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Photographers love those precious late-afternoon moments when colours and shadows create dramatic contrasts. They call it the magic hour. It is a time when photographers pay close attention to their surroundings.

I have been a librarian for 34 years. I am in the magic hour of my career – sunset is both a promise and a threat, although some clear daylight remains.

Here are some magic-hour thoughts I’d like to share.

1. **There is a great deal of talent emerging in our profession.**

   I have spoken to, listened to and shared meals with many young Canadian librarians during the last year. I always remember an evening, decades ago, when I had dinner with one of that era’s lions. The more he drank, the more he began to predict the demise of the public libraries. His prediction had nothing to do with technology or demographics or use patterns. It centred squarely on the indisputable fact that the enormous talent he and his colleagues apparently possessed could never be replaced.

   He was wrong, of course.

   One of my clear thoughts, based on the past year’s experience, is that the future leadership of our profession is in good hands. There are many talented people poised and ready to take us in exciting new directions.

   This thought comes with a caution. During the past 20 years, demographics dictated that senior managers tended to grey at their desks. I hope these past 20 years have not altered our image of what makes a good leader. Leaders do not have to be exceptionally experienced or to have patiently waited for their time to arrive.

   I expect and hope that we will see more libraries with senior leaders who are younger than the staff they manage.

2. **Repetitive jobs will continue to disappear.**

   When I started as a librarian, staff manually checked returned books for holds, called customers when material arrived, needled Recordak cards, hand-stuffed overdue notices (weeks after the fact), carefully added and pulled cards from the catalogue, and engaged in normal office activities like typing letters. These jobs have almost completely disappeared.

   According to technologists, almost any repetitive job can and probably will be automated. We all need to review the skills of our staff and help them to adjust.

3. **Beware the numbers. They are creeping back.**

   One of my listservs monitors chatter between the directors of large North American public libraries.

   There has been a recent surge of inquiries and comments about the need to prove our worth by increasing traditional, numbers-based service measurements. Such messages often state that politicians want to see these numbers increase so they can validate our worth.

   Although many libraries, including my own, are experiencing unprecedented increases in traditional activities, I hope we do not see a return to a need to justify our worth based on traditional measurements.

   I adore the OCLC studies and none has been timelier or more useful than the very recent *From Awareness to Funding* (available for download at [www.oclc.org/reports/funding/default.htm](http://www.oclc.org/reports/funding/default.htm)). OCLC’s study makes it clear that the public will continue to value libraries so long as we are seen as providing services capable of transforming people’s lives.

   Sometimes the quest for numbers and the need for such relevance clash. When they do, I hope that relevance wins. In my magic-hour-affected mind, the public’s perception of our worth, based on the value they put on the services they receive, is even more important than our perception of worth based on the numbers we collect. 🌞
Associations are complex organisms. At their worst, they are convoluted, unresponsive, archaic, underachieving creatures which foster a sense of frustration and then apathy amongst the membership, and ultimately succumb to their own inertia. But at their best, they are dynamic, vibrant, creative environments which nurture consistent development and build on past successes to ensure a stable base on which to expand and respond to diverse member needs.

Because of their governance structures, associations can seem somewhat cumbersome. They have established constitutions and bylaws, and decisions are taken by consensus, which is made more difficult when members meet only infrequently. Association leadership, due to considerations of geography, circumstance and the need for these individuals to perform their day jobs, is challenged to react to situations quickly and to be proactive in addressing both the external pressures and the internal needs facing the professional community.

Associations continue to exist because of volunteers. Large associations, such as CLA, require a paid staff to coordinate and support their many activities. But the real work of the association – the policy decisions, the advocacy stances, the professional development opportunities, the creation of professional standards – this is all the responsibility of the volunteers. Associations rely on individuals to be generous of their time and their expertise. People may give these to their associations because they recognize the need to help the development of their profession, to repay the support they get from others in the community, and to mentor a new generation of professionals.

**A win-win proposition**

There are many ways to play a volunteer role in your association, and as many reasons for doing so. You can stand for election to CLA and its divisional governance positions, become an interest group convenor, or join a committee or task force. Association work allows you to take on tasks that may be quite different from your day job, providing an opportunity to develop new skills and expertise which can, in turn, be used to help you move forward in your career. Volunteer roles are a form of continuing professional development, as well as a forum for testing new ideas.

Much of the work of volunteers is often unacknowledged, or even unknown, by the wider community. Any volunteer with expectations of fame, glory and financial reward will likely be disappointed. But the work is vital, and the reward is great. It is found in the skills you develop which land you that next great job; in the networks of professional colleagues which provide friendship and support; in the opportunities to acquire expertise which you may share with the national and international professional community.

We have just concluded the 2009 election process for CLA governance, and we are now in the process of recruiting volunteers to the various CLA committees. We owe a great debt of thanks to all of those members who are now ending their terms of service; and equally we owe thanks to those who are now stepping forward to fill those vacancies. We are also indebted to employers across the country who provide their staff the opportunity and support necessary to take on volunteer positions.

As a community, we must continue to take on the challenges of volunteer roles, and we must continue to recognize the essential work of our volunteers. We will celebrate the spirit of volunteerism.
Evaluation

For most people not well versed in information technology, evaluating staff or projects seems almost impossible. Unfortunately, too many people give up the struggle and simply trust – in staff, consultants and vendors. While all these people may be reliable, they cannot provide overall direction and leadership. Leadership requires setting goals and evaluating performance, results and outcomes.

Whether for internal or external use, a clear evaluation framework should be set jointly with staff. If senior staff are available, they can establish the benchmarks and review them with management or the board. Management’s role is to consider the benchmarks and measures from a “reasonableness” perspective. Are they understandable? Are they too easy or too hard to achieve? Are they closely related to organizational goals?

A generic framework

To assist in developing a sense of “reasonableness,” following is a generic evaluation framework that can be adapted to any organization. Larger organizations can expand on each category to address the various types of staff, services and equipment they employ. Smaller organizations can set a few measures or evaluation criteria in each category.

1. Budget and Cost: All organizational units must stay within budget; however, the budget must be carefully set to take into account the proper costs of services and equipment. Staff should be required to analyze costs and provide forecasts that balance requirements and available resources. If resources are insufficient, options must be presented – for example, multi-year implementation or reduced requirements.

2. Ability and Workload: The main reasons for missed objectives are overestimating ability and increasing workload to accommodate additional deliverables. Particularly, evaluations must take into account staff turnover, acknowledging the ramp-up time new staff need to begin new jobs. Objectives should be modified if staffing issues affect workload projections, because changes in staff ability may affect more objectives than only those in the IT department.

