-grade standards. Okay, not the end of the world, but I hold everyone else to them too, which is unrealistic and alienating for those forced to endure my squinting disapproval. People thought I was a snob because, well, I was. I burst into tears at the unfairness of my judgment and vowed to start giving my colleagues (and myself) a break. There were nods all around at my breakthrough. I made progress and accomplished one of my personal goals: to be uncomfortable socially and live through it.

I’d made that decision the first evening, when we staggered into the dining room after the lengthy bus ride up the mountain.

I wanted to embrace the opportunity to really work on my “areas for improvement.” This included confidence in situations with unknown humans possessing “greater institutional value” than myself. I sat alone at a table and waited. Eventually the room filled and conversations began: our flights, what library systems we were from, and what we thought of the facilities. This was enough interaction with strangers to make my skin crawl. I felt like I was starring in my own personal version of the movie “Clue.” I didn’t know how I ended up there, when it would be revealed that I was a fraud, and who would announce to the room that I had been seen with the Candlestick when I entered the Billiard Room with Mrs. Peacock. But I stayed through the whole gut-twisting affair without once hiding in the bathroom, as I promised myself.

My roommates were perfectly nice, which made them scary. The first morning I regarded them warily over breakfast, afraid if I spoke something would give me away. We walked in silence to the conference room. I wrung my hands hoping no one would ask about my nonexistent library school degree. I was sure I would be outed as somehow less than complete by my companions.

I kept quiet until the first session, where it was revealed that the focus of the activities wasn’t about who had the most schooling or made the most money. Directors, management, support staff and librarians, it was made clear, were all equal, worthwhile, professional contributors in all activities. Jon Shannon and Becky Schreiber, the Institute’s excellent, knowledgeable facilitators, expected and got buy-in from every person (a meeting maneuver I hope to replicate someday) on this point. Reassured and sort of shocked by this agreement and all the welcoming personalities, by the end of the week my roommates and I were inseparable, folding each other’s laundry while trading library war stories, MLS or no.



Areas with growth potential in librarianship

I see an interesting trend and a definite need in academic libraries for Blended Librarians who are part librarians and part instructional designers. Information about this can be found on the Blended Librarian Web site at blendedlibrarian.org

—NANCY HOOVER
University Librarian,
Shoen Library,
Marylhurst University

The idea that each of the 32 participants were equal assisted in that beloved meeting tradition everywhere: creating ground rules. We were all encouraged to stand up for what we wanted to get out of our “meetings.” (The declaration went something like this: “Those of you that interrupt- self-regulate. Those of you finding yourself interrupted- stand up for yourselves.”) Ground rules tend to be a meaningless phenomenon that, when discussed, get met with eye rolls. The only way around this is to make ground rules only if you intend to honor the agreement. They are the place where everyone, regardless of position, has power. Like the Constitution, they should be part of a living document that the group can overthrow if necessary. Considering that we had signed up for what was basically a series of back to back meetings over five days, it was valuable that we spent significant time discussing the basics of what it means to have a meeting, and how to run them fairly.

The focus for the week wasn't actually about making everyone feel equal, but about self-awareness. It seems so basic now, but it's easily overlooked. I realized quite quickly that my tendency to seem aloof was anchored in the misinformation I told myself about my abilities. “I don't really know what I'm talking about because I don't have my degree,” and “No one wants to hear what I have to say; I'll just quietly do my work,” were just a couple of the negative thought nuggets I snuggled with. My instincts also told me there was no reason to spend time talking to people at work if it wasn't going to help “get the job done.”

I spent lots of time wrestling with my interpersonal demons, which was encouraged, and exactly what I needed to become more confident and less of a social liability. It turned out my gut was wrong. I learned the advantage of “managing up” from a subordinate position using different methods of

communication adaptable to different personality types (something I previously found scary if not impossible). It dawned on me that strategic (but authentic) relationships are critical to the health of the work group. When there's trouble, it can be tackled by people already in a position to negotiate simply because they're known to each other. Being social can help get the job done!

And it turns out that self-examination isn't just for monks anymore. By saying “Okay, this is what's on my plate emotionally and mentally. How can I work around or utilize (!) these things to achieve the library's goals?” has become something I literally ask myself every day, because despite feelings or circumstances, it's my decision to react professionally and take positive action.

As far as social skills go, I'm in a much more optimistic place that turned out to have a very simple route: I model the be-

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Skills you are looking for in new librarians

Not too surprisingly, we need librarians who are flexible, personable, and curious and who understand that, for many of our users, libraries can be daunting places so the ability to reach out and connect is key.

In addition, we want librarians who are engaged in the discovery of new ways to package and deliver information and who will embrace scholarship as a means to share their discoveries. We want librarians who delight in using technology to create simpler and more efficient ways for users to retrieve information. Finally, we want diversity in all of its myriad forms—ethnic, race, thinking—you name it.

—KARYLE BUTCHER
University Librarian,
Oregon State University



havior I want to see in others. People reflect their surroundings and environment, and I try to take the opportunity to make it good.

So, I didn't run into any bears on my midnight journey in the Idahoan wilderness. Instead, I ran the last twenty yards to the front door, fumbled with the key, and collapsed into the front room of the chalet, berating myself for getting freaked out. Then I remembered I was not only keeping myself from being mauled, but protecting valuable documents as well.

Mission Statement for the 2006 PNLA Leadership Institute

We commit to position the library as a relevant essential presence in all communities.

We welcome our community into a dynamic space for enrichment and life long learning.

We reflect the vibrant diversity of our communities in our collections, services, and staff.

We provide opportunities for all staff to develop their talents, assuring excellent customer service.

We initiate strategic partnerships to maximize resources and encourage community ownership and pride.

We embrace innovative technology to cultivate an information literate society.

Overheard Wisdom from the 2006 PNLA Leadership Institute

If you're not failing now and then, you're probably not trying hard enough.

If you say something and no one hears you, then you haven't said it.

Energy follows attention. Most managers spend 40 percent of their time dealing with three percent of their staff.

We have to figure out how to not do 'that angry library staff thing' where we intimidate people out of the library by making them feel stupid.


Why don't we ever ask what makes a good library patron?

Is it possible that our organization's cynics are just disappointed optimists?

Use uncomfortable feelings as a road sign. Ask "Why?" and "What can I do?" Learn to value the discomfort.

Technology is the form of delivery, not the thing itself.

If you find yourself needing to rebuild a relationship, take 51 percent of the responsibility, even if you don't believe it. It will encourage the other party to act in kind.

If you decide to dance with the bear, you don't get to sit down when you're tired. 

Recommended Reads/References

Galdwell, Malcom. 2000. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Chaleff, Ira. 1995. *The Courageous Follower: Standing Up to and for Our Leaders*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Bellman, Geoffrey M. 2001. *Getting Things Done When You Are Not in Charge*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

The Adventures of a Part-Time Librarian

by **Lori H. Wamsley**
*Reference Librarian,
Portland Community College
and Clark College*
&
*Adjunct Faculty Member and
Assistant Director,
Emporia State University's
School of Library and Informa-
tion Management (SLIM) MLS
program in Oregon*

When I first meet someone, the question I dread the most is not “What do you do?” because I’m always happy to tell people I’m a librarian. Rather it’s their next question—“Where do you work?”—that is more difficult for me to answer because I have not one, not two, not three but four library-related jobs at three different organizations! So, how do I answer the dreaded question? Well, I take a deep breath and then quickly say: I work as a part-time/on-call reference librarian at Portland Community College Libraries and I also work as a part-time reference librarian at Clark College’s Cannell Library in Vancouver, Washington. In addition, I’m the Assistant Director of the Emporia State University’s School of Library and Information Management MLS program in Portland, Oregon, which involves marketing and coordinating their MLS program and advising MLS students. Finally, I’m an adjunct faculty member for ESU SLIM, teaching two classes online: Project Management and Technology Skills. Phew!

As you see, it’s not the simple answer most people would expect. Welcome to the life of a part-time librarian. Yes, there are days when I wake up and think, “What day is it and where am I supposed to be?” but overall, I enjoy the multiple work hats I wear, as each provides unique challenges and opportunities. Being a part-time librarian may not be for everyone, but hopefully, I’ll be able to show you why it can be a fun and considerable option for many librarians seeking employment in the library profession.

There are many reasons why part-time work is an attractive option for me. They include: gaining experience, flexibility in schedule, staying in the local area, variety of duties, and networking.

Gaining experience

When I graduated from library school, I had very little library experience, which is a typical situation for many newly-minted librarians. Approximately 51 percent of LIS graduates chose librarianship as a second career, thus, many come with a specialized skill set they must translate to potential library employers—a task that has proved to be difficult to accomplish for new MLIS graduates searching for librarian positions (Maatta 2007). I, too, choose librarianship as a second career; with an undergraduate degree in business, I worked in the corporate world for my first career. I had many business skills and abilities that were transferable to library work and I endeavored to translate those business skills into library lingo on my resume and cover letters to potential library employers. However, I still found it difficult to find a full-time job as a librarian with little actual library experience. But eventually, I found that libraries were willing to take a chance and hire me to work on-call or part-time. This proved to be extremely beneficial to me, because working at my various part-time jobs has provided me with the opportunity to gain the library experience that I was lacking on my resume.

Flexibility

One of the best aspects to working part-time is I’m not locked into a set 40-hour a week schedule, so I can choose when I want to work and when I want time to spend with my family or time to pursue my personal interests and hobbies. For those part-time librarians who want full-time positions, having a flexible schedule also allows you to have time to search and apply for full-time positions. As job seekers will tell you, job hunting can take a great deal of





Areas with growth potential in librarianship

For all the information that is available through existing library resources (catalogs, databases, etc.) and even the increasing amount of information available on the Web through various digitization projects, there is a great deal of information that has not been digitized, or even “uncovered” in many areas. I think there is tremendous growth potential for librarianship in these areas, and it is long overdue.

We have spent several decades focusing on making the same information available in a variety of formats (and with countless localized twists to the same data), but have not tapped into a wealth of information in a wide range of categories. Coupled with this is still the need for assisting those who are seeking this information to understand the nature of the information so they can better mine the resources that are becoming available. I continue to see this as an important role of librarianship.

—JIM KOPP
Director,
Watzek Library,
Lewis & Clark College

time and effort. The 2007 Library Journal survey of new graduates found that many new professionals choose to take temporary or part-time work while searching for the “perfect” job (Maatta 2007).

Staying in the local area

Again, according to the 2007 Library Journal survey, only 16 percent of new MLIS graduates in 2006 reported moving out of their home region (Maatta 2007)—a number that indicates that not many librarians are willing or able to move for employment. I, too, was geographically bound to the Portland area when I first graduated from library school. My husband had been recently promoted at his organization, we had recently purchased a home in Portland, and we really wanted to stay close to most of our family and friends who live in and around the Portland area. By taking a part-time position with SLIM, I was able to work in the library field, while remaining in the Portland area. Taking a part-time position can often “buy” you time by enabling you to stay in a specific geographic area, while waiting for a full-time position to become available.

