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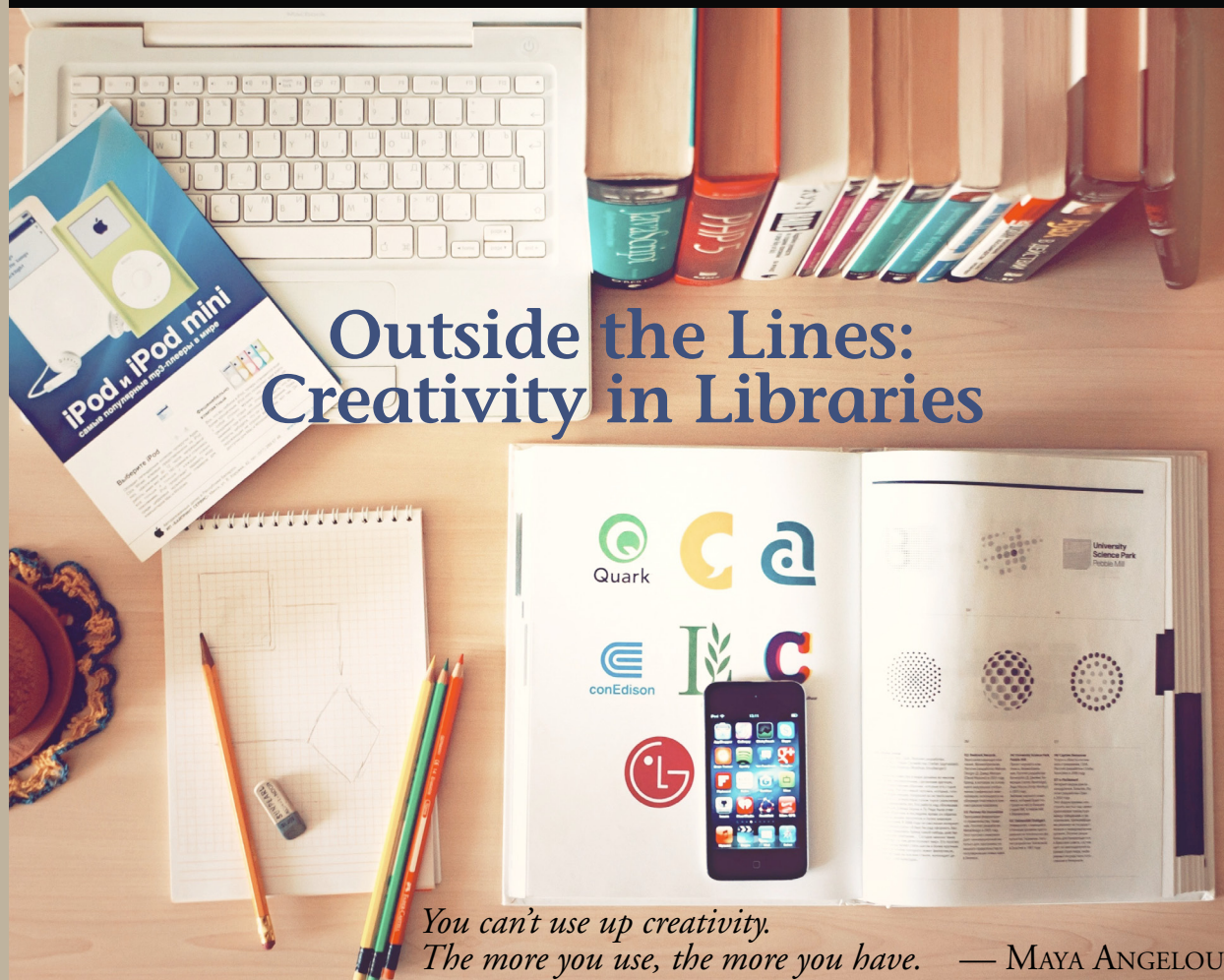
Outside the Lines: Creativity in Libraries

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Outside the Lines: Creativity in Libraries

*You can't use up creativity.
The more you use, the more you have.* — MAYA ANGELOU

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Please refer questions and input regarding the *Quarterly* to:

Sara Kelso
OLA Quarterly Coordinator
Adult Services Librarian,
Tigard Public Library
sara.kelso@gmail.com

Graphic Production:
Tobias Weiss Design
7345 SW Deerhaven Drive
Corvallis, OR 97333
phone 541-738-1897
julie@tobiasweissdesign.com
www.tobiasweissdesign.com



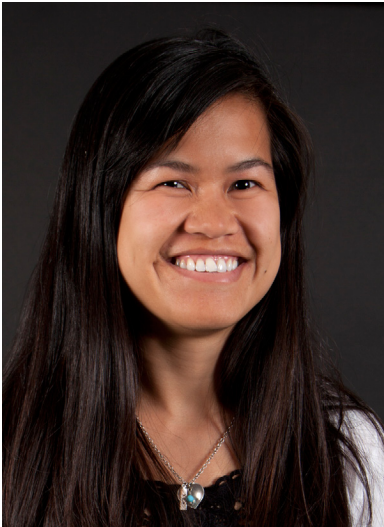
Outside the Lines: Creativity in Libraries

**Upcoming
Issue**

Fall 2014

*Library
Support Staff*

Introduction



Ngoc-Yen Tran
Outreach & Student Engagement Librarian & Global Scholars Hall Library Commons Manager, University of Oregon
yentran@uoregon.edu

Ngoc-Yen Tran is the Outreach and Student Engagement Librarian at the University of Oregon. She received her MLIS from the University of Washington iSchool and her BA in English and BA in art history from Willamette University. Yen's job is multifaceted, including: creatively managing a small residence hall library, building and sustaining campus partnerships, collaborating with international studies department students and faculty, and developing opportunities that engage students with the UO Libraries and librarians. Yen enjoys crafting and the outdoors.



Serenity Ibsen
Technical Services & Archives Librarian, Charles Voorhies Fine Art Library, Pacific Northwest College of Art
sibsen@pnca.edu

Serenity Ibsen, Technical Services and Archives Librarian at Pacific Northwest College of Art, has a BA in Art History and an MLS. Serenity's library passions include user experience, scholarly communications, and digital initiatives. Most of year, Serenity helps develop tools for students at PNCA and serves as library liaison to the BFA, MFA, and MA Thesis students. She's an amateur archer and mycologist who almost exclusively reads science fiction.

Ambiguity. Unknown. Gray area. These are common words that we have been hearing in librarianship and will continue to hear as libraries and librarian roles continue to change and evolve. Often, these words are paired with creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, and inventiveness when determining how to best meet our challenges.

“Creativity” is not an easily definable word, but within the context of an occupation or field of study, creativity can be defined as “an attempt to propel a field from where it is to wherever the creator believes the field should go” (Sternberg, 2006, p. 95). Robert J. Sternberg in his “Nature of Creativity” article goes on to say that there are eight types of creative contributions that can be made within a field at any given time; the ones seen in library discussions and in practice have included: redefinition (attempting to define where the field is but from a different viewpoint or perspective), advance forward incrementation (moving the field in the direction it is already going but beyond where others are ready for it to go), and integration (integrating two formerly diverse ways of thinking into a single way of thinking) (2006, pp. 96–7). We have seen these concepts manifested as libraries become cultural spaces and makerspaces, places that loan out unconventional materials such as seeds and equipment, and librarians integrating business and marketing practices to bring awareness of library resources and services to patrons.