3. Alignment and Integration: IT exists only to serve other functions. Achieving IT objectives in isolation from others is overly simplistic and may be counterproductive. Through formal and informal methods, management must make itself aware of the alignment of IT with all other library functions. This could be done through a survey or through discussions at management meetings. IT serves best when it is integrated with all functions and when staff communicate well with staff in other departments.

4. Processes and Service Levels: Best practices show that the IT department should have solid, repeatable processes for a large portion of its work. Vast amounts of help are available for designing these. A large organization could investigate ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) standards. A small organization can find simple templates and inexpensive advice through an Internet search. With defined processes, defined service levels can follow, and measurement of adherence can be implemented. Both IT and the organization as a whole benefit because expectations and results can be aligned.

Evaluating IT can be achieved through good management practices, even if the evaluators are not thoroughly familiar with technology. Technologists can explain themselves clearly and should be required to do so. The best technologists are excellent communicators and will welcome the opportunity to express their ideas through the evaluation process. Furthermore, the consistent practice of evaluating staff and projects will develop better communication skills in rising stars.

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Information literacy matters! That point is increasingly being made for a range of contexts and clientele. Successful employment, citizenship and even daily decision making hinge on the ability to access, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively, efficiently and ethically. In the past decade information literacy has come to prominence in Canadian librarianship, not only in the academic library context, but also increasingly in public libraries. School librarians, too, have a long tradition of incorporating education for “research skills” into primary and secondary education curricula.

Responsibility for information literacy instruction does not lie solely with librarians, however. School teachers, university and college instructors, and even parents have a responsibility to develop and improve their own skills and to assist others in their information literacy journeys. We have a long way to go. Currently many children and adults still have much to learn; a decade spent doing quick and dirty Google keyword searches does not result in sophisticated information literacy understanding or skills, and confidence with a keyboard is often not matched by demonstrable skill and understanding.

My interest in information literacy lies in my background in education and library studies. So it’s not surprising that I endeavour to instill sound pedagogical understanding and enthusiasm for instructional work in my MLIS students, and that the majority of my research over the past 15 years has focused on information literacy in the Canadian context – how it’s being conceived, how instructional work in academic and public libraries is being delivered and evaluated, and how those with responsibility for information literacy instruction experience their educative roles. It is heartening to observe the degree to which information literacy has become a focus of interest and effort in librarianship over those 15 years.

The articles in this special issue of Feliciter represent a range of perspectives on information literacy, including a look back at historical roots, and our struggles with new ways of interacting with technology and with one another. Several authors (Jennifer Branch, Cory Laverty, and Sarah Polkinghorne and Cameron Hoffman) tackle challenges in the Web 2.0 environment. Cory Laverty, for example, explores the evolution of our conceptual understandings of information literacy as these have evolved over time. She points us in fascinating new directions that are bound to test our assumptions and our pedagogy. Elsewhere, Pia Russell reminds us of the importance of information literacy instruction based on sound pedagogy drawn from relevant work across disciplines. Finally, Nancy Goebel and Judy Peacock highlight the importance of evaluating the outcomes of information literacy instructional work. Together, the articles bring into sharp focus the significance, and the challenges, of current information literacy thinking and practice.

An unfortunately common assumption is that young people, many of whom bring substantial technological experience to their academic work, are competent information seekers, evaluators and users. Such confidence is belied by their actual skills and understandings. Librarians are needed, more than ever, to guide people who are confident in their information skills toward more sophisticated information interactions. As the articles in this issue demonstrate, we have every reason for confidence that there will continue to be outstanding information literacy instruction and concomitant success in Canadian libraries. We have a more challenging road, I suspect, as we work to convince policymakers and funders of the importance of this work.

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Over the past two decades, librarians have reflected on the meaning and complexity of information literacy. What are its competencies? How do people learn them and how do we teach them? What do you emphasize in your own teaching?

Reflect for a moment on what you think it means to be information literate. One of the most commonly cited definitions originates from 1989, even though it preceded widespread use of the desktop PC and public access to the web: “To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (ALA, p. 1).

The concept of information literacy has evolved in many unexpected ways in the last 20 years apart from the revolutionary changes in the information landscape and its technological foundation. What follows is a selection of ideas and perspectives that have helped me better understand our information literacy heritage and its future.

Waypoints

In the 1990s, librarians struggled to understand and communicate the notion, scope and boundaries of information literacy. Information literacy was frequently dismissed as a set of simple skills that learners acquire without instruction. Our evolutionary path reveals waypoints when educators tried to uncover the layers of information literacy. Carol Collier Kuhlthau formalized her Information Search Process between 1983 and 1994 to bring us a conceptual research-based framework that maps behavioural, cognitive and affective responses to the stages of inquiry learning. She stated that the act of inquiry extends our thinking beyond superficial searching to in-depth exploration and analysis of information.

Today many models of the inquiry process offer a visual and conceptual understanding of information skills in the context of problem solving. Consider the Research Process model by Stripling and Pitts (1988), the Big Six formulated by Eisenberg and Berkowitz (1990) or the Ontario School Library Association (2009) research model used across the Ontario K-12 curriculum. Information literacy involves executing a process and drawing on a mindset of approaches to help us solve problems.

In 1995, the introduction of the World Wide Web spurred revolution by its ubiquitous availability and volume of information, and it was a disruptive event for definitions of information literacy. Access to so much serendipitous information called for more careful searching and screening of resources. Information literacy became reoriented toward thinking skills rather than straightforward computer skills. The extensive use of computers led to the integration of computer and reading literacy. At this pivotal stage, Shapiro and Hughes (1996) questioned how to describe the information competencies necessary to function within an information society. Their answer was that information literacy should

### Figure 1. Overview of Seven Facets of Information Literacy by Christine Bruce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information technology</th>
<th>Use of technology for retrieval and communication.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information sources</td>
<td>Knowledge of sources and access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information process</td>
<td>Strategies used to find information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information control</td>
<td>How information is managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge construction</td>
<td>Building personal knowledge base in a new area of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge extension</td>
<td>Working with knowledge and personal perspectives so novel insights are gained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Using information wisely for the benefit of others.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
be conceived of as “a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural, and philosophical context and impact.” Shapiro and Hughes challenged us to articulate information literacy as a distinct subject in its own right with its own unique curriculum. Information literacy involves thoughtful analysis of the context and ultimate application of information in society.