Variety

Each of my library-related positions are different. The staff, procedures, technology, and especially the patrons vary. Being exposed to varied communities provides me with a well-rounded perspective of librarianship and allows me to develop different skill sets. In addition to providing reference, I have had the opportunity to do collection development, information literacy instruction, participate on work committees, liaison with faculty, teach online courses and work on library Web pages—all great skills to have on a resume! I would not have had the opportunity to develop and hone these skills without working part-time in a variety of library environments along

with a willing attitude to take on whatever tasks are given to me. I am constantly learning new things from the mixture of duties which expose me to the different ways that librarians serve their patrons and communities. I also find that I can be a resource to the various organizations that I work for because I can offer input on how things are done at the other organizations, which can help to provide anecdotal evidence for decision-making. Finally, working in different organizations lets you “test out” different environments (Johnston 2004). As you explore different aspects of librarianship and types of organizations, this can help you focus future job searches on the areas of most interest to you and the environments best suited for your personality.

Networking

By working in different libraries, I’ve had the wonderful opportunity to meet and work with different librarians, which has helped me to develop a great network of colleagues. Having this network of colleagues is really invaluable to me, as I am able to observe, collaborate and learn from them. Additionally, different colleagues get to know your abilities and skills, which can often lead to other job opportunities both within and outside their organization.

While there are many benefits to working part-time, there are also some challenges to know about when considering part-time employment. The biggest ones are unpredictable hours, uncertain earnings, limited or no benefits, and feelings of disconnectedness.

Unpredictable hours = uncertain earnings

I work for two community colleges where hours are determined term by term, so trying to develop a schedule beyond the eleven-week span of the term can be difficult.



And obviously, the nature of on-call work is such that you're never sure when you might get a call to work. So it can be hard to know your long-term schedule, which can affect the flexibility of your schedule. I mentioned the benefits of a flexible schedule above, but it is a fine balance between being available and unavailable for work; you don't want to be too unavailable to work, because then you likely won't get any scheduled hours. Additionally, part-time hours are often available during the less desirable times such as evenings and weekends. This can be difficult to juggle when you have family members whose schedules revolve around a more traditional Monday–Friday, 8–5 work or school schedule. Another downside to unpredictable hours is it can be hard to plan financially because you cannot always rely on consistent hours week-to-week (if you're on-call) or term-to-term, as hours are determined by the needs and budget of the library. This can be especially difficult if you need to rely on a steady income for living expenses.

No (or very limited) benefits

In general, part-time work is hourly work only, which means no benefits. So, while some part-timers may be able to cobble together enough part-time hours at a variety of libraries to work 40 hours a week, you likely will not have the health insurance, retirement plans, vacation/sick leave and other benefits that typically accompany a single, full-time job. Some part-time jobs that are at least 20 hours a week may offer limited or reduced benefits, but you frequently have to be scheduled at least 20 hours a week a significant portion of the year to earn those benefits which can be difficult to maintain, since consistent part-time hours are typically not guaranteed. Additionally, many organizations do not provide professional development funds to part-time workers or compensate part-tim-

ers for time spent attending professional conferences or workshops (Johnston 2004), which can make it harder to participate in professional activities.

Feeling disconnected

Being a part-time or on-call librarian means that you don't always get the "memo" on new procedures, technologies and issues going on in the library because you're not always there when decisions are made or implemented. While this allows you to become adept at quickly assimilating to your environment and becoming very nimble at figuring things out on the fly, it can also lead to feelings of disconnectedness because you don't always have the larger picture of what goes on within the organization. Overall, the libraries and librarians I work with are very communicative, collaborative and inclusive—I really can't emphasize this enough. However, communication efforts still fall through the cracks once in a while, as it does in all organizations, and such situations can leave a part-time librarian feeling detached from the organization. These feelings of detachment can be exacerbated if you work during weekend and evening hours when regular staff are not around. It is essential to maintain contact with the other librarians to mitigate these feelings (Collins & Brungard 2006).

In a nutshell, being a part-time worker in the library field can provide great opportunities, including gaining valuable experience, flexible schedules and networking with knowledgeable colleagues. Due to some of the challenges of part-time work, it can be helpful to have a spouse or partner who has a job that provides income stability and benefits. It also helps if you like to take on a variety of tasks and you are willing to embrace ambiguity.

Overall, I really enjoy my part-time positions and I do think it's a viable op-



Advice for new librarians

Be flexible and keep learning. Your job in 2 years will be different than it is today. Focus on the library user's needs. Think about all the users and potential users—what are their needs? How can the library help them? Remember to listen. Librarians are great at finding answers but first must hear the question.

—PETER LEONARD
Executive Director,
Cedar Mill Community
Library Association



A Day in the Life of a Special Librarian

by **Lisa R. Todd**
Library Assistant,
Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory



Areas with growth potential in librarianship

Leadership and management will be the growth areas for librarians. As many in the profession retire, there will need to be others willing to take on the issues of managing the library. This includes managing other people, developing budgets, marketing services, responding to facilities issues (buildings and grounds) and working with other government administrators.

Another area is collection development. While more and more collections are being built using standing orders and third party vendors, there is still an art to developing a collection that meets the community's need.

—EDWARD HOUSE
Director,
Beaverton City Library

8



“So how would you like to write about a day in the life of a special librarian?” This invitation seemed like a fun and perhaps easy to write piece to write for OLAQ. What a great way to introduce a research library to other librarians, I thought.

For the next couple of weeks, I tried to map out a typical day for me in our small library, but with frustrating results. Gradually, it dawned on me: there is no such thing as a typical day. How the heck do I write about my job, in a way which would make sense to anyone who reads my article?! I was doomed, it seemed, even before my very first published article was ever finished. Then I wondered: are there typical days in libraries? In the introduction to the book *A Day in the Life: Career Options in Library and Information Science*, Jessamyn West of librarian.net commented, “there is no typical day just as there is no typical librarian. Sure, everyone checks e-mail (almost), and everyone goes to meetings (mostly), and we all work with various sorts of information” (Shontz and Murray 2007). Now, that was a bit more helpful. So feeling as though there are no “typical” days in a library isn’t that unusual after all.

One might argue that in a library such as the one where I work, my work day might be more regular and typical because I don’t interact with the general public. My patrons are my colleagues; researchers who know what they need but not always where to find it. Most days contain similar elements which could, in a stretch, be considered typical. But it is within each week or month, not each day, that my work contains elements of typical or standard library work: circulation, reference, collection development, acquisitions, serials management, cataloging, and interlibrary loan.

NWREL, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (“The Lab”), is one of

10 Regional Educational Laboratories in the United States. Originally mandated by former President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1966, the Labs “serve the educational needs of a designated region by providing access to high quality scientifically valid education research through applied research and development projects, studies, and other related technical assistance activities” (IES 2008).

There are four librarians on staff at NWREL. Each of us provides an element of library service to staff researchers. We assist with literature reviews, systematic searches, document delivery, archiving, writing, and reference. I am primarily responsible for document delivery and collection maintenance.

The main Lab library, called either the Information Center or Professional Library, contains over 5,000 books and periodicals. Its focus is primarily as a professional reference collection, with additions based on current contractual subject areas and research trends. There are three smaller collections, each managed by separate departments. Only one of our collections is a lending library; the Professional Library and two smaller libraries lend only to Lab staff.

Blogger and reference librarian RickLibrarian spent a day mapping out his activities before, during, and after work. At the end of his post he observed, “As I look back on the list, I see some universal themes recurring: death and taxes and chocolate and the Internet. Tuesday will be much the same but different” (RickLibrarian blog comment posted December 13, 2005). As an experiment, I spent a couple of days listing everything I did while at work. What universal themes would appear for me? Probably not death and taxes, since in my job we don’t deal with taxes—nor death, thankfully. Chocolate doesn’t occur much either, although trips to local coffee

shops for lattes do happen more often than they should! Here, then, is an amalgam of entries, which give an overview of my days.

1. I turn on my computer and log onto the Intranet. No new postings today. This reminds me that I need to write a brief article about a recent videotaping.
2. While eating my breakfast I read my work e-mail. Most of the new e-mails are listserv postings. One from my boss, another from my coworker reminding me of books which I need to return by Friday. Another e-mail is from a patron thanking me for the directories which I had borrowed via ILL.
3. I spend about a half hour reading news, blogs, and checking my Gmail account.
4. Send purchase requests off to be processed and turned into purchase orders.
5. E-mail the facilities director, following up on a problem encountered yesterday with buying a book online. Explain I've found the same book at a library so my patron can use the borrowed copy for a while, which simplifies the purchasing process.
6. Send an e-mail to the corporate rep at our local Borders, about the same book
7. Talk with a researcher about the directories which I loaned her yesterday.
8. Talk with my coworker about the same directories. She'll look at them when the researchers are done with them. We're considering buying the directories.
9. I open the mail. Or rather, sort through

it and set it aside. Depending on current projects, I might ignore all but the critical pieces of mail for a day.

10. In today's mail is a book which I ordered from Amazon for our new webmaster. Must catalog it this afternoon and give to him.
11. File checkout cards. Quite a stack has accumulated.
12. In my e-mail are three e-mails, each with approximately 20 citations. I've been asked to find the full text articles for each of the citations, by the next day. This is a rush job and I feel a bit panicky, but ultimately they're all located by the next morning. Whew!
13. Cataloged new book which arrived in today's mail. Took to Lab webmaster, who was very happy to receive book.
14. Cataloged a second book which arrived later today, and checked it out to my boss.
15. Sent an interlibrary loan request to Clark College.
16. Get a last-minute rush request for an article. Am pleased I find and e-mail article within five minutes. There's a bit of personal pride in being able to quickly fill document delivery requests!
17. Read part of the most recent issue of *Information Outlook*, SLA's journal.
18. Read this week's ResourceShelf, and explored their posting of a site called KnujOn, which looks really intriguing. I sign up for a free personal account.



Advice for new librarians

Diversify. Get involved in projects that stretch your skills and expertise. Demonstrate a commitment to the profession (through service or publications). Don't "hunker down" into your own comfortable setting. Be visible. Pay attention. Ask questions. Care.

—DEB CARVER
Dean of Libraries,
University of Oregon



Hopefully this will combat some of the spam I get in my personal e-mail accounts.

19. Answered a question about citing an article downloaded from an online journal.
20. Go for a walk at lunchtime, returning books to PSU and Multnomah County libraries. We have an account with PSU which allows us to borrow books from their collection, and access their electronic databases. This is a lifesaver.
21. While reading the NEWLIB listserv this morning, I see a posting about an upcoming NISO webinar, “Demystifying Library Standards.” I forward the e-mail to my boss, asking if I can register to attend. She approves, and suggests I check with my coworker (I already sent her an e-mail, she also wants to attend).
22. Get an e-mail request for two books, one of which I can find locally. Submit an ILL request; ask the researcher about the other one, which will cost \$18 to borrow. He declines that one.