Richard Florida sees the influence of creativity on our economy, especially with the rise of what he calls the Creative Class, the group of people who are contributing to economic and societal growth through their imaginative skill or originality of thought. Florida states that, “In virtually any industry, from automobiles to fashion, food products, and information technology itself, the winners in the long run are those who can create and keep creating” (2002, p. 5). He also points out that creativity is multidimensional and should not be limited to the creation of new inventions, products, or firms. Instead, he says that creativity can take on many forms including revisions, enhancements, or new processes (2002, p. 5). In this ever-changing world of new technologies, economic fluctuations, and evolving user needs, creativity enables libraries to more agilely adapt. Adaptability is the key to remaining relevant and fulfilling our missions, and creativity allows us to have a more holistic view in achieving this.

For many who study creativity, there is also the belief that creativity is valuable and should be cultivated (for those working in all fields or occupations). Steven J. Tepper and George D. Kuh in “Let’s Get Serious About Cultivating Creativity” for the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (more details in the “Creativity and Advocacy” article in this issue), they articulated that, “creativity is cultivated through rigorous training and deliberately practicing certain core abilities and skills over an extended period of time” (2001, para 6). Amongst these practices include: the capacity to bring people, power, and resources together to implement novel ideas, and the ability to approach problems in non-routine ways using analogy and metaphor (2001, para 6). Innovative approaches to spaces, service, programs, and our own professional development will also empower our users to explore their own creativity.

So how have libraries or librarians been creative? In this issue of the *Oregon Library Association Quarterly*, we wanted to showcase the creative, inspired, and imaginative ways librarians are emerging from the stacks, stepping out from their traditional roles, and thriving in our (currently) ambiguous workplaces. Ross Betzer’s article highlights divergent thinking as a technique for more creative reference services, Amanda Meeks offers suggestions for unconventional conferences that will inspire us to remix librarianship, Jey Wann asks if the music we listen to sparks our creativity and productivity, Jane Nichols describes non-routine thinking with for the Oregon Statewide Database Licensing Program, and Candice Watkins links the connection between creativity and advocacy with a novel idea.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the articles in this issue and get inspired to think outside of the traditional library box! Additionally, if you have worked on a project or activities that sparked patron interest, creativity, and curiosities, or transformed your library in a creative way, we want to hear from you! Please send us a short description about anything from makerspaces, doing outreach to unconventional groups like the homeless or with student life departments on college campuses, training library student workers or volunteers to be peer-to-peer instructors, spearheading digital initiatives, engaging in different kinds of social media practices, etc. We want to learn from you and to transform our libraries and library practices in positive ways with your ideas!

—Serenity Ibsen & Ngoc-Yen Tran

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Consider the Fishmonger: *Creativity and Divergent Thinking at the Reference Desk*

by **Ross Betzer**

Information Services Librarian,
Multnomah County Library
rossbk@multcolib.org



Ross Betzer is an information services librarian at Multnomah County's Central Library, where he has also previously worked as a library page and library assistant. His current project areas include virtual reference, staff training, copyright, and intellectual freedom.

Mindy stared at the computer screen, her brow furrowed and her fingers tugging at an earlobe. The requirements for the travel form spiraled around the Word document like a white collar Möbius strip. If she could only figure out the approved reimbursement request rate for a mid-morning snack when travelling to a destination in the Midwest, she would finally be able to attend the annual Reference & Research conference.

She heard a cough, looked up and saw a patron standing in front of her.

"Hi!" Mindy said. "What can I help you with?"

"Um," the patron, a young man, said, "I need to know some statistics about, uh, salmon fishing."

"Okay," she replied. "Is this for a project that you're working on? Could you tell me more about how you were hoping to use the information that we find?"

"Uh, sure. I'm worried about the effects of fishing on salmon, and so I thought I'd start by seeing just how many fish are being caught. I've just been hearing a lot about salmon on the news lately, and I'm kind of concerned.

"Okay. Have you ever used The Statistical Abstract? Let me show you how it works."

When we are helping patrons at the reference desk (or at any location in the library), we do not always think creatively. We use the resources that have worked for us in the past, and we expect the reference transactions to follow a familiar pattern. Because of that, they usually do - but maybe they do not have to. By making an effort to bring creativity and openness to every customer interaction, we can increase the chance that our patrons will get the responses and resources that are specifically useful to them. It is the reference and customer service equivalent of the second of Ranganthan's Five Laws of Library Science: "every person his or her book" (1931, p. 75). By deliberately choosing to use creativity and divergent thinking when we assist patrons, especially when identifying resources for a patron in the reference environment, we improve our work and the level of service that is received by our patrons.

"Creativity" is a large, messy concept with a tangled history and an ever-evolving definition. A brief encyclopedia entry in the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* provides a good summary of views on creativity going back to antiquity: it has been successively linked with conceptions of divinity, madness, and craft and artisan traditions (Simonton, 2005, p. 495–496). For 20th century theories about creativity, Robert Brown gives a complex but fairly concise summary of them in the opening chapter of the *Handbook of Creativity* (1989). Be warned, however,



Brown frankly states that he is not going to answer the question “What is creativity?” in his single chapter (1989, p. 3). I will certainly not attempt to define the term creativity in this article. However, one particular tried-and-true theory and measure of it which can be useful when analyzing reference or other customer service interactions is the idea of “divergent thinking.” Conceptualized by the influential mid-20th century psychologist J.P. Guilford, it is a method for measuring creativity by analyzing a “response to questions with no obvious, singular answer” (Kaufman, 2009, p. 12). A question without an obvious, singular answer? That will certainly sound familiar to anyone who has worked at a library reference or information desk.

In *Creativity 101*, James Kaufman describes and summarizes the four components of Guilford’s divergent thinking: *fluency* (the total number of responses provided when faced with a question), *flexibility* (the number of unique categories of responses provided, rather than variations on the same response), *originality* (the number of responses which others did not provide for the same question), and *elaboration* (the thoroughness and complexity with which responses are identified within different categories) (Kaufman, 2009, pp. 12–15).

Going back to the example at the beginning of this article, Mindy clearly did not demonstrate a fluent, flexible, original, or elaborate response to her patron’s question.

It has been established in Brenda Dervin and Patricia Dewdney’s classic article on neutral questioning that each patron, and each patron’s information need, is unique (1986, p. 507). As a consequence of this, the useful response or responses to each patron will also be unique, based on the patron’s question, their personality, and the specific situation in their life. The patron in the above example is looking for fish statistics because he is personally concerned about the effect of fishing on salmon species: this is a very different information need from that of an elementary school student doing a report or a college professor working on a research project, even if they might start with the same initial question (“I need to find statistics on salmon fishing”).

One way to get closer to a patron’s true information need is through a thorough and skillful reference interview (and there is certainly much creativity involved in that activity!) For an excellent and practical work about reference interviewing, I recommend *Conducting the Reference Interview: A How-to-Do-It Manual for Librarians* (Ross, Nilsen, & Radford, 2009). However, in this article I am focusing on the part of the interaction after the reference interview: the time when you must decide what it is that you will give the patron. It is a good opportunity for some divergent thinking.

(The patron just told Mindy that he wants statistics on salmon fishing because he is concerned about the well-being of that fish species. Mindy’s mind raced and adrenaline kicked in as she faced this question with no obvious, singular answer. But then she remembered that, like with every question, she needs to be creative, go slow, and try to think of anything and everything that might help this patron.)

“Okay,” Mindy said, “that’s a great question! I could show you a reference book called *The Statistical Abstract* which is a great place to get started finding statistics, but there might be some other things that would help you with this question, too.”

“Really? Like what?”



“Well, one idea would be to look for any current books about fishing or about salmon – in fact, I think I just heard an interview on the radio the other day with an author of a new book about the effects of commercial fishing: Fished to Death. It sounded really interesting!”

“That sounds pretty good . . .”

“We could also look for articles about this subject: the library has lots of databases we can use to search for articles that might have appeared in all sorts of magazines, like Science, or Nature, or The New Yorker.”