Christine Bruce (1997) extended our thinking about the components and impact of information literacy by mapping it into seven categories. The seven facets (Figure 1), derived from conceptions of information literacy in higher education, describe how we experience and interact with information in real life. The result is a relational and holistic model of information literacy as opposed to a behavioural one based on a series of actions and skills. Information literacy is constructed through authentic experiences across a range of dimensions that must be developed collectively.

Ben Schneiderman (2003) asks “what’s on Leonardo’s laptop?” in his examination of how technology should enable learning. The stages he describes (Figure 2) illuminate new dimensions of information literacy triggered by novel information technologies. Read/write tools such as Flickr, wikis, blogs, webpages, podcasts, YouTube, Facebook and MySpace offer media for the creation and donation of information resources for global sharing. Information literacy involves collaboration and social interaction directed at building and sharing information in many formats. This “democratization of data” blurs traditional boundaries between information sources and consumers.

David Warlick (2004) describes 21st-century literacy in a model that moves from the 3Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic) to the 4Es (exposing knowledge, expressing ideas, employing information, and ethical use of information) (Figure 3).

The literacy skills he identifies reveal how the “traditional literacies” have converged in the digital environment to encompass information literacy skills. Information literacy involves deconstructing media, online text and statistics; conveying information visually; managing digital resources; manipulating information to solve problems; and ethical use of information.

Other official definitions of literacy, such as the one by the National Council of Teachers of English (2008) highlight this convergence (Figure 4) and the emphasis on collaborative and cross-cultural information gathering, creation and sharing. John Willinsky (2008) further unravels the notion of ethics in his Seven Rights of Information Literacy (Figure 5).
Dane Ward (2006) encourages us to re-envision information literacy as a path to personal understanding that can change our inner life and the world around us. Being information literate requires more than the ability to work analytically with information; it also demands that we know how to interpret and internalize information in creative and meaningful ways.

"[I]nformation literacy instruction will increasingly emphasize other ways of understanding information, and ... this will include teaching students about personal engagement and self-knowledge" (Ward, p. 398).

However, this view of information literacy portrays a cloud that is both expanding and ascending. It has gone from fairly simple skills, to include more analytical skills, to include IT skills, to include broadly strategic (and complex) skills, to include media-savvy skills, to include ethical and interpersonal skills, to include creative and meta-reflective skills. This is a pretty tall order.

Information literacy can empower us to shape and transform thinking. Nevertheless, the information technologies that have brought us so much have also changed our engagement with the information universe. Consider these news stories: “Dumbed down: The troubling science of how technology is rewiring kids’ brains” (George 2008); “Are our brains becoming Googled?” (Hotchkiss 2008); “Is Google making us stupid?” (Carr 2008). These are worrying trends. Williams and Rowlands’ (2008) comprehensive review of student search behaviour revealed that it is unsophisticated and uninformed. With the rise of a Google generation, we see a cohort that has inherited the “I’m feeling lucky” syndrome.

Does simplified searching change the questions we ask? Will YouTube outstrip Google as a learning tool when visual digestes allow us to avoid reading?

My Wordle conglomeration of the ideas in this paper captures something of where we are now, but not where we need to go. The words “inspiration” and “learning culture” are not there yet. 🌊

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Cory Laverty’s interests focus on the evolution/revolution of what and how librarians teach. As Head of the Education Library at Queen’s University, in Kingston, Ontario, she contributes to online courses and classes on inquiry learning and educational technology.
In January 2008 a revealing study on the information behaviour of young people was released by researchers at the University College London. Among the findings was the claim that implementing information literacy pedagogy at the post-secondary level was likely too late to be of value to learners: “...intervention at university age is too late: these students have already developed an ingrained coping behaviour: they have learned to ‘get by’ with Google” (Rowlands, p. 23).

Many post-secondary practitioners who value an information literacy framework would agree that there exists a significant gap in the information competencies that students demonstrate during the high school to university transition. However, is it really too late to introduce students to the idea that the critical and effective use of information matters to their academic success? Should librarians and instructors simply throw up their hands and give up?

This study prompts an important question: how relevant is teaching information literacy in post-secondary education today?

Information glut

As the Teaching and Learning Librarian at a medium-sized comprehensive university, I coordinate many of the library’s educational initiatives. Course-specific library instruction that incorporates information literacy has historically been one of our leading service priorities. When I meet with instructors throughout campus and discuss with them problems surrounding the information-seeking behaviour of their students there is little disagreement that indeed their students struggle with critically and effectively using information. Some of these problems are best articulated by instructors themselves:

• Students lack an understanding of what constitutes good-quality scholarly information.
• Students have difficulty evaluating the glut of information available, and to cope they frequently depend on quick but questionable sources, like Dictionary.com, which can result in a blind acceptance of advertising-based information, or sources that depend on a truth by consensus approach such as Wikipedia.

Furthermore, libraries, publishers and vendors do not always make it easy for users to solve their information needs. With a dizzying array of interfaces and search methods, students easily abandon the system of academic information available through their institution in favour of more intuitive sources like Google Scholar.

Convincing instructors of a shared challenge is easy; they are so embedded in the frontlines of the problem. However, if my colleagues and I depend too heavily on outlining an information literacy based solution through the introduction of library-centred approaches, such as the Association of College and Research Libraries’ standards and guidelines, instructors are easily overwhelmed with jargon-rich details or deterred from the approach entirely, as they view it as too confined to librarianship or as lacking the rigorous empirical or theoretical framework they are accustomed to. Many post-secondary instructors at my institution and at others recognize the relevance of information literacy today more than ever. But the challenge now seems to be how can I – or any other librarian in a similar situation – best respond to framing information literacy pedagogy as a solution?

The reading brain

I have found the research described in three recently published books not only speaks to the relevance of information literacy, but also gives information literacy pedagogy an interdisciplinary understanding and the theoretical traction I desire when speaking with instructors. I sought out sources that were research-based
and would appeal to instructors from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. And while not explicit with the term information literacy, each theorist speaks directly to shared objectives with information literacy pedagogy.

Maryann Wolf is the Director of the Centre for Reading and Language Research at Tufts University. In her book Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain, she discusses the history of reading and how its relatively recent adoption in our history has affected our brain’s plasticity and intellect. She outlines how the recent shift toward screen-based reading from the deep reading of printed material is fundamentally changing the way we process information. Her research has found that the internalization of knowledge, critical thinking and the practice of meaningful inference are diminishing with the dominance of screen-based reading.