RickLibrarian discovered general themes of death, taxes, the Internet in his daily work. From my own list of tasks completed, the major theme which jumped out at me is that of customer service. If a Lab member asks for help, their request moves to the top of my priority list. In her introduction, Jessamyn West also observed, “Librarianship is a process. We are the translators between our resources and our patrons, each constantly changing and evolving. This can mean amplifying the dusty whispers of almost-forgotten books or toning down the steady cacophonous drone of a frequently updated RSS feed. At

the end, the results are like a gift: ‘I found this, for you.’ The work is never done, and yet for many of us, we would be doing it anyhow, without the job, without the position.” (Shontz and Murray 2007)

If, as Jessamyn stated, librarianship is a process, it must be a flexible one. Being translators between information and patron demands flexibility, the ability to bend and twist with each new request. There will always be materials to shelve, checkout cards to file, subscriptions to renew, a dusty corner to tackle. But first and foremost is the need to fill a request, and ultimately the pleasure in connecting a patron with the information which they require. My days are rarely—if ever—typical. They are, without fail, interesting, intriguing, and an endless source of new things to learn. 🌸

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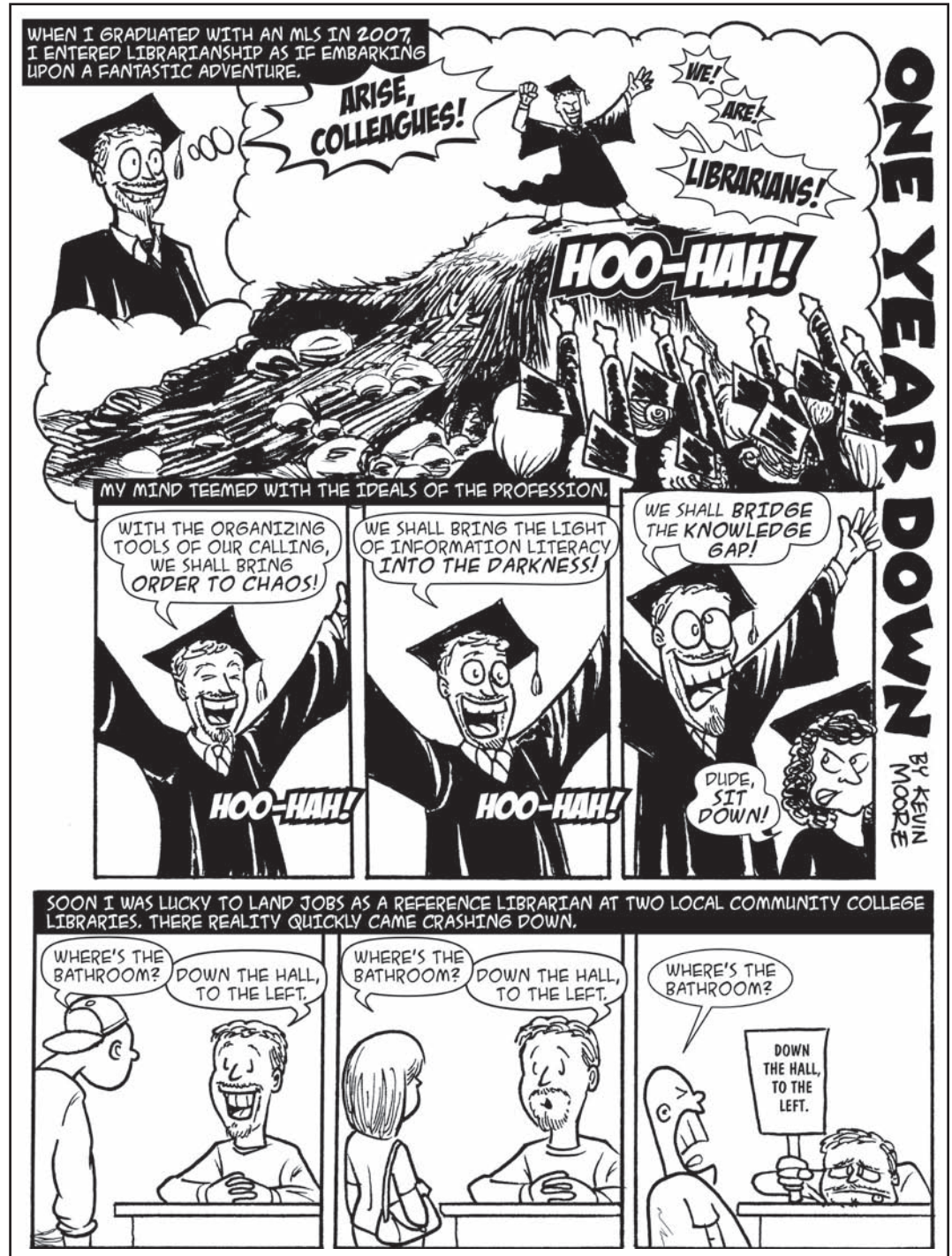
Areas with growth potential in librarianship

Administration and management
Digitization, preservation,
special collections
Design and delivery of full text
information
Public services
Instruction
Library consortia
Digital curation

—VICKIE HANAWALT
 Library Director,
 Reed College Library

One Year Down

by **Kevin Moore**
Part-Time Reference Librarian,
Portland Community College
&
On-Call Librarian,
Multnomah County Library
&
Cartoonist





THE **LIBRARIAN** IN ME COMPELS ME TO CONFESS THAT THE **CARTOONIST** IN ME HAS COMPELLED ME TO **EXAGGERATE**. JUST A TAD



THE CHALLENGE IS TO TREAT EVERY INTERACTION AS A **FRESH EXPERIENCE**, NO MATTER HOW ROUTINE.



MY FIRST YEAR IN THE PROFESSION HAS TAUGHT ME A GREAT DEAL BEYOND THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS (AND MUNDANE REPETITIONS) OF WORKING IN A LIBRARY. INDEED, AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY FOR ME HAS BEEN THAT THE IDEALS OF THE PROFESSION ARE OFTEN REALIZED WITHIN SEEMINGLY TRIVIAL ACTIVITIES.



BECAUSE UNDER THE APPEARANCE OF **REPETITION**...



... THERE ARE INDIVIDUAL PATRONS WITH **UNIQUE** INFORMATION NEEDS.



IT IS EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF THESE **UNIQUE** NEEDS. OLD HABITS OF SERVICE, NEW DEMANDS OF INFORMATION DELIVERY, PLUS THE **SIL**O EFFECT OF OUR DIVISIONS AND THE POLITICS OF OUR INSTITUTIONS -



- CAN INTERFERE WITH EFFECTIVE SERVICE TAILORED TO THE **SPECIFIC** NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS.





Get Your Virtual Reference Skills Through L-net!

by **Emily Papagni**
L-net Partner Support Librarian



Areas with growth potential in librarianship

Management and budgeting—even if these areas aren't in your usual duties, people retire, there's turnover and colleagues go on sabbatical—you never know when a librarian will be asked to step up to the plate. When this occurs, it's best to train in these areas so that you have more confidence in completing these tasks. If you can't get this training at your current position, this is where working on a committee in a professional association can give you experience in planning, budgeting, bylaws, board work (incl. fiscal and legal issues) and networking.

—HELEN H. SPALDING
University Librarian/
Professor, Portland State
University Library

You could be a new librarian who is struggling to build strong reference skills and experience in order to get your first library job or you could be an experienced reference librarian working to keep your reference skills fresh while you're facing the challenges of staying on top of the latest technology developments. In either case, developing virtual reference skills will help you and L-net is a place to do it.

What is L-net

L-net, Oregon's virtual reference service, connects patrons with librarians 24/7 via live chat and e-mail. The service has made a tremendous impact on reference services throughout the state. L-net continues to grow its capacity to provide services as more librarians join in, either as library staff or volunteers. The service celebrated its fifth year anniversary this past spring. In these five years, the service has worked towards two goals. The first is to make reference service through online chat and e-mail available to all Oregon citizens, students, and workers. The second goal is to give Oregon librarians the opportunity to develop virtual reference skills.

Why should I care about virtual reference skills?

The second goal of building virtual reference skills often improves a librarian's ability to get a job and to keep a job. Over 100 Oregon librarians from 36 libraries currently staff L-net. Many of them have said that they think of staffing L-net as a form of job enrichment and that they get a sense of professional satisfaction from staffing the service.

Library managers have noticed this enrichment in their staff and would like it to be even more widespread in hopes that all Oregon reference librarians will eventually have virtual reference skills.

Barbara Jenkins, head of reference and instruction at the University of Oregon Libraries, comments on the need for virtual reference skills:

When I hire, I look for candidates who are aware of the issues in the changing reference landscape (in fact, the job description now lists it as a requirement). If they are familiar with virtual reference, it means that they are usually willing to rethink traditional perceptions of what reference means and be flexible enough to work in a constantly evolving environment.

For library staff who have experienced a decline in walk-in reference questions, L-net offers an opportunity to build relationships with patrons in new ways and answer questions that are increasingly complex. Matthew Yake, a library assistant at Multnomah County Library, shares:

My feeling is that providing reference via services like L-net is a way of keeping libraries relevant in a changing world ... As a reference worker it's my belief that we must meet our patrons where they are and working with L-net is most certainly a part of the process of information access continuing to expand beyond the library's physical boundaries ... I very much look forward to L-net being a source of more challenging reference work.

In addition to the librarians who staff L-net at partner libraries, the service also has a group of volunteers. Most L-net volunteers don't have the option of staffing the service at a library either because they work at a library that is not an L-net partner library or their library participates at a limited level. Some volunteers work at



libraries part-time or on-call or are retired librarians. Most volunteers staff L-net from home computers.

Hillary Garrett, who is currently the Reference/Public Relations Librarian at McMinnville Public Library, began staffing L-net as a volunteer:

As a relatively new Oregonian, volunteering for L-net was the perfect way to meet librarians and learn about all the various services our libraries provide. I now work an L-net shift as part of my paid position, and I believe volunteering for L-net set me apart from other applicants.

Being a part of L-net has connected me to other librarians, some in Oregon, some in other states—I love getting to see what other libraries are doing! My L-net experience has been a talking point at job interviews, library functions, and even my kickball games (seriously). Getting involved with L-net should be a top priority for librarians, if not to improve your virtual reference skills, at least to promote how cool Oregon libraries are.

The demand for live reference services through online chat continues to grow. As patrons' lives shift, there is more of an expectation among patrons that services, including library reference services, will be available 24/7. Traffic on L-net has grown 30 percent in each of the last two years. Since its inception, L-net has answered over 70,000 reference questions. This growing demand from patrons for the service indicates the need for more librarians for whom virtual reference is a core skill.