(The patron seemed uninterested in the option of magazine articles. Even as Mindy offered these resources to the patron, she continued thinking of other sources that might be useful.)

“And here’s another idea for you,” she said. “We might be able to find a local organization that works with salmon conservation or the fishing industry. Do you think that might be helpful?”

“That would be awesome!” The patron began getting visibly excited. “I hadn’t even thought about trying to find something like that!”

“Great! I bet we can find a few organizations or government agencies that specialize in this sort of thing. Even if they don’t have exactly what you need, they might have more suggestions for where you can go next. And you know what, there’s even a library in Oregon which focuses just on fish and aquatic-related data for the Northwest. And here’s a crazy idea: I wonder what we would find out if we talked about this with someone who runs a fish market?”

Much better! In this second example, Mindy demonstrated each of the different aspects of divergent thinking. She offered a large number of suggestions (*fluency*), making sure to do so slowly and with the patron’s permission. She thought of different kinds of resources, from books to articles to government agencies to other libraries (*flexibility*). She offered authoritative reference sources like *The Statistical Abstract*, but she also was not afraid to try suggesting something a little bit unusual like talking to a fishmonger (*originality*). And, although it is not included in the text of the example, we can imagine that Mindy probably went on to spend some time making a list of local fish-related organizations and talking with the patron about how he might approach them (*elaboration*).

While it is true that in some cases the obvious resource might be the exact thing that the patron needs, it does not hurt to test the waters and try offering something else. Patrons have widely varying expectations about what the library offers and what kinds of service they can get at the reference desk (if they even know about the existence of library reference or information services). In many cases, their expectations might be quite narrow. For example, a large-scale 2005 study by OCLC found that 30 percent of respondents from the United States had never heard of online databases, and 48 percent had never heard of online librarian question services (De Rosa, et al., 2005, p. 158). When we are creative in our suggestions and our answers, we not only increase the chance that we will hit upon something useful to the patron: we can also expand the patron’s understanding of the services that the library has to offer.

However, a patron may not always be as excited as we are in finding more and more useful resources. It is important to regularly and frequently ask the patron for their permission to continue searching and brainstorming. One technique that can help with this is



explaining your thoughts and rationale to the patron, and then deciding together where to look next. For example, in a situation where the patron is fairly clear about wanting to find a book, you could say something like:

“Yes, let’s definitely look for a book about this. But just so you know, this also might be something where we could find a good article from a magazine or a journal – do you want to try looking there, too, after we check for books?”


Creative thinking is an important skill for everyone to utilize during reference and customer service interactions, but it is especially useful for new reference staff. Introductory trainings are a good time to present this concept. New library assistants and librarians at Multnomah County Library, where I work, take part in a training called Research Strategy. This training previously focused on the use and understanding of print reference sources, but it has since been modified to take a more theoretical approach to helping a patron with a research question. It acknowledges the fact that a staff member will spend the rest of their career continually gaining knowledge of tools and resources, and that it would be impossible to learn about every potentially useful resource before the first shift out on the reference desk. New staff can benefit immediately, however, by understanding the range of different types of information sources (in terms of format, content, and authority) and the importance of creativity (flexibility in particular) when considering all potential options for a patron.

Creativity does not have to be limited to just the reference desk: many, perhaps all, patron interactions are an opportunity for creative problem-solving. At Multnomah County Library, one of the service principles for all employees is a “Think Yes!” attitude: “We provide each patron with choices in products and services. We minimize the number of barriers and maximize the number of options” (Multnomah County Library, 2009, p. 1). A non-reference example of this could be that a patron has fines or other circumstances which prevent them from using a library card: a staff member can be creative in trying to find library services and resources to offer that patron which do not require a valid card, such as items to read within the building, library question-answering services, or referrals to other library staff or departments who might have more suggestions. Why should library staff “think yes”? It can make us better at our job serving patrons, and it can reduce stress (because we do not have to say “no” all the time and argue and defend a negative stance). Most of all, it is fun. Instead of customer service robots memorizing and parroting policies and procedures, we can be individuals who apply our creative minds to the task at hand. Every patron interaction can become different and unique.

There is no one way to provide good reference assistance or customer service. But, by making an effort to be creative and divergent in our thinking, we can go beyond responses to the patron that are merely competent and sufficient. We increase the chance that we will find a fantastic resource to meet their particular information need and information situation, and we might even offer them something that they had never before considered. We can have fun and challenge ourselves with each and every reference question.



Time for some homework! Although I have hopefully persuaded you that creativity is an important skill to use in your interactions with patrons, I have not presented any techniques for becoming more creative. That will have to be the subject of a future article (perhaps after I learn what those techniques might be). In the meantime, here is an exercise with which to practice your divergent thinking. You can do this by yourself or (better yet!) with a partner or group of co-workers.

1. Think of a type of reference question that you receive frequently, and then recall (or just make up) a specific question of that type. Write it on a piece of paper.
2. Make a list of possible resources which you might offer to a patron who has this question. Include different formats, different physical or virtual locations, and different levels of depth or authority. Try to come up with as many ideas as you possibly can, no matter how out-there some of them might be.
3. Look at the list of resources that you identified, and think about whether, in sum, they represent a response that is fluent, flexible, original, and/or elaborate. If you're doing this exercise with others, compare and discuss your different ideas.
4. Consider how you might go about suggesting all these ideas to a patron without completely overwhelming them. 

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Creative Conferences for Librarians Round-up

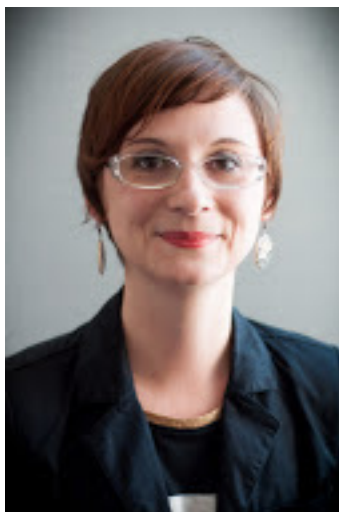
by **Amanda Meeks**

*Outreach & Instruction Librarian,
Chicago School of Professional
Psychology*

&

*Reference & Instruction Librarian,
City Colleges of Chicago*

amanda.margaret3@gmail.com



Amanda Meeks is currently part of the reference, instruction, and outreach teams at two academic libraries in Chicago, IL. She serves as the volunteer Outreach Coordinator at Chicago's Read/Write Library. She is also a visual artist, educator, and crafter. Her passion for library outreach, professional development, community, and creativity drives her pursuits and keeps her very busy.

To say that librarianship is a non-creative field is utterly untrue; librarians are some of the most creative people I have ever met and anyone who has attended at least one library conference will know as such. It is safe to say that creativity does not happen in a bubble, we absorb ideas and experiences and then let them transform us and our libraries. We, as library professionals, inspire each other but we also find inspiration in some unlikely places when we step outside of the norm. Naturally, we have interests outside of our day job. We explore subject areas, technology, music, the world of organizational psychology, visual resources, etc., to hone those varied interests, learn from professionals outside of our field, to relate better to the patrons we serve, and to find new ways to engage users with our collections.

Conferences allow us to openly share ideas so that others may adapt, expand, and combine them with other concepts and tools at hand to reach new, interesting outcomes. Almost any library-specific conference you attend will offer programming with creativity and innovation in mind, as those are certainly hot-ticket topics in librarianship right now.

While there are countless library conferences (and unconferences) to take advantage of locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, the following events have more to offer in terms of creative, participatory programming and conceptual engagement. Many of these events focus on specific types of librarianship, such as zines and fashion, while others focus on emerging technologies and innovation more generally. They also range in size, price, location, intended audience, and some are grassroots operations while others are offered by well-established professional organizations.