Reading and writing are fundamental academic practices that are deeply connected to the information behaviour of university students. Wolf’s research reveals that now confronted by the medium of a computer screen, the concept of literacy finds itself at a crossroads. If screen-based information is coming to dominate the reading process at university, what impact will this have on how students think and learn in academic settings? She sets up the context of a literacy problem: how can students adopt a balanced approach to reading from both the screen and the printed page and still seek meaning in such a fluid information environment? Wolf’s observations of an unprecedented literacy challenge present librarians and instructors with the opportunity to make a fundamental choice about how and why information literacy can be positioned into the student experience.

The synthesizing mind

While Wolf establishes a literacy problem in an information context, Howard Gardner contributes a psychological framework for responding to this problem. Gardner became a leading theorist in the field of educational psychology when he published his theory on multiple intelligences in 1983. His most recent work, Five Minds for the Future, published in 2007, outlines five conceptual constructs of the mind (disciplined, synthesizing, creating, respectful and ethical) that he believes are necessary for individuals to develop as their communities prepare for the uncertain environmental, social and technological challenges of the future.

It is the cultivation methods of the synthesizing mind that I have found overlap most significantly with the objectives of information literacy. Gardner argues that the development of such a mind becomes ever more urgent as the quantity of collective knowledge increases. Within the context of this information glut, Gardner states that not only do “individuals crave coherence and integration” (p. 47), but they also gain from guidance on synthesizing strategies, tools and criteria (pp. 69-70). He outlines a range of synthesis types, from simple narratives to the formation of metatheories. Additionally, he emphasizes the need for recognizing standards for gauging when an effort to synthesize has been productively accomplished. I would argue that in outlining a sense-making approach in an information context, Gardner positions the concept and methods of information literacy as a taxonomy for synthesis.

Discipline-specific approaches

With the importance of literacy and information synthesis established, I turn to the work of Janet Donald to provide a pedagogical perspective that brings these pieces together. In her book Learning to Think (2002), Donald seeks to understand how learning and teaching approaches can be best suited to the instructional strategies and learning styles of a discipline’s unique epistemology. When I introduce instructors to this research, it is Donald’s focus on discipline-specific approaches that really captures their attention. For example, she argues that different methods of inquiry are better suited to understanding the knowledge of different disciplines. Hermeneutics lends itself to literature studies, while the scientific method dominates the study of physics.

Differences exist between how to think across disciplines, but Donald also describes how three thinking processes are common to all disciplines: selection, representation and synthesis. She states that the role of information is central to the sense-making that students engage in when they develop intellectual frameworks within disciplines.
Linking Canada’s Information Professionals

Most important for student learning is their ability to use the new media to gain access to a variety of information sources to explore and then build their own conceptual frameworks. This adds another dimension to the professor’s instructional role – evaluating available additional information sources (p. 295).

I infer from Donald’s observation that it is the university’s pedagogical responsibility to ensure that students are not only exposed to a broad scope of information, but also introduced to strategies that can locate authentic meaning of this information as well. When I discuss Donald’s work with instructors, I emphasize that they are not alone in this added role – librarians are uniquely situated as information experts within disciplines to collaborate with instructors. What I find most valuable is how Donald’s research acknowledges the apprenticeship model of students in the academic endeavour. Rather than understanding information literacy pedagogy as merely teaching techniques for constructing search commands, outsmarting counterintuitive and unnecessarily complex interfaces, and practising appropriate “netiquette,” we can take from Donald’s research that students are simultaneously inquirers, researchers, readers and writers of a discipline, and that the selection, representation and synthesis of information is central.

A long program of instruction

These are three helpful sources among many, and I refer to them because they describe approaches that have resonated with the post-secondary instructors I regularly work with. Wolf, Gardner and Donald address multidisciplinary perspectives and technological contexts that are not confined to the Library and Information Science literature, and are research based. The work of these three researchers helps me to understand information literacy in the broadest of senses, assists my colleagues in challenging their assumptions of information literacy, and speaks comprehensively to the instructors we work with to facilitate their students’ critical and effective use of information.

I am not suggesting that universities have the sole responsibility for information literacy pedagogy. It would be most effective for students if a post-secondary information literacy component was one of many in a long program of instruction starting in primary school. I think those researchers at the University College London were right in saying that information literacy instruction at university is late, as students have adopted strategies that simply get them by, but I disagree that university is too late for information literacy interventions.

As a librarian involved with many campus-wide educational initiatives, I observe that the significant challenges facing our contemporary idea of literacy, the need for learning approaches that emphasize synthesis, and the central role of information in developing discipline-specific intellectual frameworks make the teaching of information literacy in post-secondary education deeply relevant today. Indeed, it appears that universities need information literacy now more than ever.

Bibliography


Pia Russell is the Teaching and Learning Librarian at the University of Victoria Libraries. Pia has a MIS and M.Ed from the University of Toronto. Her research interests include the role of information literacy during the high school to university transition and the teacher development of librarians.
Assessment and evaluation are fluid concepts and, at times, used interchangeably. As general processes applied to understanding performance in any context – student, librarian/professor or organizational – they can equally be viewed as positive and effective undertakings, or as onerous and inconclusive approaches to determining cause and effect. Regardless of one’s views, effective teaching and learning cannot be understood without intentionally and consistently applied assessment and evaluation.

Assessment relates to knowing what the student can and can’t do, and does and doesn’t know (i.e., student performance). Evaluation relates to knowing what the teacher does and doesn’t do well (i.e., teacher evaluation) and also, perhaps, to knowing what the organization (library or academic/administrative departments) does and doesn’t do effectively at program, organizational and strategic performance levels.

This article focuses on evaluation as it applies to information literacy (IL) program performance in a university library setting.

Current program evaluation practice

At an organizational level, evaluation data are routinely collected, organized, analyzed and then interpreted. However, in many cases the reality is that the results of evaluative processes are not then understood or reapplied to enhance learning outcomes. Organizations can also be faced with a disjunct between who needs the data and for what purposes. Administrators require certain types of information regarding IL programs but, if librarians are not involved in the conversations regarding the rationale and intended use, the input and output data gathered for reporting purposes might not be adequately collected or recorded. Even if the information is reliably collated and reported, librarians might need additional information or context to analyze and apply the results effectively, or to be in a position to influence change. Collectively, a collaborative approach toward data gathering and evaluation is more likely to meet the shared goal of enhanced student learning.

IL evaluation practices often mimic the evaluation strategies of the larger institution or library, such as applying quantitative measures (statistics) or qualitative strategies (surveys). Librarians typically record attendance for one-shot classes or credit-bearing courses, and articulate participation as an evaluative criterion for determining their effectiveness with a view to improving their teaching and influencing student learning. However, while “routine” statistical evaluation is necessary in some circumstances, what is equally required is careful planning regarding what should be evaluated, why it should be evaluated, how it should be evaluated and by whom it should be evaluated. In all cases, a commitment is required to “close the loop” on the evaluation to improve the IL program and the teaching skills of librarians, and – ultimately – student learning.