Practice those reference skills

When librarians talk about how developing virtual reference skills makes them better

librarians, they often say that their virtual reference skills have improved their face-to-face reference skills. This is especially true for the skill of conducting a thorough reference interview. Because L-net librarians don't have the visual and auditory cues that librarians have while helping a patron at an information desk, there is a strong need to conduct a reference interview to clarify the question. L-net librarians also value reference interviews because the interview is one of the things that distinguishes us from other online resources—Google can't perform a reference interview. No search engine can understand the context of a reference question and find appropriate resources to answer the question within that context. Librarians say that this skill has made them more aware of how to do a comprehensive reference interview while working with patrons in their libraries.

L-net keeps copies of all chat transcripts (scrubbed of any information that might identify a patron) and L-net librarians are encouraged to read one another's transcripts. Doing so gives insight into techniques for communicating online with patrons and also helps librarians to be more aware of the various tools available for answering specific reference questions.

Being a collaborative service goes a long way towards making us all feel connected as a library community. In addition to reading one another's transcripts and learning new techniques for providing reference service online, L-net librarians stay connected via our listserv and our annual Summit conference. L-net recently published the "Field Guide to Oregon Libraries," which highlights the resources and subject specialists at our partner libraries. It's one more tool to help us stay in touch and feel connected with our colleagues around the state.

L-net also offers librarians the opportunity to work with types of patrons that



Advice for new librarians

Constantly question (perhaps mostly to yourself!) the way things are done the way they are in your library. See if the answer benefits your users. If it doesn't, think of a new way to do things. Repeat.

—AARON SCHMIDT,
Director,
North Plains Public Library



they would not normally assist inside their libraries. Librarians at public, academic, and school libraries get to experience working with one another's users and reference topics that they would normally not experience from working with their local patrons.

Hopes and dreams for L-net

As part of our goal to help librarians develop virtual reference skills, L-net is switching to different software in Fall 2008. The new software for chat is based on instant messaging. It has the potential to incorporate text messaging and other forms of communication in the future. The librarian's interface will be much simpler than what L-net librarians have used previously. We expect that this will eliminate a barrier for many. The software will be easy to learn and easy to use. L-net is partnering with the Cleveland Public Library and Ohio's KnowItNow


service to develop the software and provide the service. Besides being a statewide service, L-net will offer our software as a utility to Oregon libraries that would like to use the software to serve their own patrons through a local chat service.

Our hope is that as many librarians as possible will be able to participate in staffing L-net. The simpler interface will make it easier for librarians to get involved with the statewide service and become virtual reference librarians.

As Caleb Tucker-Raymond, Oregon statewide digital reference project coordinator, said, "The world keeps turning. Exploring new models and modes for reference service helps us understand how and why and to provide better library service all around."

Ready to get involved?

Librarians and library school students with reference experience may apply to be L-net volunteers by sending a resume and two references to the L-net Partner Support Librarian at emilyp@multcolib.org. The complete volunteer job description is available at <http://www.oregonlibraries.net/volunteers>. To learn more about what librarians have to say about their experience staffing L-net, <http://www.oregonlibraries.net/joining/testimonials>.

All Oregon libraries are invited to become L-net partner libraries. Information on partnering is available at <http://www.oregonlibraries.net/joining/responsibilities>. By participating, you will be serving your own patrons in a new way and collaborating with other Oregon librarians. In addition, your new virtual reference skills could help you land a different job or help you answer questions at your own reference desk with a new set of tools and a renewed enthusiasm for reference service. 

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NWCentral:

Your Gateway to Continuing Education Through Collaboration

by Roberta Richards
Coordinator,
PORTALS library consortium
&
Reference Librarian,
Portland Community College

Your library school education was superb. Your job experience is broad and deep. So, you're ready for the challenges and opportunities of a workday at a library, right? Well ... maybe, not so much. An ancient Chinese curse condemns the recipient to live in interesting times. Libraries today are both blessed and cursed to operate in times that are, to put it mildly, quite interesting and ever-changing. Technology is transforming. Communities are evolving. Patron expectations are skyrocketing.

New librarians and experienced library workers alike must struggle to keep abreast of trends and developments. One day you're doing your job satisfactorily, and the next you're asked to get a handle on the next generation catalog debate, learn how to serve a new population, brief the board on copyright issues, align services with the millennial generation, or something else that requires immediate up-to-date training. For all library workers, whether newly-minted or seasoned veteran, ongoing continuing education is absolutely essential to remain relevant in library services.

NWCentral (Northwest Continuing Education Network of Training Resources for All Libraries), an online clearinghouse of educational opportunities in the Pacific Northwest, can help! This collaborative tool is based on the premise that it takes a community to master the ever-changing skills needed to serve our diverse constituencies. Continuing education for library professionals, support staff and managers comes in a variety of forms: conferences, workshops, workplace-hosted trainings, webinars, library blogs, meetings of interest-based library organizations, college classes, and countless Web resources. Sometimes, however, the most effective learning comes from a simple interaction, live or virtual, with a colleague who has expertise to share

on the challenge of the moment. The goal of NWCentral is to bring all of this together in a 'one-stop shop' for continuing education that is local, economical and enjoyable.

If you have not had a chance to visit NWCentral (www.nwcentral.org), please do! This is some of what you'll find:

- An events calendar with all sorts of library trainings, meetings, and conferences in the Pacific Northwest and online.
- Handouts, tutorials, presentations and Web links on a range of library topics
- Conference presentations
- Scholarships and grants information
- A speaker's bureau listing experts willing to share their knowledge

And much more—with much of the content contributed by members of the local library community.

Plan to spend some time on your visit to the site!

The story of NWCentral begins with PORTALS, the Portland Area Library System consortium. Leslie Wykoff, director of WSU Vancouver Library and former chair of PORTALS, describes how NWCentral began back in 2004. "PORTALS decided, after much work reassessing its mission, that local and regional continuing education for librarians and library staff was its top priority into the future. An LSTA grant from the State Library in Oregon allowed PORTALS to hold focus groups and needs assessment meetings across the state of Oregon, form



a user-run Advisory Board, and build the beta version of NWCentral. PORTALS still provides some funding for the NWCentral project.” Sheila Afnan-Manns was project manager of NWCentral during its development stage, and Rachel Bridgewater was its Web architect. Drupal, the open-source content management system, was selected to provide the structure for the site. Using Drupal’s lightweight architecture and some custom coding, NWCentral was designed to provide a solid structure for organizing content as well as many opportunities for participants to connect.

In June 2006, a pilot of NWCentral was introduced to the library community. A voluntary Advisory Group came together to help publicize the site and guide its growth. Slowly—and with a few bumps—the site began to establish itself in the Northwest library community. Enthusiastic volunteers spread the word through conferences and listservs. Members of the library community began to populate the events calendar and topic categories with content. The Oregon Library Association recognized the potential of NWCentral early on and created an OLA board liaison to NWCentral, a position currently held by Maureen Cole of Eugene Public Library. In 2007, the Washington Library Association followed suit and designated its coordinator of continuing education, the position currently held by Mary Bucher Ross, as the formal liaison to NWCentral. In 2008, hosting of the Web site moved to Portland Community College. Donna Reed, Library Director at PCC, recognized NWCentral as a good fit for the mission of the college. Currently PCC provides continuing education support for professionals in health, technology and other fields and has a program that trains library paraprofessionals. By hosting

NWCentral, PCC is expanding its commitment to library continuing education.

Now that NWCentral has been in service for over two years, the need for certain improvements to the Web site has become apparent. To reach its full potential NWCentral needs a critical mass of users, including both seekers and contributors of continuing education events and resources. This bare-bones operation has never conducted usability testing, and it has become clear that improvements to the site’s organization and interface are necessary for it to achieve this critical mass of users. A follow-up LSTA grant from the Oregon State Library for 2008 will fund usability testing and an overhaul of the site. This work will be done by Paul Irving and colleagues at In-site Web Publishing, the talented team that created Multnomah County Library’s wonderful new Web site and recently launched a Web site for the Kalamazoo Public Library. The release of the revised NWCentral site is currently scheduled for October 2008.

NWCentral has always operated with minimal staff support, which is another of those joint blessings and curses. Granted, if NWCentral had its own professional staffing, then content could be added to the site with no effort from members of the library community, and the site could boast a slicker, more varied appearance. On the other hand, the advantage of the community-driven, self-service model that NWCentral uses is that it fosters connections. When a local librarian shares a handout she has created on, say, a staff training on responding to an angry patron, she is expanding her commitment to the larger library community. If she provides her contact information, another library manager considering similar training can both learn from her handout and contact her for advice. Maybe



The future of librarianship and how to keep up

Read something interesting once a day, at least. Read “one level up” or outside your area of expertise. Read related literature, e.g. Educause reports. Try to get a sense of what is ahead of you, not what’s already happened.

—DEB CARVER
Dean of Libraries,
University of Oregon

together they can brainstorm new solutions, or they can pool their resources and bring in an expert speaker, or just commiserate about their jobs. We don't just need information—we need connections.

Because NWCentral operates with minimal staff support, the voluntary Advisory Group that guides the project is key to its success. Members of the Advisory Group come from all over Oregon and Washington, and represent public, academic, school and special libraries. Here are a few statements from Advisory Group members about why they take time from their busy schedules to support NWCentral:


Paula Swan from Spokane Falls Community College Library in Washington is the Advisory Group's newest member: "I got involved with NWCentral as I was looking for a regional online CE clearinghouse for teaching and research. I like the multiple access points to resources—the calendar and the subject access—especially. It is a great resource for librarians who want to strengthen their professional networks."

Maureen Cole is a former president of OLA and OLA's current liaison to NWCentral: "OLA was looking for a way to connect its members to Continuing Education resources and NWCentral offered a solution! In a volunteer organization, time is the most important resource. OLA found itself without a lot of time to devote to the deserving and important area of Continuing Education, to keep its members in touch with the latest and greatest regional offerings. NWCentral presents an elegant and electronic answer to our need; in doing so, we have established a great partnership!"

Marian Thomas is director of human resources at Deschutes Public Library: "Are you a leader? Do you like to mentor? If yes, your gateway is NWCentral. This impor-

tant and developing shared community Web site is a great opportunity for you to share with others. One key way is to share conference presentation materials. Another way is to share information about dynamic speakers. These two actions are significant and will help develop the growing resources at NWCentral. Participate today and make a difference! We guarantee your sharing will enhance and encourage others in their pursuit of lifelong learning."

Perri Parise, the Director of Emporia State University's MLS program, has this advice for new librarians looking for a professional position: "There's no substitute for networking and lifelong learning. It is often frustrating to see an ad for a position that seems just perfect, except for some preferred skill that you, the job seeker, lack. And that's where NWCentral can play a key role."