Mark your calendars and next time you have professional development funds to spare consider one of these amazing conferences—even if it falls outside of your typical job responsibilities!

In Order of Occurance:

Fashion: Now and Then Conference

Time: October 23–25, 2014

Place: New York, NY

Website: <http://lim.ent.sirsi.net/client/fnt>

Summary: The Fashion: Now and Then Conference explores past, present, and future uses of information and technology in fashion. Participants and attendees range



from the professionals in the fashion industry, libraries, archives, academic institutions, publishers, collectors, and museums. This year's conference will focus on the evolution of fashion information and technology with a broad spectrum of topics and ideas presented. Whether you have collections of materials, textiles, ephemera, or rare books dealing with fashion this may be a niche conference worth attending.

International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) Conference

Time: November 5–8, 2014

Place: Toledo, OH (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.vislit.org/welcome/>

Summary: Hosted by the International Visual Literacy Association, this conference brings in researchers, university and K-12 educators, designers, media specialists, and artists dedicated to the study and practice of visual literacy. IVLA defines visual literacy as “the ability to derive meaning from images of everything that we see—to read and write visual language.” This year's theme for the three day conference will be *The Art of Seeing: From Ordinary to Extraordinary*. If you work with images of any kind, artists, or are at all interested in learning about visual literacy, this would be an incredibly useful conference.

OpenEd2014: Open Education Conference

Time: November 19–21, 2014

Place: Washington, DC (in a different location each year)

Summary: If you want to get creative with educational resources, including creating, adapting, and sharing, then this is a unique opportunity to join the global movement around open education. This year's conference program includes several educators, librarians, and institutions who are using open educational resources to drive and support their curriculum. Ultimately, open education (which includes MOOCs, open textbooks, learning tools, and more) provides ample opportunities for lifelong learning and many academic and school librarians are already immersed in this topic.

College Book Art Association (CBAA) Annual Conference

Time: January 9–10, 2015

Place: Claremont, CA (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.collegebookart.org/>

Summary: CBAA is the organization that supports and promotes academic education in book arts through developing pedagogy, practices, teaching, scholarship, and criticism of the genre. This year's conference will focus on the history of book arts and artists' books through programming and presentations, small-group discussions and break-out groups, exhibits, tours, and committee work. This conference would open up ideas for anyone working with artists' books in any library or museum setting by providing ideas for programs and events. It is also a great opportunity to think about collection development in this area if it is appropriate for your institution.



i2c2: Innovation, Inspiration, and Creativity Conference

Time: Early March, 2015

Place: Manchester, UK

Website: <http://i2c2conference.org/>

Summary: The tagline of i2c2 is “using positive disruption to improve libraries”, which sounds a lot like creative problem solving and innovative organizational change. Their blog states, “Overall, the insights we took from the conference were to seek out opportunities for collaboration, to consider any and all ideas, even if only for a second (before asking yourself, really?), and to be open to change and innovation. If/when this conference takes place again, it really is worth attending.” Based on this statement, I would recommend keeping an eye on their website to find out if the conference will be offered in 2015.

Visual Resources Association (VRA) Annual Conference

Time: March 11–14, 2015

Place: Denver, CO (in a different location each year)

Website: http://vraweb.org/conferences_page/

Summary: VRA is a multidisciplinary, creative (yet very scholarly) organization dedicated to furthering research and education in the field of image management within the educational, cultural heritage, and commercial environments. The conference offers a great deal of programming dedicated to image collections, digital media, and collection curatorial duties. With several breakout sessions, formal and informal meetings, presentations on topics ranging from social media to copyright, and networking opportunities, this seems like a great place to find future collaborators and ideas for that collection of under utilized images at your library.

SXSW: South by Southwest

Time: March 13–22, 2015

Place: Austin, TX

Website: <http://sxsw.com/>

Summary: Music, film, and interactive technology—this conference is not only on the cutting edge of all things related to those topics, but it is also exceptionally engaging and fun for attendees. Every community has music, film, and technology audiences and therefore, a need for these things in the library. This conference may garner new ideas for your community, regardless of size, location, and type of library. Registration is split (or you can register to have access to all three events), to help with the high cost of attendance.



Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) Annual Conference

Time: March 19–23, 2015

Place: Fort Worth, TX

Website: <https://www.arlisna.org/news/conferences/49-2015-conference>

Summary: ARLIS/NA is a professional organization dedicated to fostering collegial relationships and excellence in art and design librarianship and image management in North America. Conferences offer ample opportunities for networking, touring local art and library collections, programming that explores ideas such as visual literacy, rare books, artist and librarian collaborations, and issues facing art libraries and repositories. Art librarians and non-art librarians will have many take-aways from this conference. There are several scholarships available through regional chapters and the ARLIS/NA organization to help offset the cost of attendance.

Radical Archives Conference

Time: Early April, 2015

Place: TBD, institutions invited to host in a different location each year

Website: <http://www.radicalarchives.net/ra/>

Summary: This small conference was organized by a few individuals and presented by NYU's Asian/Pacific/American Institute as part of their 2013–2014 residency at A/P/A. According to the website the conference plays on the notion of “archiving as a radical practice, by which means: archives of radical politics and practices; archives that are radical in form or function; moments or contexts in which archiving in itself becomes a radical act; and considerations of how archives can be active in the present, as well as documents of the past and scripts for the future.” The organizers are hoping that another group of individuals and a host institution will emerge in order for this conference to continue in the future. If you are interested in organizing or being a part, please reach out through their website.

Annual Conference for the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

Time: April 23–25, 2015

Place: Philadelphia, PA (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.siop.org/conferences/15con/>

Summary: Are you interested in the scientific study of the workplace? This would be an excellent conference for anyone interested in leadership and management in libraries. From a business perspective, this conference and organization explores topics such as talent management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organizational development, performance, and work-life balance. Many librarians struggle in leadership positions due to a lack of training and mentorship in this area, but this conference could provide new insight that would alleviate this struggle.



Zine Librarian (Un)Conference (ZL(u)C)

Time: Mid-July, 2015

Place: TBD, institutions invited to host in a different location each year

Website: <http://zinelibraries.info/>

Summary: This is the conference for those interested in learning how to establish and cultivate a zine library. Topics range from starting a library, cataloging collections, programming and outreach activities, and collection policies or procedures. Zines are a newer realm for many traditional libraries, yet more and more zine collections are popping up. They present a host of unique issues as well as endless opportunities for public programming and engagement. The ZL(u)C is affordable, fun, and a hands-on opportunity to learn about the genre and how zines could enhance your collection or programming.

NEXT Library Conference

Time: September 12–15, 2015

Place: Aarhus, Denmark

Website: <http://www.nextlibrary.net/page/next-library-2015>

Summary: This annual conference will offer programming around the topics of library buildings, space design, civic media, social innovation, service design, play/gamification, the dark side of the internet, data, incubators for creativity & learning, and opposites attract, according to their website. Previous program schedules outline engaging events, discussions, and participatory workshops that focus on making the library a more interactive environment, new technology, and user-experience.

THATcamp

Time: Year-round

Place: International

Website: <http://thatcamp.org/>

Summary: “THATCamp stands for ‘The Humanities and Technology Camp.’ It is an unconference: an open, inexpensive meeting where humanists and technologists of all skill levels learn and build together in sessions proposed on the spot in an informal and participatory way.” These conferences are held all over and take place year-round. It is an inexpensive or free, open, productive, and usually one-day meeting. There are subject-specific camps (language, religion and theology, digital frontiers, etc.) as well as more general meetings hosted by several academic institutions. There is literally something for everyone with THATCamp, but if it does not exist, you can build it!