Revisiting program evaluation

A logical place to start in program review is to intentionally document IL efforts of consequence. These may be classroom-based initiatives, broader faculty or discipline-related strategies, or practices applied at an organizational level. Some libraries may recognize as their IL measures sources of data such as use of online IL tutorials, contributions to first-year experience programs, involvement with general education requirements, and the creation or implementation of standardized grading rubrics. In all cases, the evaluation processes need to align with the context at hand; not all evaluative processes will be appropriate for all contexts.

For example, at the Augustana Campus Library of the University of Alberta, a collaborative approach toward data gathering and evaluation is more likely to meet the shared goal of enhanced student learning.
Alberta, program evaluation includes such indicators as student engagement in and results of the 21 credit-bearing IL courses, participation rates in the annual IL workshop, distribution of the IL DVD (It Changed the Way I Do Research: Augustana Talks Information Literacy), interest in and use of the open-source assessment software (WASSAIL), IL awards for teaching faculty and for students, and effectiveness of IL branding/ marketing. In Australia, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Library uses performance indicator methodologies to evaluate library program and teacher effectiveness (as student satisfaction) and faculty program evaluation (as effective curriculum design). Statistical IL data gathering and analysis by QUT Library serves as a primary method of informing ongoing resourcing, development and advocacy.

As all contexts are different, it is critical to understand and acknowledge the context and build on strengths and opportunities within that context. Bearing in mind established IL evaluation practices, it is important to consider future goals and objectives in light of educational changes and strategic planning. This process must engage all partners, including librarians, library administration, university administration and teaching faculty. Forward planning and evaluation redesign must then become a regular component of the programmatic IL evaluation process, with outcomes aligned with either new or existing frameworks to guide and inform the programmatic goals, planning and statement of outcomes.

Programmatic outcomes can include components such as the goal of the overall improvement of evaluation of librarian teaching and/or student satisfaction with their learning experiences. Frequently, evaluation tools are developed without sufficient collaboration and discussion between stakeholders regarding the implementation of the evaluation processes and the desired outcomes. In isolation, it is difficult to create teaching evaluation tools of broad application. Collaboratively developed tools benefit from the breadth of experience and perspective that collective effort is more likely to provide.

The collaborative development, review and refinement of rubrics facilitates a more cohesive overall evaluation strategy and is an investment of time that can precipitate and enhance the reporting of more consistent and credible data. Evidence of improved student engagement as a result of the strategic reflection, analysis and implementation of teaching evaluation tools positively drives programmatic evaluation and development. At the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus Library, an environment conducive to constructive and critical thought and feedback is intentionally encouraged to create, implement and reflect on rubrics. These rubrics are developed to achieve standardized evaluation, and assumptions are presented and discussed from a variety of perspectives. No “less than perfect” rubric is considered a failure; all contribute to ongoing development of evaluation practices and professional perspective and, ultimately, librarian contribution to student learning.

Strategic evaluation practices

Intentional strategic application of evaluation practices and processes has the potential to maximize resources and extract greater gains from collective and individual efforts of staff at all levels. In this way, it might be assured that what is valued is being measured rather than measuring what is assumed to be valued. Effective evaluation is positioned to be embraced and success achieved in the presence of clear and consistent communication, a respectful working culture and a common understanding of and engagement in the institution’s and the library’s mission. Librarians can design and apply informed and effective evaluation practice in consideration of the “bigger picture” using consultative processes that assure appropriate directions in evaluation. Ultimately, this practice assures and substantiates an environment conducive to evidence-based decision making and development at the program and classroom levels.

Many institutions have embraced the significance of IL institutionally by creating an IL coordinator role. This facilitates mechanisms and opportunities for bigger picture planning and visioning for the library administration and librarians. Such a position facilitates a cohesive and managed consideration of relevant curricular components and documents and strategizes the library’s’ place – including barriers and opportunities – in influencing curricular planning and decision making. Ideally this role collaborates closely with teaching faculty, department chairs and curriculum committees so the approach is fully, holistically and
strategically embedded into the curriculum.

Intentional strategic IL program evaluation positions collective IL efforts to more successfully meet and achieve student learning outcomes, encourages effective teaching practice, and addresses organizational accountability and performance measurement. QUT’s creation of the Integrated Literacies Coordinator position demonstrates the institution’s strong commitment to the implementation and evaluation of IL and academic literacy (academic/study skills) as a holistic contribution and approach to learning support for two related core graduate capabilities.

Closing comments
The question is not whether evaluation is necessary, but rather the degree to which strategic and operational intelligence is applied to the planning and implementation of the evaluative processes. In addressing the issue of evaluation, consideration must be given to the breadth of the contexts and concepts. Evaluation done out of routine at the individual and/or organizational level in isolation of broader conversations and strategies will have limited relevance and application. Meaningful IL program evaluation that benefits all stakeholders is generated and matures within an environment where planning is collaborative, where mistakes are expected and used to inform change, and where the mission of the IL program is collectively determined and embraced.

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To support the information literacy needs of your school community, you’ve read the most recent books and articles and you are familiar with your provincial information literacy documents. You think about how to integrate information literacy skills into assignments, projects and inquiry units. You work with teachers to help them become more information literate and support them as they work with students.

But how are you doing with your own information literacy skills? Are you literate in Web 2.0 and the new literacies that students are learning in the social world of the Internet and bringing into our schools? These new skills include play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multi-tasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking, negotiation and visualization (Jenkins et al., p. 4).

Teacher-librarians are no longer the only information experts in schools. Our students come to school with experience and skills in a variety of web-based technologies and video games. Today’s new technologies include web tools that are readily available and used to communicate and collaborate with others. Blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing sites, and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace are all examples of Web 2.0 tools.

Why should we keep up? As authors Solomon and Schrum write, “we can take advantage of the features that new tools offer and tap into students’ natural affinity for these tools in order to create learning experiences that expand their worldview and enhance what they learn” (p. 24).

We all feel, at times, like the world of Web 2.0 is leaving us behind. But as one of our graduate students in teacher-librarianship wrote on her blog recently, “I’d rather make mistakes and learn along with my students than lose touch with the reality of their world.”