So, whether you are looking for your first job, seeking a different job, or just trying to keep up with the job you have, you are invited to join the network of lifelong learners at NWCentral. You are especially invited to be part of the expanded and improved site that will be released this fall! Questions or comments about NWCentral can be sent to admin@nwcentral.org or to any Advisory Group member, whose contact information can be found on the site. Add your support to locally-grown library continuing education and participate in a network that is preparing to thrive in these interesting times. 



Advice for new librarians

Try to remember that this is one of the very best times to be a librarian, so be clear where your passions lie and pick that field of librarianship that allows you the opportunity to exercise them. When you start new job, pay attention to what works and what does not and be willing to be a problem solver. Always see yourself as a player. Look for opportunities to collaborate whether within your department, library, your campus, city or state. Pay attention to people you admire and note how they do what they do.

—KARYLE BUTCHER
University Librarian,
Oregon State University



What Else Can I Do With an MLS Degree?

by **Pierina (Perri) Parise**
Director,
Emporia State University's School
of Library and Information
Management in Oregon

To be or not to be a "Librarian"? Ah, the L word ...

Several years ago at the 2003 convention of the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the members debated long and hard about a change of name for their organization—in particular eliminating the “L” word. Many of the members felt that the word library or librarian did not really represent the work they do. They could not agree on another name and therefore kept the name as is. But if we think of our field in the broader sense of “information professionals,” we can see that there are many ways to use our skills in careers outside the traditional library setting.

A survey of the SLA Web site (<http://www.sla.org>) provides a useful overview of many of the alternative careers open to holders of the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree. According to Rachel Singer Gordon, there are various reasons to consider an alternative career, including “feeling burnt out in your current career ... a desire to strike out on your own, to be your own boss ... a desire to explore options that draw on a library background, yet allow you to advance and command the respect you deserve for your skills and accomplishments, regardless of your degree status.” (Gordon 2008).

One of the most obvious job markets into which we can expand is the technology arena. Many MLS graduates are employed as Web designers, database developers, and information systems specialists. The digital world provides openings for those who can convert materials to digital form and provide access through metadata schemes. Mercy Corps is an excellent example of a non-profit organization that maintains all materials in digital form in order to serve their staff in all corners of the world. Museums and archives

are places that have embraced the new technologies as ways to make their materials more accessible to users. Digitizing collections and putting them online allow people to view the items from any where in the world, while cutting down on the physical handling of valuable materials. Information professionals apply metadata and controlled vocabulary schemes to these digitized items, greatly improving the ability to find once difficult to locate collections.

Vendors who provide products and services to libraries hire MLS holders because they can “talk the talk” to customers. For example, Innovative Interfaces, Inc. (or “Triple I”) has a broad range of positions. You could work on the technical or systems end, do the marketing of their products, or be a trainer or an administrator. Another example is Blackwell Book Services, a local vendor that hires MLS graduates to catalog and process materials, provide bibliographic support, and organize buying plans for libraries.

Brenda Kliethermes works at Triple I and explains how her job relates to her MLS degree:

My position as an Information Resources and Training Coordinator at Innovative Interfaces includes a variety of job duties, such as training staff, producing documentation and participating on special projects. I find that my approach to my diverse duties continuously relies on skills from my MLS. At any moment you might find me conducting a reference interview with staff or a customer who is researching our documentation resources, designing a new training session that addresses a variety of learning styles, using knowledge of information-seeking behavior and information architecture to create and publish documentation, or explaining the complexity of an integrated library system to a new employee whose only exposure to



Skills you are looking for in new librarians

The passion to help people and the confidence to experiment. Any other skills can be trained.

—AARON SCHMIDT
Director
North Plains Public Library

a library was as a patron. The flexibility of these skills allows me to face new challenges with confidence and provide a solid base for continuing professional development.

Being an “independent information professional” has always been a viable alternative to working within a traditional library setting. With the explosion of electronic information resources, the need for this type of work has definitely grown. People who perform this role go by many different titles—-independent researcher, information broker, information entrepreneur, solo librarian, etc. Often they specialize in certain research topics such as competitive intelligence, market forecasting, government information, and engineering, to name a few. The Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP) is a useful resource for those considering going solo and the AIIP Web site (<http://www.aiip.org>) is a good place to start.

An off-shoot of the independent information professional is the generic job title “consultant.” Again, those who market themselves in this way usually specialize within an industry or field. Libraries hire consultants as project managers, grant writers, architectural/interior designers, strategic planners, community analysis experts, etc.

In addition to hanging out your shingle as an independent practitioner or consultant, companies and agencies hire employees to perform the above skills, especially competitive intelligence, market analysis, and prospect researching, which entails finding donors/investors an organization can target for funding.

A specialty niche for information professionals is “medical informatics,” combining the information field of medicine with all aspects of technology.

The Web site for the Department of Medical Informatics and Clinical Epidemiology at Oregon Health & Science University (<http://www.ohsu.edu/dmice/>) explains:

Medical informatics is the field concerned with the acquisition, storage, and use of information in health and biomedicine. As technology and information both become more prevalent in society, the ability to quickly and accurately identify, parse, understand, and utilize that information becomes both more critical and more difficult.

A growing field related to librarianship is records management. Some records managers feel they are the “saviors” of our modern world. In the print-only era, there were secretaries and file clerks who organized files and documents for agencies and businesses. But today, we are all our own file clerks, with primarily digital-only documents which we store our own way on our own computers. As employees come and go, the organization loses important information. There is also recognition that employees possess tacit knowledge which needs to be captured and preserved as organizations do their strategic planning and short term/long term planning. The field of knowledge management is recognized by industry as essential for long term success.

Michele Hanrahan, who works for PATH—a Seattle-based non-profit—feels that her MLS degree has been a significant advantage in her work:

I am leading the project to create archives for closed projects along with a number of other activities, like analyzing policies and record-keeping requirements, doing outreach to promote awareness, and training people to use tools and systems effectively. I think that I have a real advantage over many traditional “records

Alternative Careers

Technology related

Web Designers

Database Developers

Information Systems Specialists

Digital Experts

Working for Vendors

Consultant

Records Manager

Specialties

(either as independent brokers or company/agency employees)

Competitive Intelligence

Market Analysis/
Forecasting

Prospect Researching

Grant Writing

Engineering

Government Information

Medical Informatics

Project Management

Strategic Planning

Architectural/Interior
Design

Community Analysis



The “Social” Way to Learn Online: Learning 2.0 @ Multnomah County Library

by **Mike Larsen**
Learning Systems Manager,
Multnomah County Library

During the first three months of 2008 the wave known as Learning 2.0 swept through the Multnomah County Library (MCL). We weren't among the first, but we were determined to be among the best in applying this innovative, low-cost, high impact concept, which in the last year and a half spread throughout the library community like no other learning trend in recent memory. This article will explore MCL's somewhat unique implementation of Learning 2.0 and the lessons left in its wake.

Inspired in part by Stephen Abrams' February 2006 article, “43 Things I (or You) Might Want to Do This Year,” in August of that year Helene Blowers began the first Learning 2.0 program at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (PLCMC) in North Carolina. Since then, over 250 libraries around the world have implemented similar programs. Individual programs differ, but adhere broadly to the model established by Blowers: a series of self-paced learning activities where participants explore Web 2.0 tools and technologies along a guided timeline (usually weekly), and blog about their experiences.

The defining characteristic of 2.0 tools is that they are “social.” They allow users to interact with one another in a way that earlier, first generation Web tools did not. Blog readers can add comment to posts, wiki content can be edited by multiple users, etc. At MCL, we found the social aspect was key to participation in our Learning 2.0 Program, and to the use and adoption of 2.0 tools.

Traditional classes possess an element of social interaction that has always been lacking in online learning. In a classroom, you hear the questions your classmates ask, and how the instructor responds; you can ask questions; you can lean over to the person next to you and get hints on

little bits of content you may have missed; and during breaks and after class you can exchange comments with friends. All these different types of social interactions assist in the learning process.

The genius of Blowers' original Learning 2.0 idea is that the social features of Web 2.0 technologies are harnessed to create an online training program incorporating many of the important elements of social interaction. Using Web 2.0 technologies you retain the online advantages of cheap universal and instantaneous distribution, and the capability for the learner to complete the lessons at a time and place of their convenience. The online learner is no longer limited to sitting at a computer all alone with the curriculum: 2.0 tools make online learning social. At MCL, we tried to take this central insight, and apply it in as many ways as we could, seeking at every turn to maximize the social opportunities.

I think the program was great fun and very useful as a team-building exercise. Also, good for morale to share learning experiences with co-workers in other job classifications.

—MCL PAGE

To maximize social engagement we incorporated the following features into our Learning 2.0 program:

- We selected a common blogging tool (Roller, an open-source platform) and required all participants to use it for their Learning 2.0 program blogs. Roller generated a tag cloud from participants' tags.
- All participant blogs were visible in a blogroll so that anyone could easily read what their co-workers were writing.



Skills you are looking for in new librarians

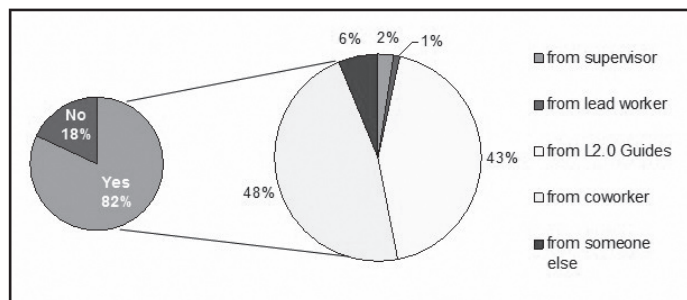
An appreciation and understanding of technology is an integral aspect of what we would seek in new librarians, but perhaps more than ever it is the integration of this with a strong sense of information seeking, critical thinking skills, and, perhaps most significant, being able to be flexible with an increasingly dynamic environment.

—JIM KOPP
Director
Watzek Library
Lewis & Clark College

- Comments were enabled for all participant blogs (although participants had the option of turning off comments for their own blog.)
- The blogroll was sorted so that blogs receiving the most page views were listed at the top, thus encouraging a bit of competition to generate posts that would be more frequently read and commented upon.
- We recruited and trained a cadre of Learning 2.0 Guides from as many different work groups and locations within the library as possible, and designated these people as a “go to” easily accessible resource for anyone with questions or technical problems.
- We set up open lab times in various branches, staffed by one of the Learning 2.0 Guides, where participants could work on the learning activities surrounded by co-workers similarly engaged.
- Every week, an e-mail went sent to all employees highlighting one or more employee’s work as “Blog of the Week” so that others could read and comment on these examples of the program in action.
- Each member program’s governing committee committed to seek out blogs that were receiving few or no comments, and to add comments so that these participants would not be discouraged or feel like no one was paying attention to what they were accomplishing.
- Midway through the program, one of our monthly system-wide “Reference

Forums” was set aside as a Learning 2.0 practice and Q&A session for added networking and support.