Without Music, Life Would Be a Mistake: What Oregon Library Employees Listen to at Work

by Jey Wann

Oregon Documents Coordinator,
Oregon State Library
jey.a.wann@state.or.us



I've spent my career at the Oregon State Library in a variety of roles: working in acquisitions, reference, circulation, and with Oregon documents. I've been active in OLA, most recently on the 2014 Conference Committee. I have a BA in music and communications from Linfield College. In my spare time, among other things, I perform in two early music groups.

Music has been called many things: the food of love, the universal language of mankind, the highest of the fine arts, the wine that fills the cup of silence. Nietzsche said life without music would be a mistake. Music surrounds us. It may be music we wouldn't choose to listen to, like the music in grocery stores, or while we're on hold on the phone. Or it may be music we seek out, whether from live performances, or from a number of different electronic sources.

This issue of the *OLA Quarterly* is about creativity. In this article, I'll take an informal look at how Oregon library employees use the creativity of others—music—while they're going about their daily duties.

I spend a good deal of my time at work listening to music. It's sometimes to block out office conversations when I need to concentrate, sometimes to block out the sound of the HVAC system, and sometimes to encourage me to work on a hard or dull project ("You can listen to Red Priest if you will work on this boring process document"). I've been listening to music at work long enough that I first used a Sony Walkman (yup, cassette tapes!). To gather information for this article, I posted the following questions on *libs-or*, the email discussion list for Oregon libraries:

- Do you listen to music at work?
- If so, on what device(s)?
- What kind(s) of music?
- While doing what?
- What is your job specialty or specialties?
- Other comments
- May I quote you in the article?

I didn't know what to expect: 10 responses? Hundreds? I was happy to receive 40 responses from folks in a variety of Oregon libraries (and even an Oregon native now working in a library in Massachusetts). The answer to the first question was a resounding "Yes." Only two people reported not listening to music at work: one because her library doesn't allow it, and one because of IT issues. Of course, it's quite likely that those who do listen to music at work were more likely



Jey's suggestions for non-soothing classical music:

Late Beethoven string quartets, especially the Grosse Fugue. If you can listen to them without feeling stressed, please check your pulse.

Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra. If you can listen to the last movement without laughing out loud, you may need to re-boot your sense of humor.

Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez. Lively Spanish music with a definite urban feel.

Anything by Gesualdo. Definitely the weirdest of the Renaissance composers. Chromatic, sometimes depressing, and rarely, if ever, soothing. Do not listen to if you are already feeling low.

to answer than those who don't. I had a pre-conceived idea of what the response would be when I posted the questions. What library specialty, I mused, requires the most attention to detail, and tends to take place away from public areas, where interruptions aren't common. Why, cataloging, of course! However, only three of those who answered the questions are catalogers. If I use the responses to construct the library person most likely to listen to music at work in Oregon, it would be a public library director or supervisor who listens to classical music on his or her computer.

Here's a closer look at what people listen to, and how they listen to it.

Put Another Nickel In

As with most of the responses, people listen to music on a variety of devices, and many respondents use more than one. Computers were the most popular (26), followed by phones (12). Other devices included MP3 players, Kindles, tablets, and CD players. Pandora is definitely popular with Oregon library folks. Jay Hadley (Multnomah County Library supervisor) says, "I love how I can hit 'thumbs up' on Pandora and hear more music like the track that is playing, or hit 'thumbs down' and never hear that track again. For free music it has a good degree of control." Other sources for music included Spotify, Grooveshark, and various radio stations.

Not all of the responses were totally serious. One respondent reported that he uses a picnic-style crank turn table to listen to Black Sabbath at 78 rpm while doing statistics.

Wagner's Music is Better Than It Sounds

—MARK TWAIN

Actually, no one mentioned Wagner, but they listed practically everything else! Many people said their tastes are eclectic and varied. Most people listed more than one type of music. As I mentioned above, classical music was mentioned most often. For some, that was generic category, although others were more specific. Mari Bettineski (Warner Pacific Tech Services Specialist) listens to Satie while cataloging. Elaine Goff (Willamette University Serials Specialist) listens to a variety of classical composers "... as long as it's not too intense or emotional like Elgar tends to be." Other mentioned classical as being soothing; see sidebar for my comments on that.

The range of music people mentioned was very broad. Ethnic and world music are popular, as is jazz, all variations of rock, new age, blue grass, blues, punk, dance, and house. The only piece of music to be specifically mentioned more than once was the soundtrack to *The Lord of the Rings*. Almost every respondent listed more than one kind of music.

A few people said they have to be careful with vocal music, since the words can be distracting when they're working. Jessica Rondema (State Library Executive Assistant) likes Arabic music "... because it is upbeat, but the words don't distract me, since I don't speak the language!" Joni Roberts (Willamette University Public Services Librarian) says "I mostly listen to instrumental music because if the music has words, I will be tempted to sing along!"

Some people listen to things other than music. A few people mentioned nature sounds as being relaxing. Other non-music mentioned includes white noise, BBC radio news, local police scanner, TED talks, and an actual water fountain. Amy Mihelich (WCCLS Cataloger) says "I've found that listening to stand-up comedy is a good way to get out of the post-lunch doldrums."



Some of Jey's faves you may not be familiar with:

Anything by Red Priest, a British baroque ensemble with a big attitude. Try *Red Priest's Vivaldi* to see what they do to the very familiar "Four Seasons." My favorite is their version of the La Folio Variations on *Nightmare in Venice*.

The Oregon Guitar Quartet. Innovative arrangements, from the classics to classic rock. Among my favorites are "Saint James Infirmary" and the world's best arrangement of "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair," both on *Something Wondrous Fair*.

Bach cello suites. Go beyond Yoyo Ma and check out recordings by Hekun Wu or Angela East.

Wood N Flutes. Difficult to find, but worth searching for: *Journey*; an eclectic mix of music from the middle ages to modern, played on low-voiced recorders.

Play It [bleeping] Loud

—BOB DYLAN

Many respondents mentioned that they always use headphone or earbuds, or are very careful not to play their music loudly enough to annoy their co-workers or library patrons. Christy Davis (Klamath County Library Directory) only listens to music after other staff have gone home. "I don't wear headphones," she says. "I'd have to take them out and put them back in a hundred times during the day—and I'd look unavailable."

There are some interesting exceptions to the keep-it-quiet rule, however.

John Reppinger (Willamette University Reference Librarian) has external office hours at Willamette's departmental student hearths. "I sometimes use music as a conversation starter with students," he says. "Once we're talking, I sometimes ask what they're working on and see if there's an "in" to help with their research. Plus, it is kind of neat to hear students' music selection and actually recognize the songs!"

Bob Jones (Milton-Freewater Library Director) has an even more out-going use for music at the library. Oldies Night @ the Library started 2006 to bring in people who would not normally visit. Bob has taken the program outside of Milton-Freewater: "Through Libraries of Eastern Oregon I have taken Oldies Night to a dozen other libraries in the state. In 2012 I gave a presentation on Oldies Night at Big Talk from Small Libraries, an online conference sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission." Directors of small libraries frequently wear many hats; Bob's includes being a disk jockey.

At the State Library, the Talking Books and Braille Services Division uses music to add energy to the workplace. On occasional slow Friday afternoons, they have Journey Friday; they use Pandora to play 1980's bands. In addition to Journey, "Working for the Weekend" by Loverboy, and "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N Roses are staff favorites. Joel Henderson (Talking Books Administrative Program Coordinator) says "it sparks conversations, promotes team bonding, and helps get you through those last few hours before you head home." And there may be air guitar or drumming involved. (There must be something about 1980s pop music and Fridays: Mari Bettineski reports that it frequently turns up on her Friday afternoon play list).