Having fun

In our work with graduate students in the Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning program at the University of Alberta, we have been encouraging teachers and teacher-librarians new to Web 2.0 to approach it with a playful stance. Jenkins et al. define play as “the capacity to experiment with one’s surroundings as a form of problem-solving” (p. 22). Following are a few of the tools I suggest you play with (if you haven’t already) to help improve your information literacy in this area.

You might want to begin with blogging. There are several blogging programs, but the most popular are WordPress and Blogger. Set up a blog and write about your hobbies, your travels or your professional learning and reading. Read Will Richardson’s Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms and use this wonderful book as a starting point. You may want to blog about books that you are reading. Link the blog to your library homepage and encourage students, parents and staff to comment on your blog.

Next, follow the blogs of others and join in the conversation. Follow blogs from leading education and librarianship writers and thinkers, colleagues, favourite sports teams, magazine and newspaper blogs, cooking, sewing, parenting or scrapbooking blogs. Choose a few that interest you and follow them for a while. To find blogs to follow you can use websites such as findblogs.com, blogsearchengine.com or blogssearch.google.com. Once you find some blogs of interest, you can use tools such as Bloglines or Google Reader to collect, follow and manage your blogs. Try following a few of the links in these blogs to other things that might be of interest to you. It is really important not to just read the
blogs but also to comment, add links of interest and join the conversation.

Using Diigo or Delicious or another social bookmarking tool, start a collection of websites that you can access from any computer. You might want to work with a colleague to mark websites for grade three curriculum topics, say, or for a specific topic in science or social studies. You can then share them with students and parents through your school website.

Web 2.0 tools also provide us with access to different kinds of professional learning experiences. Search the web for conferences of interest and see if sessions have been recorded to be shared. Find out about virtual conferences and meetings, and participate in one. See if your professional associations offer professional development sessions using the Internet. If you find interesting sessions, download them to iTunes and then upload them to your iPod to listen to at the gym, while out for a walk, cleaning, or on the subway. A good one to try is the K12 Online Conference, which you can access through iTunes.

**Other sites**

Find out what others are playing with and play along. Ask your students, your friends, colleagues and family members for some ideas. My current favourites are VoiceThread, Trailfire.com, Google Docs and Picasa. I just made a VoiceThread of my son reading a story to share with family and friends. Recently I gave a presentation to a group of teacher-librarians about Web 2.0 using Trailfire and then left them with the trail as a “virtual handout.” See [http://trailfire.com/jbranch/trailview/67507](http://trailfire.com/jbranch/trailview/67507) to find useful Web 2.0 websites.

When working with colleagues, I use Google Docs to share information and work collectively on documents. It is a great way to work with teachers to develop a unit plan or design an assignment. I love to upload photos to Picasa to share with friends. Of course, most of us have seen a video on YouTube, but there are richer collections of videos for schools available from SchoolTube or TeacherTube.

On my “to play list” is SlideShare, a tool that allows you to put PowerPoint presentations on the web to share with others and so you always have a backup wherever you travel, and Shelfari or LibraryThing, which allow you to create an online library, participate in online book clubs and write reviews.

Websites such as [http://webtools4u2use.wikispaces.com/](http://webtools4u2use.wikispaces.com/) (a wiki) and [www.shambles.net/web2/](http://www.shambles.net/web2/) provide support for teacher-librarians (and a lot more Web 2.0 tools to explore).

Just remember that becoming information literate in Web 2.0 is a process. As we know from Carol Kuhlthau’s work, the initiation stage can be a time when we feel uncertain and apprehensive. However, once we get going, “feelings of uncertainty often give way to optimism” (p. 42).

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**Standards**

How do we develop a plan to focus on our own 21st-century information literacy needs? It can’t be a simple scope and sequence chart because we don’t even know what we are going to need to know.

A good starting point is to use information literacy standards for students and apply them to our own personal and professional learning. The American Association of School Librarians’ pamphlet *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* sets out four key areas. It says that learners use skills, resources and tools to:

1. Inquire, think critically and gain knowledge.
2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations and create new knowledge.
3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.
4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth (AASL, p. 3).

According to the International Society for Technology in Education’s *National Educational Technology Standards (NETS)* and *Performance Indicators for Teachers*, we need to think about how we:

1. facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity
2. design and develop digital-age learning experiences and assessments
3. model digital-age work and learning
4. promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility
5. engage in professional growth and leadership (ISTE, p. 1).
I hope you have fun playing with Web 2.0 tools, on your way to becoming more information literate.

Bibliography

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How are information literacy practitioners discussing Wikipedia? Just as important is this question: what do these discussions say about us as teachers? This article will consider these questions and reflect on their implications for our work.

A good starting point here is a brief survey of the roots of Wikipedia’s ability to incite debate. As Trinity Western University librarian Bill Badke notes in his article “What to Do With Wikipedia”:

On one side, we have opponents who view Wikipedia users as ignorant of the need to use reliable sources when doing academic work. On the other, we have devoted users who have embraced this tool as the crown jewel of the new digital information world.

Given Wikipedia’s prominence as a go-to information resource for millions of searchers, recognizing why it inspires heated debate among library practitioners is fairly straightforward. On one hand, Wikipedia embodies many of our traditional values. It’s non-profit, it makes information widely accessible, and it inspires collaboration and debate. On the other hand, Wikipedia can seem horrifying to us. It can be breathtakingly ephemeral. It privileges verifiability above truth. Using our standard information literacy checklist of the characteristics of high-quality web-based information – stability, peer review and author credentials, for example – we could easily stamp Wikipedia with the latest web slang label: EPIC FAIL.

In April 2007, the Pew Internet & American Life Project stated, “36% of online American adults consult Wikipedia.” Measured another way, among “the cluster of sites that are focused on educational and reference material, Wikipedia is by far the most popular site, drawing nearly six times more traffic than the next-closest site.” We have no reason to suspect that Wikipedia traffic has declined since this study’s publication, or that Canadians approach Wikipedia in an appreciably different way.

Despite misgivings we may have, many of us consult Wikipedia, too. How do information literacy practitioners view Wikipedia, and how do we discuss it with our patrons? In the long run, what can the answers to these questions tell us about the evolution of our information literacy work?

An information literacy lens
Like anyone with an instructional role, those of us who do information literacy work communicate our views through our teaching. An examination of the Wikipedia-related postings made to the Information Literacy Instruction Discussion List (ILI-L) between January and October 2008 reveals that listserv participants (generally professional librarians) hold a variety of views about Wikipedia. Not surprisingly, their approaches to using and framing Wikipedia within their teaching are also highly varied. One theme emerging from these discussions deals with the issue of whether Wikipedia is good or evil.