What was the result of all these strategies and measures to encourage and support participation? Ours was a voluntary program, and 78 percent of all library staff chose to participate. In a post-program survey, 82 percent of staff answered affirmatively that they had received the help they needed.



Participant feedback on support:
Did you get the help you needed?

MCL’s Lessons Learned

The MCL staff is nearly as diverse as the metro area population they serve. Many have worked for the Library since the days of card catalogs and ink-stamped due dates. Others are new graduates in their 20s or even younger. Their levels of familiarity with digital technology are equally diverse. The primary goal was participation: to get as many employees to participate as possible. One of the biggest challenges we faced was how to structure program content and delivery in such a way that we could keep the tech-savvy interested, without alienating the technophobes.

To attack this problem, in addition to building in maximum opportunities for peer and technical support, we included both basic, and optional advanced activities for each week’s theme. For example, in our program’s first week, our learning theme was blogging. As a basic activity, every participant set up



The future of librarianship and how to keep up

Read everything. Read about higher ed, not just librarianship.

Find professional assoc. activities that broaden your experience. Don't confine yourself to academic venues. Lots of great stuff happening in public libraries.

Know your community—not librarianship for librarianship's sake, not one size fits all.

Take an online course, or do something that gives you the experience you are designing for others.

Be judicious about listservs, blogs, etc. and how much of your time they consume.

—VICKIE HANAWALT
Library Director,
Reed College Library

their own personal Learning 2.0 project blog using Roller. As an optional advanced activity, those who felt comfortable were encouraged to explore Twitter, Pownce, or another microblogging service.

Despite our best efforts to encourage them, some chose not to participate in our Learning 2.0 program. Our project evaluation survey identified that many of the employees who chose not to participate didn't see how the skills they could learn might apply to the work they do every day.

I still question the utility of much more than a general knowledge of some of these toys that have little or no library applicability ... Maybe that's it: more explanation and/or demonstration to staff that this stuff is useful.

—MCL SUPERVISOR

In explaining the program, we, like most libraries with Learning 2.0 programs, trusted that the tools would sell themselves. We then compounded our error by not sequencing the learning activities so that the most obviously useful tools, such as online docs (Google Docs, Zoho, etc.), came early in the program. We introduced online docs ten weeks in; by then it was too late for someone who had become discouraged and dropped out.

While I appreciate that all members of the library were allowed to participate, it's relevancy to our current set-up is not so clear.

—MCL PAGE

Relevancy was a key point for many participants. Many discovered the utility of the Web 2.0 tools for themselves, but others didn't bother to explore unless they knew that the time they spent was going to be useful. It's a basic tenet of adult learning

theory: people want to know what's in it for them. We should have done a better job of pointing out, for example, that by using a wiki, a work group can collaborate on a set of work rules or plan a special event without worrying about e-mailing updates or saving the latest version. Outreach workers can use LibraryThing or Shelfari to organize materials for their specific target groups. Librarians can use RSS feeds to keep up on the latest developments of professional or personal interest. Social bookmarking tools like del.icio.us can help anyone assemble lists of resources, improved and expanded by the wisdom of their friends and co-workers, to help when they need to call up that information in the future.

The one thing I would suggest about this was maybe the ability to skip one or two sessions. Because our office does not deal with direct patron contact a couple of the lessons did not seem very relevant.

—MCL SUPERVISOR

I think that, although the content of Learning 2.0 was in most cases quite good, not all of it was applicable to all Library employees. I think it would be more appropriate if in the future the various lessons were optional, so that the people who would use the skills could take them.

—MCL PAGE

One of the main suggestions from our evaluation survey as to how we could improve the program was to give participants the ability to skip lessons that seemed less relevant to them based on their particular job duties or interests. In effect, our participants told us the way to improve the Web 2.0 learning program is to make it more 2.0—more open to user participation, choice, and selection for relevance and applicability.



I found it was difficult to find the time to participate like I intended and once I got behind it was hard to catch up.

—MCL SUPERVISOR

Although we tried to anticipate time crunches by incorporating a “catch up week” into our project plan, for many one week was not enough. People are busy. When they take traditional training classes, simply having a scheduled class meeting time once or twice a week helps to keep people on track. Without the requirement for physical presence, online learning becomes too easy to put off. We had more success and higher participation rates with work groups that scheduled time together to work on the program, and then, in keeping with the program guidelines that it be optional, let them opt out if they didn’t want to participate. This worked better than opening a lab time and allowing people to opt in and show up.

Despite those who chose not to participate, and the grind that some employees felt from having to contend with learning a new activity each week, by almost any measure, our Learning 2.0 program would be termed a success. 96 percent of library supervisors feel the program was worth the time and effort expended. And our delivery model was successful too. 96 percent of supervisors also would support a future training program delivered using the same model (self-paced online learning activities, coupled with planned features to encourage social engagement and a network of peer support).

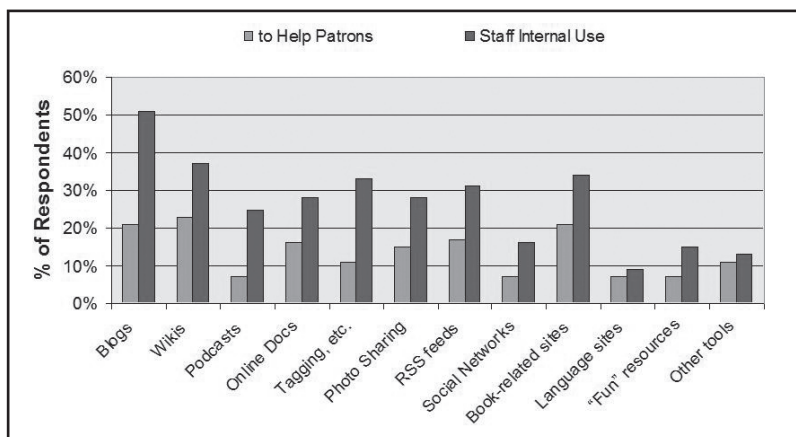
Better than feelings, MCL employees are putting their new found skill and familiarity with Web 2.0 tools into action. 75 percent of library supervisors either have already implemented, or have plans to implement, Web 2.0 tools for their workgroups. Over 50 percent are either using

blogs or plan to use them, with slightly less using or with plans to use photo sharing sites such as Flickr. Bookmarking sites and wikis were each named as helpful by more than 30 percent of MCL supervisors.

This was a great learning opportunity even for those of us who are already on the Web all the time. So far I’m using things like RSS feeds, twitter, and blogs for gathering information related to my work much more than I did before. I also think that I’ll be able to recommend a lot of the sites and tools to patrons as time goes on, even if I haven’t had a chance so far.

—MCL LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Web 2.0 tools can be used to help patrons. The fact that patrons were already using these tools was one of the main drivers for the Learning 2.0 program. But we found that Web 2.0 tools can help staff even more. Every single group of tools/activities we introduced in our program has seen greater usage by staff in the non-public side of their jobs than in directly assisting patrons.



Use of 2.0 tools greater internally than for patrons

See The “Social” Way to Learn page 35

Academic Libraries after Print

by **Allen McKiel, Ph.D.**
Dean of Library
and Media Services,
Western Oregon University

Two general implications concerning the future of academic libraries evolved from an analysis I did of two ebrary e-content surveys. The analysis confirmed views I have held for some time. First, e-content will supplant print for academic libraries but the efficacy of the librarian will remain and probably increase long after the research value of the physical collection is relegated to historical significance. Second, the academic library function will not be outsourced. The three primary foci of the academic library will be acquisition, instruction, and publication.

Only the most stalwart believers in the primacy of paper distribution systems can deny the probability of its disposition by electronic counterparts. The eclipse of paper distribution by electronic requires anytime-anywhere access to the Internet. The advancing merger of cellular and IP technologies will provide the mechanism for the distribution of information resources currently distributed physically. There are converging technologies and economic exigencies that mitigate in favor of this view. The appearance of Kindle by Amazon and Android by Google and T-Mobile are recent evidence of progress towards convergence. The promise of interactive marketing and distribution through a proliferation of constantly evolving Internet access devices along with all of the services and products that can be marketed through them is driving the Internet toward this economic nirvana with increasing energy.

The critical mass point for the change to electronic publication is dependent upon the percentage of the population that has wireless access to the Internet with devices suitable for viewing and reading documents. At the point that income from electronic distribution outweighs the income from a tandem print/electronic distribution strategy, print will be eclipsed. Paper will

likely be available on demand at premium prices. Electronic counterparts will drop significantly in price as the costs of maintaining print distribution are separated from electronic distribution.

The functionality of the academic library will persist in the context of electronic resources. There are indications which suggest that the integration of information resources into the curricula by librarians will become more important as information increasingly becomes the raw material of modern culture and economy. In general, the library will become an even more integral and dynamic component of the endeavors of its academic community as the library operations associated with the provision of electronic resources evolve.

However, the transition from physical to electronic distribution of information is changing the nature of library operations. Most library operations associated with print resources will have electronic counterparts. Some remain but diminish—i.e. circulation scales down to authentication. Some expand—i.e. acquisitions, instruction, and publication. Librarians are likely to be engaged in intensified efforts to identify Internet based resources relevant to the specific needs of their institutions, to integrate information literacy comprehensively throughout the curriculum, and to develop content management systems to assist the academy in organizing and providing access to its own production of information.

Acquisition

The services of librarians were required in the two dimensional world of print because of its volume and complexity over manuscript production. Librarians brought specialized mediation to the task of acquiring the increased volume of resources provided by the printing press. The environs of the electronic information sphere



Advice for new librarians

Reference skills are a dime a dozen. What else are you bringing to the table? Have you looked at our Web site? How can we make it better? What is your subject specialty? I want to know how you are going to help me. Don't know what else I may be looking for? Ask. LEARN SPANISH.

—PATRICK DUKE
Library Director,
Wilsonville Public Library

require the same interventions on the part of professionals, albeit using the developing technologies of information and communication. The dramatically rising volume and complexity of information resources distributed via the Internet necessitates change in the methods of mediation. Google and search tools like it will handily assist in the provision of focused answers to surprisingly wide types of information needs. It will not systematically identify curriculum-relevant Internet resources for integrated use. The acquisition function of librarians will be engaged in identifying, organizing, and presenting the subset of information across the spectrum that is relevant to the curricula of their particular institutions.

It could be argued that the tools evolving on the Internet to identify the subsets of information relevant to an individual will also evolve to automatically identify those that are relevant for an institution. Conversely, it can be argued that those tools, even for the individual, will continue to require ongoing mediation and decision making with respect to accessing and purchasing options within constantly changing information needs. The same mediation and decision making processes will be required within the institutions of higher education. The past ten years of expanding cooperative purchasing arrangements in the typical academic library provides evidence. Universities purchase resources from a growing list of vendors and within a growing complexity of cooperative relationships. The processes required in the ongoing evaluation of those resources are also expanding.