*Without music to decorate it, time is just a bunch of boring production
deadlines or dates by which bills must be paid.*

—FRANK ZAPPA

We've seen, informally, how Oregon library staff use music in a variety of ways in the workplace, especially to help them be more efficient and focused. What came through most strongly for me is how much people love the music they listen to, and how important it is to their lives. Bonnie Brzozowski (Corvallis/Benton County Library Reference Librarian) said "I would be lost without music at work. If I'm ever grumpy and counting down the hours until I get to head home, I put on a favorite tune and it boosts my energy and motivation."

Julie Wickham put it best: "Music and books make my life worth living!"

*Many thanks to all the people who responded to the libs-or post; I'm sorry there
was not room to include all the comments and playlists!*



Oregon's Statewide Database Licensing Advisory Committee Tries New Approach to Support Oregon Libraries

by **Jane Nichols**
Teaching & Digital
Humanities Librarian
jane.nichols@oregonstate.edu



Jane Nichols has worked as a librarian at Oregon State University Libraries & Press since 2003 where she focuses on teaching and digital humanities.

Proposal Overview and Background

Oregon State Library's Statewide Database Licensing Advisory Committee (SDLAC) recently announced a unique approach to supporting academic libraries. The SDLAC's role is to advise on Requests for Proposals (RFPs), typically resulting in one vendor winning a contract to provide content for all types of Oregon libraries. A one size fits most approach means some libraries' content needs, such as Oregon academic and K-12 libraries, are ill-fitting. In an attempt to address this, the SDLAC recommended working with the Orbis Cascade Alliance (The Alliance) to off-set the cost of its group subscription to Ebsco's Academic Search Premier database package. This came about as a result of the 2014 statewide database contract being awarded to The Gale Group, Inc. with highly favorable terms and because the Committee sought new ways to meet academic libraries' content needs rather than persisting in a one-size fits most approach. The recommendation to partner with The Alliance in support of Oregon academic libraries mirrors another SDLAC recommendation: that the State Library explore partnering with the Oregon Department of Education to meet the K-12 community's need for a general encyclopedia. This article shares a short overview of how and why the SDLAC changed its thinking about the Statewide Database Licensing Program (SDLP)'s structure.

The SDLAC's primary aim is to make recommendations about the SDLP. The SDLAC advises on the drafting of requests for proposal, reviews proposals, recommends database(s) to license, and advises about cost allocations. As a committee of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Advisory Council, the SDLAC submits recommendations to the LSTA, which, in turn, advises the Oregon State Library Board of Trustees. Once the Board passes a recommendation, State Library staff acquire electronic resources using LSTA State Block Grant Program funds.

Previously, from 2005 to 2009, the SDLAC worked to meet as many users' content needs as possible through a single vendor approach. At that time the Program's contract was awarded to Gale/CENGAGE Learning and LSTA funds not only provided for a 50 percent subsidy for academic and public libraries but also fully funded school and tribal libraries. In 2009 the contract was renewed and LSTA funding of just under \$400,000 fully subsidized all 22 Gale/CENGAGE Learning databases. LearningExpress Library was added the following year.



Surveys Inform RFP Process

To inform the most recent Request for Proposal SDLAC members distributed two web-based surveys to ask constituents' about their content needs and to gather their input for the RFP process. Surveys were conducted January 2012 and March 2013. The first survey inquired about content needs at a broad level and asked whether respondents felt a single database model still meets their needs. The majority recognized Oregonians disparate content needs and that relying on a single database or vendor can only meet these needs to varying degrees. In other words, librarians totally get that one size fits most.

The second survey asked how constituents would rank categories of content. The categories were informed by the 2012 survey responses and a ranking exercise done by SDLAC members. Another objective of the March 2013 survey was to gather more feedback about the database funding model, would constituents prefer more expensive database(s) where libraries contribute to the cost or less expensive database(s) available to all libraries for free? The March 2013 results, summarized here, truly guided the SDLAC as they developed the RFP. Results led the SDLAC to construct the RFP around the ranked content categories. Constituents ranked general periodicals as the most important category for the statewide program to make available and the majority responded that they preferred to have less expensive database(s) that would be available to all libraries for free over more expensive ones where their library would contribute to the cost.

Table 1: March 2013 Summarized Results

Question 2: Please rank the following categories of resources in order of importance to your library to have available through the Statewide Database Licensing Program. (1 = the most important, 7 = the least important)	
General Periodicals	3.02
Research/Reference Resources	3.54
Career, Job and Computer Skills Resources	4.07
Newspapers	4.10
Contemporary Issues Resources	4.18
Peer Reviewed Journals	4.49
Ebook Collections of Nonfiction Books	4.60
<i>answered question</i>	258



Table 2: March 2013 Summarized Results

Question 5: Electronic resources vary significantly in cost, and funds available for statewide licensing are limited. If the Committee had to choose, which of the following options would you prefer?	Response Percent	Response Count
More expensive database(s) in which your library may need to share in the cost.	39.1%	90
Less expensive database(s) that would be available to all libraries for free.	60.9%	140
Other (please specify)		40
<i>answered question</i>		230
<i>skipped question</i>		35

RFP Process

In addition to being guided by the survey results, the SDLAC reviewed previous RFPs as well as RFPs from Washington and Idaho to see how they handled diverse content and audience needs. The committee discussed at length, with significant input from the State Procurement Office Department of Administrative Services (DAS) representatives, how to organize the RFP and ultimately decided to create four categories of database packages: 1. General Periodicals; 2. Academic Journals; 3. General Reference; and, 4. Contemporary Issues Reference Material. State Procurement Office representatives recommended a key structural change from previous RFPs: vendors were allowed to submit proposals to one or more content categories allowing the State to offer the contract to one or more vendors. No more than one award would be made per category, though one vendor could be awarded more than one category and vendors who proposed in multiple categories would earn points. Evaluation included the awarding of points across two rounds followed by points awarded based on a cost scoring and points for multiple category offers. If needed, and in the State's best interests, further rounds of evaluation were allowed. The SDLAC hoped this approach would create flexibility to help meet Oregon libraries' distinct content needs.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Statewide Library Database Packages was issued in June 2013 and during late summer and fall 2013, the SDLAC conducted several rounds of evaluations. DAS representatives conducted an additional round asking for a Best and Final Offer option. This last round resulted in revised cost proposals from the three top scoring vendors: The Gale Group Inc. reduced their price by 23 percent, ProQuest LLC by seven percent and EBSCO Industries, Inc. by four percent making The Gale Group Inc. the successful proposer. While all vendors met the basic criteria established in the RFP; their costs (and proposed products) differed significantly as seen in this table. Despite scoring criteria weighted to emphasize content, price was still a significant factor in part because OSU is committed to providing the resources at no cost to smaller libraries and has been trying to



provide resources at no cost for school libraries. (Public libraries with a service population of less than 20,000 and any academic library with an enrollment of less than 1,000 will be subsidized in full by the State Library.)

Table 3: Best & Final Offers

Best & Final Offers	
Vendor	
EBSCO Industries, Inc.	\$974,100
ProQuest LLC	\$372,074
The Gale Group Inc.	\$350,000

SDLAC Recommendation

The Committee recommended that the State Library move forward with negotiating a contract with The Gale Group, Inc. for the Statewide Database Licensing Program recognizing this would meet basic, though not all, information needs in Oregon. SDLAC further recommended that if contract negotiations resulted in significant cost savings, that it would identify additional resources to pursue to benefit the academic community. Thus, the recommendation to explore opportunities to partner with the Orbis Cascade Alliance to provide such a resource was devised. The SDLAC developed this recommendation in response to academic librarians previously stated concerns about their constituents content needs not being met by The Gale Group, Inc. database suite, unlike products such as EBSCO Industries, Inc. SDLAC hypothesized that off-setting even just a small portion of the cost for academic libraries to participate in the Alliance’s contract with EBSCO would help those libraries. As of summer 2014, not only is this strategy being pursued but, four of the seventeen SDLP libraries that were not already participating in the Ebsco package signed up to take advantage of the subsidy. With a contribution of \$50,000, the subscription cost for all of the participating libraries will be lowered by nine percent per library in the upcoming fiscal year.