Wickippedia
Evil is one of many recurring themes in information literacy practitioners’ conversations about Wikipedia, as exemplified by ILI-L. Wikipedia has been cast not merely as unreliable, and not merely as lacking trustworthy editorial processes, but as evil. Library resources, in contrast, are often cast as good. These forces of good and evil, not surprisingly, are often couched in adversarial terms.

For example, one ILI-L contributor related that during her training as a
From marketing to pedagogy

What is also interesting in exploring recent ILI-L discussions about Wikipedia is to see the way our profession is altering or adjusting its perception of the role the social web plays in our institutions.

In 2007, we conducted a discourse analysis of some 80 articles that were published in the literatures of librarianship, education and computer science about the relationship between Web 2.0/the social web and information literacy. We discovered that in the library literature, social web applications were viewed mainly as marketing tools for libraries. Articles we studied at that time described very creative methods of library promotion: RSS feeds were first used to inform patrons about newly acquired materials, blogs were used to engage young adults to comment on books they had read, and instant messaging was being deployed to enhance reference services.

However, our analysis at that time did not see many discussions or examples of the social web being used significantly in pedagogical ways or as a means to achieve information literacy outcomes. In the education literature, we saw examples of social web tools being used to teach research skills. In the library literature, though, this discourse was practically absent.

Rather, librarians in their own literature were identified more as marketers than as information experts or as practitioners having a teaching role. Library patrons were viewed mainly as consumers of information rather than as people engaged meaningfully in learning.

Our 2008 examination of how librarians on the ILI-L listserv talk about Wikipedia appears to reveal a changing mindset in our profession about the relationship between the social web and information literacy. In March 2008 alone, 49 messages were posted to ILI-L in response to Badke’s Wikipedia article. Certainly in these discussions, Wikipedia is criticized, and its volatility critiqued. Occasionally in the ILI-L threads there are even nuances about how Wikipedia could possibly spell doom for libraries: “Who will need a reference librarian when everyone can look up information in Wikipedia?”

Yet in these same messages, librarians speak passionately on the topic of Wikipedia as a pedagogical tool, even as a teaching platform. One librarian, protesting an outright ban of Wikipedia in some academic institutions, noted: “a prohibition of this sort communicates to students that they can avoid thinking critically about the content of their research through a policy of ignoring sections of the library.” Another librarian noted: “I’m definitely going to mention some of these ideas to instructors I work with – using Wikipedia to teach critical thinking is a great concept to explore.”

Collections mind, information literacy mind

In these recent ILI-L discussions, librarians situate themselves in a teaching role. They view their patrons as learners. Applications such as Wikipedia are seen as means of teaching information competence instead of as library marketing tools.
This shift may mean that many librarians are identifying as public educators. Interestingly, this shift seems to enable librarians to consider information resources more from a pedagogical point of view (how can we use this resource to teach?) than from a traditional collections management perspective (is this resource current and what is its authorship?).

The emphasis on using Wikipedia as a means of teaching evaluation skills and critical thinking corresponds well to educational outcomes such as the ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education, as well as what may prove to be emerging conceptions of multiple information fluencies such as visual literacy, contextual literacy and skepticism. Perhaps the discussions we library practitioners have about Wikipedia and other social software – whether they are good or evil, whether they are pedagogically useful – speak most to our changing role as educators within an increasingly complex information landscape.

Notes
4. This research was undertaken with the permission of ILI-L administrators. All contributors have been anonymized. ILI-L is hosted by the American Library Association and has approximately 4,700 subscribers.

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Order another bottle of champagne and admit that the sand between your toes could only be Tahitian. In comparison, Hawaiian sand is slightly coarse, making the Tahitian variety feel like warm silk. And here’s the waiter with the bubbly. He says: “Do you have any graphic novels about junkies in New York?”

At which point you snap out of your reverie. You are not on a beach in the South Pacific. You are on duty at a reference desk in Ottawa. The silky sand is pure fantasy, and now you are obliged to do your job. Paradise is far, far away.

But your shelves abound with descriptions of distant places, some more paradisean than others. In your library’s travel section, there are two main divisions: guidebooks and travel literature. The former include volumes dedicated to specific places all over the world, from cities, states, provinces and counties to entire nations and continents. Publishers of series such as Rough Guides, Berlitz, Fodor’s, Frommer’s and Lonely Planet produce dozens of new and revised titles annually, along with detailed maps and phrasebooks. Rich in data, these items circulate heavily to patrons intent on holidays and an escape from routine. Guidebook users recognize that every trip costs money and requires planning and organization.

What guidebooks give

Guidebooks provide information on countless different topics, from accommodation and sightseeing to tipping, babysitting and laundry services. Guidebook authors offer security and reliability. They recommend the best options available in hotels, restaurants, transportation, and sights of interest. Anyone compiling a guidebook knows not to champion a roach-infested hostel or a filthy dining room. If users are tempted to spend time in dodgy neighbourhoods, guidebooks will often warn them about risks such as crime hotspots and scams.

“It’s interesting to note the continuing popularity and high circulation figures for guidebooks,” says Brian, a library technician in Vancouver. “You’d assume that most people would rely on the Internet for current information on tourist destinations. But what we’re seeing is substantial use of both print and online resources. Patrons will search for basic data online, then confirm it with print resources, or add to it. Print resources can give more contextual information – that is, material that provides a more complete picture of their destination and what it includes.”

Hence many public libraries hold as many hardcopy guidebooks as they did before the advent of the Internet. Their collections of maps and tourist phrasebooks can be even larger than before, owing in part to late 20th century political events such as the reunification of Germany and the fall of the Soviet Union. Whereas travel
Linking Canada’s Information Professionals

in Eastern Europe was difficult and unattractive during the Cold War, now tourism in Poland and Russia has increased. There is greater demand for Polish and Russian phrasebooks, and more interest in similar items for those travelling to the Czech Republic, Romania and the Baltic states.

Atlases

Patrons also need access to map collections and reference atlases.

“We replaced many of our old atlases and gazetteers when the Iron Curtain fell,” says Lori, a librarian in Toronto. “We were embarrassed about how out-of-date they were. But they weren’t used as often as the newer cartographic resources, which are taking a lot of punishment.”

Lori notes that newer atlases have weak bindings that deteriorate quickly with even moderate use. The result can be loose pages.

“Atlas spines and photocopiers don’t get along well,” says Lori. “You see people pressing open atlases onto photocopiers, and sometimes you’ll hear a spine crack. It’s a depressing sound, because we know that the atlas will have to be rebound sooner rather than later. Or perhaps we’ll simply replace it, and that’s expensive.”