The acquisition role of the library professional extended into the electronic realm will also have to accommodate an ever increasing volume, diversity and complexity of open source and freely available Internet-based information resources. The expansion of the electronic information sphere is accel-

erating in both breadth and depth. Commercial, corporate, government, academic, organizational, and personal sites are proliferating. Their pages are not just simple, flat presentations of pictures and words. Web sites connect to increasingly diverse and complex data sets. The information sphere and the tools and systems for navigating and using it are multiplying. Many university library Web sites, as an example, currently organize by program area hundreds of links to information sources available without charge over the Internet. These resources also require the acquisition processes of discovery, evaluation, and communication.

Instruction

The shift in information access has increased the need for instruction in the rapidly expanding global information sphere. The days of a library tour that centered on the catalog and how to find things in the library are gone. Instruction in and assistance with the use of continuously evolving information resources will ascend in importance in the academic library. Instruction will increasingly become the focus of efforts to systematically and comprehensively provide information literacy instruction horizontally and vertically throughout the curriculum. The need for students and faculty to become more information savvy in an increasingly information dependent culture will be reflected in the ongoing efforts of librarians to integrate instruction in the use of relevant information resources into the various academic programs. Librarians will need to stay abreast of the expanding content of the information infrastructure as well as the continually evolving electronic tools for accessing, organizing, and using information.

Different views of appropriate basic information literacy at the moment include instruction in the use of general e-book and e-journal databases, an introduction to con-



Advice for new librarians

I look for energy. I look for people with a desire to continually improve themselves and the organization. I look for tolerance. I look for optimists. I look for people with a bias for action over analysis, the proactive type.

—DARREL CONDRA
Library Manager,
Tualatin Public Library



cepts of peer review, evaluation of Internet information resources, discussions of plagiarism and copyright, instruction in citing resources, an exploration of search strategies, the selection and use of search engines, and the use of tools like federated search engines. The list is not comprehensive and continues to grow as new information resources and tools for accessing them proliferate.

The North Central Association criterion for assessing library viability no longer focuses on counting “staff members and the square footage allocated to the library and to book inventories.” Libraries “exist to support teaching and learning. To make learning resources an integral part of a student’s education, an organization will have to invest in appropriate materials and equipment and provide the staff that can maintain these resources, train students in their use, and provide assistance when it is needed.”

The information literacy role also becomes more central as evaluation and assessment of learning outcomes associated with information literacy become a more central concern of accreditation. In harmony with this increased focus on assessment of information literacy outcomes, ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) articulates the need for comprehensive, structured instruction (See ACRL Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries). ACRL provides a vision of both horizontal and vertical integration into the curriculum. Information literacy instruction should be integral for all incoming students in core requirements like writing courses. It should also progress through the curriculum with vertical integration at the program and course levels.

Although the transition to the completely digital library will require considerable sorting out, librarians are likely to play a role in academe more intimately integrat-

ed into the instruction mission of higher education. Librarians will be members of teams that design learning environments. As higher education integrates more thoroughly into the fabric of an information centered economy, the demands of life-long learning will restructure the higher education learning environments. Adaptations in the design of learning environments will be set in motion by the continually evolving technologies of teaching and learning as well as the technologies of the information and communication spheres. Specialists in creating learning environments and those focused on articulating relevant access to, knowledge of, and participation in the information sphere will be working more intimately with faculty in the design and implementation of those environs.

Publishing

A growing percentage of libraries are participating in the distribution of e-content. While the efforts are fairly rudimentary, it is likely that academic libraries will play an increasing role in e-publication for their institutions. As the administration of content management systems becomes more focused on facilitating peer review and research processes, the skill sets and propensities of librarians ascend in appropriateness to the task.

A modest majority (56 percent) of the librarians in the March ebrary survey responded that they were either currently digitizing content or actively considering it. (See ebrary’s Global eBook Survey, p. 8) Content management will become increasingly important for librarianship, particularly as libraries assume more of the publishing role for their communities. As the peer review processes evolve in the context of the Internet, the functions of publishing may be disassembled and absorbed by



The future of librarianship and how to keep up

Join and be an active member in your state organization, and attend other library and technological conferences, Educause, for a great example. Read the literature, and network with colleagues. The field is as old as the hills and will not go away, but it will undergo immense transmutations.

—JAN MARIE FORTIER, PH.D.
Dean of
Information Resources,
Mt. Hood
Community College


individuals within higher education—i.e. librarians, faculty, technicians, and editors.

A glimpse of the publication role of librarians can be approached through a view of the processes of peer review in the context of the changing information sphere. The peer review process, among its other functions, can be viewed broadly as a mechanism by which a community evolves a piecemeal consensus over its research findings. Librarians provide their expertise mostly in the access portion of the peer review processes. They acquire and provide access to research resources. The current role of librarians derived from the last major upheaval in the changes in the mechanisms of information distribution, which occurred as the products of the printing press proliferated across Europe. The increased volume of information gave rise to the current mechanisms of peer review that rely heavily on editors and their reviewers for the initial selection processes in the distribution chain. And they have relied on librarians for much of the acquisition and access part of the process.

A future publication role for libraries may include configuring and maintaining content management systems for the facilitation of peer review processes. This is very speculative territory; however, the tension between the academic community and the current peer review/publishing model has a significant group of academics looking for alternatives. The responses in the ebrary survey indicate that libraries are cutting their teeth on a publishing role for their institutions even though the content at this juncture tends to be mostly special collections or materials for limited or internal distribution.

Conclusion

It is my view that librarians will be more in evidence and play a more integral role in academe as the operations of libraries transi-

tion into an e-distribution environment. As higher education expands its life-long learning mission through ever more innovative learning environments, librarians will likely have a part integrating information literacy instruction into them. They will assist in identifying and providing access to the resources and tools supportive of research. As publishers for their institutions, they will configure and manage the content management systems used in peer review processes and contribute to the metadata for organization and access of the resources published by their institutions. 

References

Association of College and Research Libraries. Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries: Approved by ACRL Board, June 2003. <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesinstruction.htm>

North Central Association. Criterion Three: Core Component 3d—the organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching. <http://www.ncahlc.org/download/Handbook03.pdf>.

Ebrary's Global eBook Survey. <http://www.ebrary.com/corp/>.

2007 Global Faculty E-book Survey. <http://www.ebrary.com/corp/>.



Advice for new librarians

I need librarians who keep up in their area of expertise, who seek out opportunities for continuing education, who read and participate in our library community, who care deeply and passionately about what we do and put patrons needs before their own needs ... I need risk takers. I want to hire librarians who thrive on change. I need change agents... Collaboration is a key trait for any new librarian.

—NANCY HOOVER
University Librarian,
Shoen Library,
Marylhurst University



Getting a job at Eugene Public Library

by **Carolee Hirsch**
Adult Services Librarian,
Eugene Public Library

with thanks
to **Kate Rowles**

Eugene Public Library recently had an opening for an Adult Services Librarian. More than 50 applicants, with a wide variety of special skills and experiences to offer, met the minimum requirements for the position. Even though we'd love to hire at least a dozen or three, we could only select one person for the one specific vacancy. When so many excellent librarians applied for one job, we had to pass up some wonderful people. So, if you are one of those wonderful people, how to do you rise to the top of the application pile next time?

Before you apply, do some homework about the community. Take a look online at the daily newspaper www.RegisterGuard.com and the alternative newspaper www.eugeneweekly.com to get a sense of the community. Do you want to live here? If you love being in a larger city with its bustle and diversity and 24/7 activity, Eugene may not be stimulating enough for you. On the other hand, if you're looking for a nice quiet peaceful little town, you may not enjoy the contentiousness of a place where so many actively involved people have more convictions than willingness to compromise. Competition tends to be fierce for all jobs in Eugene. Will someone who shares your household be able to find a job if you move here?

Look inside yourself. If you have lived all your life in a hot sunny climate, will you find long term happiness on the rainy side of the Cascades? Can you live in a place where people rust instead of tan, and sometimes battle Seasonal Affective Disorder depression?

Find out what you can about the current job opening. Call the library or the human resources analyst, to get a sense of the library community. What do you have to offer this community?

The application process

Eugene Public Library positions are filled through the City of Eugene Human Resources Division. New openings are posted weekly on the City's web site (www.eugene-or.gov/jobs). Look at the job description for general requirements and duties. The description will also have a line or two about the particular position—whether it is in Adult Services or Youth Services, for instance. Occasionally, if more than one vacancy is anticipated in the next few months, one posting might be used to fill multiple vacancies. Most often, however, each vacancy is filled through its own recruitment process and you will need to submit an application for each position in which you have interest.

You can complete the application online. Don't wait until the last minute to complete your application, even if you really love stress. Allow a little time for the technology to be cranky.

Every potential employee completes a standard application. Most positions also require you to answer the questions on a supplemental questionnaire. Those supplemental questions are the meat of the application. They give you a better idea of what the library is looking for this particular time. Your answers to the supplemental questions are vital in determining whether you move to the interview stage.

The standard application is used primarily to determine whether you meet the minimum qualifications for the job. Oh—and when a job posting requires three years experience? It means three years of full time equivalent experience; three years working part-time is only a year and a half to us. If you meet the qualifications, your application is forwarded to library staff members who evaluate your answers to the supplemental questions based on specific criteria, which are determined before the opening is



posted. Sorry, no, you won't know exactly what those criteria are. Just tell us what you know and who you are as best you can.

This is important. Even if your standard application indicates that you would be great for the position, that information gets you nowhere unless you also provide it in your answers to the supplemental questions. Read the directions. The supplemental questionnaire specifically says, "Do not refer to resume or previous sections." So don't answer any question "see resume" unless you really don't want the job. Also, unless specifically requested, it is not necessary to include your resume.

Give detailed answers. You can only be judged on what you actually say. Your list of previous jobs and resume might be outstanding, but at Eugene Public Library, if you don't repeat the information in your answers to the supplemental questions, it doesn't get evaluated. Brevity is not always a virtue.

Neither is verbosity. Put yourself in the position of the person reviewing and evaluating the materials. It is not uncommon to receive over 100 application packets for one position. You want your knowledge, skills and experience to be well-organized, clear, and easy to evaluate—at the same time, you don't want the evaluator to assume anything about your credentials. Bottom line—if you don't tell us, we won't evaluate it.

Think creatively. How does your non-library experience relate to what the library is asking for?

Toot your own horn, point out your successes.

You can count on being asked about your experience with diversity. Think broadly. How is understanding of, experience with, and curiosity about human diversity related to working in a public service environment? There are many, many areas of diversity within a community and within the community a library serves. Don't limit

yourself to racial perceptions. Tell us about the classes you've attended as well as your work experience, life experience, etc., and how this experience has broadened your ability to serve a diverse population.