During RFP evaluations, the need for a general encyclopedia product to support the K-12 library community became evident. In response, OSL staff suggested a possibility of partnering with the Oregon Department of Education to secure an encyclopedia and is now exploring this.

In the coming years the SDLAC may consider other approaches. Other statewide database programs have also recognized that one suite of databases may not meet their constituents wide-ranging content needs, some have decided to focus on funding periodicals or ebooks while others prioritized by user group, such as the K-12 community. These and other questions, such as “In three years, what resources do you hope to see in the Statewide Database Licensing Program?” were discussed during a presentation given at the 2014 OLA Conference (slides available on NW Central here: <http://tinyurl.com/pdrvwph>).



SDLAC Members

The SDLAC's ten voting members, who serve for three-year terms, represent all types of Oregon libraries. Two new members begin their term this summer: filling Position #1 representing public libraries serving under 25,000 people is Kirsten Brodbeck-Kenney from Driftwood Public Library (Lincoln City) and in Position #2 representing academic libraries from the Oregon University System is Emily Miller-Francisco from Southern Oregon University. Returning to serve in Position #3 (OASL Membership) is Garnetta Wilker, now retired, formerly of Portland Public Schools. Stephen Cox of Salem-Keizer Public Schools serves as the Chair; he sits in Position #6 which represents school libraries drawn from the OASL membership. These voting members are joined by three non-voting members who link to key organizations including the LSTA, The Alliance and the Organization for Educational Technology and Curriculum and by three Oregon State Library staff.

All constituents are welcome to contact their representative to learn more about the program or voice their thoughts, contact information is at: <http://www.oregon.gov/osl/LD/Pages/technology/sdlp/index.aspx>. If your library does not currently participate in the Statewide Database Licensing Program or if you have questions about this initiative, please contact Arlene Weible, Electronic Services Consultant at arlene.weible@state.or.us or 503-378-5020.



Creativity and Advocacy: In Libraries I Believe

by **Candice Watkins**
Library Director,
Clatsop Community College
cwatkins@clatsopcc.edu



I focus on managing a community college library that strongly supports student learning, particularly with information literacy. I'm also interested in building bridges with community partners to raise the visibility of my library and make positive changes in the community.

The term “advocacy” is an ambiguous one. It’s used by all types of institutions and organizations in our society vying for support, engagement, and funding, so much so that it tends to lose its edge and meaning. Many times an organization advocates through its legislative representatives on various levels; sometimes through engagement of a community through social media; and most of the time the best advocacy occurs on a daily basis as librarians and paraprofessionals pursue daily activities in a consistent and effective manner. Advocacy, therefore, throws a wide net, which points to the definition of the term. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the verb: *advocate, v.* To call, summon, invite.

So, the question, then, is what does advocacy mean for the library profession? How do we best and most strategically call, summon, and invite our diverse audiences to support libraries? These are important questions that we strive to answer as individual professionals and as a group of professionals in the state of Oregon. Library advocacy is an active endeavor, one in which we engage on a daily basis, one that often pushes us beyond our daily boundaries, and one that includes many approaches—legislative, community-based, educational, service oriented, and more. Advocacy also wants and needs creativity in order to thrive. Stephen Tepper and George Kuh (2011) discuss the nuances of creativity in their *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, “Let’s Get Serious about Cultivating Creativity.” They state, “Creativity is not a mysterious quality ... Rather, creativity is cultivated through rigorous training and by deliberately practicing certain core abilities and skills over an extended period of time.” Tepper and Kuh (2011) further describe these skills as:

- the ability to risk failure by taking initiative in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty;
- the ability to heed critical feedback to revise and improve an idea;
- a capacity to bring people, power, and resources together to implement novel ideas; and



- the expressive agility required to draw on multiple means (visual, oral, written, media-related) to communicate novel ideas to others.

In the quest to tie creativity to advocacy in a meaningful way, I, along with some colleagues, embarked two years ago on a creative, community project intended to advocate for libraries and librarians in my community on the north coast of Oregon. The benefits of the project, which I refer to as *In Libraries I Believe*, were plentiful on the community level. Overall, though, the project confirmed for me that there is no one way to advocate. True advocacy can take many forms and some of the most effective advocacy projects are happening at the local level. These creative, collaborative projects add to the other strong works of advocacy around the state to transmit a diverse and yet unified message that libraries are ever present and strong in our communities.

Project Formation

Two years ago, the Oregon Library Association Executive Board formed an Advocacy Taskforce to explore advocacy in our professional organization. I was privileged to be included on the taskforce led by then OLA President, Michele Burke. Through the many brainstorming sessions, we discussed various modes of advocacy and the need for creative approaches and projects that would resonate with a broader community, whether school administrators, city councilors, or just regular community members. The seeds were thus sown for my project—*In Libraries I Believe*. This project was to be an audio project, capturing and recording stories about libraries and librarians from community members and piecing them together into a story arc about the value of libraries in a community—think NPR and *Radiolab* or another catchy radio show for comparison. The stories could then be accessed as podcasts online and, perhaps, transmitted on local, community radio. But, how would I take this from idea to fruition?

I needed partners and I needed a strategic vision. I drew inspiration from a non-profit organization called The Center for Story-Based Strategy (CSS), and its work with “truth” and “narrative.” CSS describes truth as being the research and data that support an advocacy effort. All too often, even the most compelling truth is ignored by the very audience it targets. The message just doesn’t resonate. Narrative, on the other hand, translates into meaning and how it can successfully strike a chord in an audience. Narrative goes beyond the telling of a story. In order to create true narrative, the work must be collaboratively based with two or more organizations working together to communicate a message through various mediums. This creates a shared narrative that is more powerful than a mere story. The Center for Story-Based Strategy (2013) describes a successful advocacy campaign as containing both truth and shared narrative.

Shared narrative is such an important component in successful advocacy—to find common ground with other professions or community entities and use those common goals to combine efforts and communicate a message. I have a full-time job, a family, and outside responsibilities. I knew that if I were to be successful in such a robust project, I would need to create a shared vision between my home library—Clatsop Community College Library, Coast Community Radio: KMUN, and the Oregon Library Association’s Advocacy Taskforce. With the shared narrative between these organizations as my foundation, I would then elicit, record, and tie community members’ stories together with the truth, or research, about the impact of libraries and librarians on communities. Finally, I would work with



KMUN radio to edit the pieces and produce two radio segments to highlight the role of libraries and their professionals in our community.

Shared Narrative

My narrative: I wanted a project with broad appeal, one that would speak about libraries in a captivating way and appeal to a broad array of community listeners. In particular, though, I wanted to find a way to break through stereotypical ideas of what libraries and librarians are and do. The trick, I understood, would be to do this through others' voices, not mine; and that would take patience, the right approach, and a little luck.

KMUN's narrative: KMUN Coast Community Radio is vibrant local radio. It has diverse programming and large community support with over 15,000 listeners tuning in each week. When I reached out to Kathleen Morgaine, KMUN's Senior Morning Edition Host and Producer, she expressed the desire within KMUN to have a stronger bond with Clatsop Community College, my employer. So, the connection with KMUN was mutually beneficial. I found facilities, equipment, and expertise for recording and editing, as well as a medium for publication and communication. KMUN, on the other hand, found a bridge to the college and, perhaps, the beginning of more creative projects that would appeal to its listeners.

OLA's Advocacy Taskforce: Both my goals and KMUN's overlapped nicely with the ideas of OLA's Advocacy Taskforce. The Taskforce was looking for a creative advocacy effort—one that was local, community-based, and could appeal to the people in a community.

Collection of essays

My partner at KMUN, Kathleen Morgaine, and I decided initially to model our project after the NPR series, *This I Believe*, which records people's personal beliefs and showcases them on public radio. Similar to that series, we asked people to write a brief essay based on their personal beliefs and/or experiences with libraries. We released the call for participation to the community in September 2013 with specific guidelines for the essays, based on the *This I Believe* (2014) prompts. In general, we reminded people of the following:

1. **Tell a story:** Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real.
2. **Be brief:** Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That's about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.
3. **Be positive:** Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.
4. **Be personal:** Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.



The press release went to all press outlets on the North Coast. The deadline for entries was set for the beginning of December 2013.

Reality and Alternative Approaches

As the essays began rolling in, I realized that I would have to alter my approach to finding the “right” stories that could create an appealing story arc. While all of the essays were heartfelt and authentic experiences with libraries, most fell into the same category of: libraries = books = good. In other words, they were boring. If this project was to appeal to a diverse audience, I would need to find more diversity of experience, more diversity of perspective, more diversity ... period.

I decided to expand the boundaries of my vision for the project by reaching outside of the library discipline and my immediate community. I contacted Donna Lanclos, an anthropologist employed by the J. Murrey Atkins Library at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. Like librarians, Donna is interested in how people search for and engage with information; however, she approaches it from the anthropological perspective. She discusses her work on her blog, the *Anthropologist in the Stacks*, which expounds on the basis for her research—the Visitors and Residents (V & R) project, a project that she and colleagues have worked on for the past several years. I thought that because of her similar and yet different approach to looking at the same issues she would offer valuable feedback for my project.

She didn't let me down. First, she was very kind and generous with her time and in sharing her perspective. I shared that I wanted, in particular, to find a way to talk about school libraries with students and teachers without eliciting the stereotypical response: libraries = books = good. I wanted to get to the heart of the matter: students need licensed school librarians to properly teach information literacy, a set of abilities that is essential to being college, career, and life ready. Donna suggested that I interview some high school students and draw upon the list of questions that she and her colleagues used in gathering information for their V & R project. You can view the questions in her article, “Visitors and Residents: What motivates engagement with the digital environment?” She also suggested that I interview the students without telling them of my true profession. This would help avoid the stereotypical response.

I followed her advice and got some amazing results. For example, one of the teens, Rachel Speakman, was incredibly savvy about the need for information literacy in her education. No, she did not describe it in those words—*information literacy*—but she hit it on the head in all other ways. Listen to Rachel's interview here as she describes her take on the use of technology and need for more guidance in using information. Note: the questions that I use are from the V & R project although I do alter them slightly.

Rachel Speakman, Astoria High School Student

Listen to Rachel's interview: <http://lrc.clatsopcc.edu/sites/default/files/file/Rachel.mp3>

I combined Speakman's interview with a high school teacher's interview. Together, the student and teacher told the same story with different words: technology is not the issue—education is. We need help in teaching and learning how to use and interact with the information world. In other words, both student and teacher felt that they needed more support for information literacy education, i.e. the usual domain of a school librarian if employed in a school. In my recordings, I combined these narratives with the “truth” or research about the



impact of school librarians on learning in the K-12 environment. The combined result was ideal—an authentic narrative about the educational gap in our schools, a gap that could be bridged with the employment of school librarians.

In deviating from the project’s original plan of solely collecting essays to, instead, mixing essays with interviews, I brought much needed life, depth, and perspective to the project. I have Donna Lanclos to thank for that.

The final mix of essays and interviews included seven voices from the community interspersed with the context that I provided. The community members included:

- Isaiah Mohr
a young man serving time at the Oregon Youth Authority in Warrenton, Oregon
- Rachel Speakman
a student at Astoria High School
- Jessica West
a teacher at Warrenton High School
- Alison Ruch
a teacher and writer in Astoria
- Drew Herzig
a city council member
- David Mooney
a homeless man who frequented the Clatsop Community College library during the summer of 2013
- Bob Pyle
renowned nature writer and lepidopterist

Editing and Publishing

My partnership with KMUN was integral to the editing and publishing of the project. I did not have the time, skills, or facilities at Clatsop Community College to properly edit and publish this project to a wide, community audience. Kathleen Morgaine at KMUN provided assistance with all of these aspects. While I did most of the recording and edited the interviews down to key blocks, she pieced them together with music and final editing touches. She also found space in KMUN’s programming for the shows and promoted them. The shows aired over two consecutive weeks on KMUN’s *The Bridge*, a weekly half-hour program which has a listenership of over 3,000. Overall, the project would not have come to fruition, been as polished, or been as widely disseminated without Kathleen’s expertise and KMUN’s willing partnership.

Lessons Learned

My deadline for this project pushed me to the finish line. The end result was a solid project that met the initial goal: to create a project with a shared vision that communicated to a broad community audience the value of libraries to a community. The effort that went into this project has and will come back tenfold. A community like Astoria thrives on local, community networks. It values community voices that are passionate about diverse things, whether art, politics, or fishing. This time the community voiced its passion for libraries—and it worked! I’ll use this success as a springboard for future advocacy efforts in my community.



For those interested in emulating this project in other communities, here are some lessons learned along the way.

1. **Form partnerships:** Community partnerships are key and the effects are long lasting. My KMUN partnership was central to this project in giving me partners with expertise, technology, and the proper facilities for an audio project. My connection with KMUN also laid the foundation for future projects. I intend to work with Kathleen Morgaine on more audio essays in my Honors 101 Inquiry class that I teach in fall 2014. Students will publish their works on the radio. Community partnerships pay forward.
2. **Reach out:** Reaching out to colleagues pays off. Donna Lanclos' perspective added much needed depth to the project. I also connected with Char Booth, Librarian at Claremont College in California. Char was also gracious with her feedback and, in general, just knocking around some ideas. These conversations, though, helped me to shape the project. My point is that our colleagues—like both Donna and Char—both took the time to talk with me because they are sincerely interested in furthering the interests of libraries. Their feedback was invaluable.
3. **Take risks:** It may not be perfect, but creating and pulling off a risky project is fulfilling. Also, it's ok to be ambitious about a project. The more community partnerships that you form, the more realistic it is that you can successfully undertake an ambitious project; and, again, the benefits of those partnerships will last far beyond the project itself.
4. **Stretch beyond your immediate environment:** As a community college librarian, I focus mainly on students in the first two years of college. Because of the perfect storm, though—Governor Kitzhaber's 40-40-20, Common Core Standards with high standards for information literacy, and a drastic reduction of licensed school librarians to teach information literacy in K-12—I have to stretch my boundaries and become more involved in local schools and in advocating for strong school libraries. An advocacy project such as *In Libraries I Believe* can be used for this purpose, capturing narratives that point to the need for strength in this area.
5. **Ask for support from your professional community:** Ask OLA for support of your project. The request doesn't have to be for funding; it can be for OLA Association "buy-in" or backing of your project. Knowing that OLA supports creative advocacy efforts not only gives you confidence in moving forward but it says to your community that a broad base of library professionals in the state Oregon supports your efforts. This backing strengthens what you do.

To view and listen to all of the interviews, visit the *In Libraries I Believe* webpage at Clatsop Community College Library, <http://lrc.clatsopcc.edu/content/libraries-i-believe>.



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OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2014

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Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 20 • No. 3 Fall 2014	<i>Library Support Staff</i>	September 1, 2014	October 15, 2014	Margaret Harmon-Meyers

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