Ask a trusted person to read your application. Are you showing the library the very best you have to offer? Ask someone who is good at details to proof read everything; your spelling checker won't ask whether you meant council or counsel. Just as an Olympic gold medal can be won by a fraction of a second, a misspelled or misused word might be the one point that separates someone who isn't interviewed from someone who is.

The interview process

Congratulations! You've been called for an interview! Pat yourself on the back, and now it's time for more preparatory work. Ask the person who called you whether there is some specific person who can answer your questions about the library and the position you are applying for. Find out as much as you can, so your interview answers can be as relevant as possible.

It is fairly standard with any City of Eugene job interview that you will be facing a panel (or maybe two) of people who take turns asking you questions from a prepared list. As you answer the questions, keep in mind that these people are starting you with a blank slate. You do not come into the interview with a score based on your application answers. Some people on the panel may not have even seen your application or resume. Your application got you to the interview; the interview evaluation is based entirely on what you say today. Just as when you answered the supplemental questions, it is okay—even preferable—to repeat yourself from one question to another, if appropriate.

See *Getting a Job* page 36



The future of public libraries—any changes?

Lots of changes. Of course, the hard part is that mostly it is unpredictable (hence the need for flexibility, curiosity, new learning, etc). Frankly, I think we need to decide what our battles will be—can we really compete for the attention of adults who don't have kids? Do we segment adults into populations based on things like language needs/literacy or tech skills/access? Should we assume that our "bread and butter" customers (families w/young children) will, for the foreseeable future, consume our books and programming in much the same way they do now (not an unreasonable assumption IMHO). It all comes down to resources and how we choose to distribute them.

—VAILEY OEHLKE
Deputy Director,
Multnomah County Library



Management Bliss:

The Unexpected Joys of Being a Library Manager

by **Pam North**
Library Manager,
Sherwood Public Library

bliss (blis) *n.* Extreme happiness; ecstasy.


OK, so maybe “bliss” is a little extreme but it sounds so good! Regardless, I believe you can find happiness as a manager—you just need to know how to go about it.

Many of us enter the field of librarianship with a specialization in mind—youth services, technical services or reference, for example. But regardless of specialty, those of us who stay in libraries for any length of time find we are in a management role at some point our careers. The dilemma this can pose is that we usually have entered the field with little or no educational preparation for management. Some of us may have gained management experience through a prior profession but for those of us who relied on library school, well, most of us are lacking when it comes to being prepared to manage.

For those of us who daydreamed through Library Management 101, there is hope. By developing a certain level of enthusiasm and an aptitude for management, it can become fulfilling. Rachel Singer Gordon writes in her book “The Accidental Library Manager,” that by combining existing skills and knowledge with the willingness to learn and grow in management the foundation for a successful career can be created.

Since many of us are drawn to librarianship because we value being of service it seems reasonable that we can adjust our vision of service to focus on a larger scale—beyond helping a single patron to helping the entire library. Management allows us to do exactly that. With our existing skills and knowledge we can adapt to the tasks of management that may not come naturally or easily to many of us. These tasks can (and most often will) include the following:

- Supervising staff
- Ensuring adequate maintenance of facilities and technology
- Establishing goals and objectives
- Evaluating people, services and processes
- Representing the library
- Preparing/presenting training
- Making decisions
- Having difficult conversations
- Dealing with conflict
- Managing personnel issues
- Attending/presiding over meetings
- Understanding municipal government and politics
- Making policy
- Public speaking
- Long term planning/visioning
- Budget preparation, presentation and management
- Statistical analysis
- Data gathering
- Measuring performance and outcomes



Areas with growth potential in librarianship

Youth services and early literacy. Services that help build a community of readers and learners. Services that improve access to resources will also grow. This includes making information easily available via the Web and teaching users how to access and evaluate information. This also includes improving access to groups less well served because of language, age, disability or other barriers.

—PETER LEONARD
Executive Director,
Cedar Mill Community
Library Association

This is by no means an exhaustive list of management responsibilities but it is our willingness to learn about them and grow comfortable with them that determines our success as a manager.

Librarians don't usually gravitate toward the field because of our love of mathematics, public speaking, conflict management or long-range planning. What we can do is try to direct the passion we have for librarianship to these new areas—finding ways to combine our love of research with math, for example. I know I've said, "I'm a words person not a numbers person" hundreds of times. Yet I have been able to harness my uneasiness with math so that I can successfully prepare and monitor a budget, run statistical reports for analysis, and predict circulation trends. When we look at numbers in the context of what they really mean for the library (enhanced funding, improved agency support, clearer community understanding) they become less daunting.

Librarians are inherently generalists and we usually possess a good deal of common sense—two attributes that can be very helpful as a manager. By trusting our common sense and using the knowledge we have acquired from the many different areas we touch every day, we can tie together our "librarian" and "manager" traits for a challenging yet rewarding experience.

Management allows us to grow in the profession in unexpected ways. In working with (and for) the community we may have the occasion to do public relations and marketing, plan and implement fundraising opportunities, and advocate for the library. As a "face" of the library we will be expected to act as host or hostess and to help build community by being active in local endeavors. Communication is key as we tend to

relationships in the community and greater vicinity. Although public speaking may be one of the most intimidating activities (I understand "stage fright" is the #1 fear in America) after one or two or twenty times, it becomes much less terrifying.

The area where a manager can have an enormous positive impact is with the library staff. The way in which you manage people largely defines their attitudes toward their work, which in turn defines how smoothly the organization runs (Gordon 2005). As managers we can help staff find meaning in their work—and meaningful work translates into motivated employees. Coaching and mentoring can be tremendously satisfying, benefitting both the staff and the profession as a whole. Through appropriate delegation, managers can balance and make the most of the differing abilities staff members. Trust the staff—when people are allowed to do their jobs without overt control they more likely aspire to excellence and to take on new challenges, managers need to remember that. Open communication with staff is vital—be willing and able to provide information to the staff and be open to the information they can provide to you—and be ready to act on what the staff tells you (Gordon 2005). It is important that we respect the library staff and offer our support. By recognizing employees' good work and celebrating successes, the entire library can resonate with those successes.

Through the hiring process managers have the opportunity to bring new life and new perspectives to the library staff. And by actively recruiting, training and welcoming volunteers the library is enhanced.

Managers may have a hand in collection development and programming. Through both collection analysis and by keeping up



Advice for new librarians

Do something to make yourself unique. Develop expertise in a new or emerging area and market your abilities. This will help you stand out from the crowd.

—DONNA REED
Library Director,
Portland Community
College Libraries




with trends in the community the manager can help guide the direction of the collection to best meet the community's expectations. Designing programs and developing projects that reflect the community interests also can be a gratifying aspect of a manager's duties.

Facilities and technology often fall into management's bailiwick. Keeping yourself educated about the technology and facilities you manage helps operations run smoothly. It's possible that you may be part of a building project—expanding, renovating, or constructing a library can be extremely rewarding. Determining future space needs; designing a facility and working with consultants, architects, and construction crews are all areas that library managers may find themselves.

As managers we have to remember to tend to ourselves. Not by taking advantage of our "lofty status" by taking privileges but by always thinking about ways to reenergize ourselves and our energy for our careers. Sometimes the satisfaction of seeing a project succeed, a staff person blossom or a new

program prosper is more than enough to keep us excited about our work.

Beta Phi Mu, the library and information studies honor society selected the motto, *Aliis inserviando consumidor*, meaning "Consumed in the service of others" to honor the dedication of librarians to the service of others. Once you attain a management position in libraries you don't have to lose that dedication—you have the opportunity to create and manage a culture of service to others in your library.


Management is not all about paperwork and problems—rather it offers the ability for us to have a positive impact on our library and its collection and services, the staff, the community, and ourselves. By taking on a management role in your library we give back to the profession and influence the future of libraries and librarians. 

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Part Time Librarian

Continued from page 7

tion for librarians who want a job (or jobs) that offers variety and flexibility. And if you ever meet me, you'll understand why I may cringe a bit when you ask me where I work, but that won't stop me from encouraging you to try part-time work—I can honestly say it's been a lot of fun and a worthwhile adventure for me. 

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The future of librarianship and how to keep up

We need to stop trying to turn our patrons into mini-librarians and provide tools and services that make sense to them, not ones that only make sense to us.

—AARON SCHMIDT
Director,
North Plains Public Library




What Else Can I Do

Continued from page 21

managers” because I emphasize needs and processes over rules and procedures.

Since “information” permeates all aspects of our world, the applications for an MLS are boundless. An important element to remember if we expand our job hunting outside of the traditional library world is to detail our skills in the “lingo” of the field we wish to enter. With creativity and a little

entrepreneurship, we can direct our skills to a limitless array of job possibilities. 

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The “Social” Way to Learn

Continued from page 25

In the six weeks following the conclusion of our program, fully 75 percent of staff used at least one Web 2.0 tool in some facet of their work other than helping patrons. Blogging was the most popular tool, but wikis, social bookmarking sites book-related sites weren't far behind.

The highlight of my work year and this will make me much more effective in my work.

—MCL CLERK

Learning 2.0 worked for us. If your library hasn't tried it, we recommend that you do. You are almost certain not to regret it. If you do go ahead, I hope we've shared some lessons we learned that you might find helpful. If you've already been down

this road, then perhaps this article will cause you to think about your unique experience just a little bit differently.

As library professionals, we need to be as current as possible on the latest technology trends and tools. This project was an excellent use of resources. My staff are now more knowledgeable and confident in these areas and contribute to the overall knowledge base of the library and are better equipped to serve customers.

—MCL SUPERVISOR



References

MCL's Learning 2.0 Program can be found at <http://www2.co.multnomah.or.us/learning/>.



Getting a Job

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Most importantly—listen to and respond to each question as if it is the only question being asked, clearly, thoroughly, concisely. As with your application materials, give detailed answers. Again, brevity is not always a virtue; neither is verbosity.

Now this is easier to say than do, but try to relax enough that the interview panel can see your real personality. If you are presenting yourself as something other than your real self, you might end up being miserable in a position you really dislike, because the interviewers thought you would fit.

And if you don't get hired this time? It doesn't mean you're a bad person or that you're not qualified. Sometimes the final decision is very difficult, choosing between two or three people who would all do an

excellent job. Perhaps this time you didn't show the library that you have exactly what they need for this particular position—fluency in Swahili, perhaps. I won't tell you how many times I applied for librarian positions here before I was hired.

If your favorite part of librarianship is reference work or working with children, consider applying for a Library Assistant III or IV opening. While these positions don't require the MLS degree, they do give you the opportunity to have much of the public contact work that many of us love. They also help you build up experience for future librarian openings.

On the other hand, maybe this job would have been a bad fit for you. Some grapes actually are sour, and your sweet job may still be waiting elsewhere for you. 





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