But won’t online resources replace paper atlases soon? Lori believes otherwise.

“I don’t want to get into a debate regarding electronic versus paper resources,” she says. “The fact is, however, that our patrons still like bulky atlases. They want to open them up and smooth out the big folio pages and run their fingers along roads and rivers and coastlines. Even tech-savvy kids like atlases, even though they’re more inclined to rely on the computer for geography homework.”

Early travel literature

Unlike guidebooks and other reference materials, travel literature is more personal. The foundation of any work of travel literature is its author’s perception of his or her surroundings, and the ways in which that author experienced – or muddled through – various situations. It frequently includes observations on the people that the author meets: their customs and culture and outstanding characteristics. The first producer of travel literature in Western civilization was Herodotus (c. 484 BC – c. 485 BC), who included in his Histories descriptions of the peoples that he encountered during his travels in regions around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Scholars have distrusted Herodotus since ancient times, and suggest that he fabricated or embroidered his accounts of different cultures. He probably did, but few can deny the entertaining quality of the Histories, which is available in many different editions and translations. In public, school and academic libraries the most popular English translation is Aubrey de Selincourt’s in the Penguin Classics series.

Every culture has its explorers, those who cross boundaries and strike out for new territories and markets. Marco Polo’s Travels – also available in Penguin – gave rise to numerous other works concerning regions that the authors considered foreign.

Marco Polo (1254-1324) was a Venetian who reached China and was one of the first to describe it for a European audience. His Travels inspired generations of explorers, one of whom was Christopher Columbus.

“Even though history as an academic subject has recently become less popular, students still read Herodotus and Marco Polo,” says Audrey, a college librarian in Vancouver. “Some of their popularity arises from their availability in Penguin, but there’s still the appeal of the works themselves. The authors were tremendous writers who knew how to wow their readers. I can’t think of a better way to put it.”

Enter the British

With the expansion of the British Empire from the 17th to the 19th centuries, modern travel...
literature in English was born. The British went everywhere, and their muddling through nightmarish predicaments is the basis for the best of their travel literature.

“The Brits love combining stout-hearted persons with terrible environments,” says Derek, a retired history professor in Kelowna, BC. “This is the root of many great works in different genres. Shakespeare’s Tempest is about a voyage gone wrong. A century later you have Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe – another shipwreck story. The British explorers of the 18th century were constantly running into trouble with storms, hostile populations and disease. In the 19th century, we have the unfortunate John Franklin, who fascinates Canadians more than any other explorer, including those who were equally or more successful in their exploits.”

In the 20th century, the tradition of mixing what the British referred to as “Abroad” or “foreign parts” with human discomfort or outright misery survived in works such as Robert Byron’s Road to Oxiana (1937), Eric Newby’s A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush (1958) and Love and War in the Apennines (1971), and Redmond O’Hanlon’s Into the Heart of Borneo (1985). Some critics think that wartime autobiographies such as T.E. Lawrence’s The Seven Pillars of Wisdom (1922) and Robert Graves’s Good-Bye to All That (1929) constitute a form of travel literature, and inasmuch as the authors are abroad and in miserable circumstances, this is a reasonable claim.

**Not so painful**

But not all travel literature need involve dire conditions. Gerald Durrell’s My Family and Other Animals (1956), an account of the Durrell family’s time on a Greek island before the Second World War, is happy and hilarious, with minor inconveniences replacing the usual harsh climates, fierce wildlife and bandits that appear in other travel literature.

Also cheerful is Patrick Leigh Fermor’s A Time of Gifts (1977), an account of his trek across Holland, France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary as a teenager. He set out in 1933, and on his way he saw evidence of Hitler’s growing influence. War was approaching, and in it Fermor would distinguish himself as a soldier. But during his youthful travels, he could experience Europe at its best, with its magnificent landscapes and architecture and food, and through meetings with remarkable persons from all levels of society. Brilliantly written, insightful, informative and amusing, this work has been popular since it first appeared.

“I’ve had a couple of patrons who have read Fermor’s book and wanted to follow in his footsteps across Europe one day,” says Lisa, a Calgary librarian. “At least that’s what they say, but then they look at a map and remember their budgets and schedules, and decide that it’s best to reread Fermor rather than attempt to repeat his long walk. They’re probably wise.”

**Rick does Europe**

Much has changed since Fermor’s adventurous youth. Travel collections now include substantial sections of videos and DVDs on the broadest variety of destinations and related topics. Among the most popular are those featuring Rick Steves, who wanders through Europe and has a delightful time wherever he goes. You can watch him doing all of the things that a solid middle-class North American tourist is inclined to do, although his innumerable clichés and monotone delivery might irritate some viewers. Nevertheless he’s full of interesting facts, and demonstrates an endearing affection for medieval architecture.

In a time of international tension and economic decline, many people are content to postpone their trips indefinitely and to indulge in the riches of their library’s travel collection. They will have no difficulties with airport security or missing luggage or bankrupt airlines. They will have no fears of diarrheal illnesses or extremes of climate. They can enjoy travel in the safety of their armchairs, and wander through 14th-century piles with Rick Steves.

Back at the reference desk, between questions concerning graphic novels and the location of the washrooms, you can let your mind wander a little. You’ve been reviewing Frommer’s Tahiti & French Polynesia during your break. You can almost feel the sand between your toes, can’t you?

Where’s that waiter? 🍽️

Guy Robertson teaches library history and records management in the Library Technology Program at Langara College in Vancouver. This year, CLA published his Unofficial Wisdom: Selected Contributions to Feliciter 1995-2009. He would like to thank Travel Bug owner Dwight Elliot for his advice and encouragement.
Many young people who identify as LGBTQ – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer, or questioning – do not have support at home or at school, and certainly not at traditional faith centres. So where can they turn for support, safe space, confidential access to information, and materials that speak to their lives? Young people are particularly vulnerable because they have distinctive needs but limited resources – the Internet notwithstanding. This is especially true in rural areas and in smaller urban centres.

At the 2007 Stonewall Book Awards, sponsored since 1971 by the American Library Association’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table, award winner Alison Bechdel (Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic) told us: “Libraries are so often how we learn about who we are, not family, etc.” As a young teen, her feelings took her “to the symbolic world of language” in the library – and that sent her back to feelings, and to people; and then to more books. It was a life-altering experience to learn of the category “lesbian,” she remarked, and then to discover that it was also a library subject heading! “We will never know,” she said, “how many have found validation on the shelves of libraries and in LCSH [Library of Congress Subject Headings].”

Power to act

Time and time again, sexual minority adults say that as young people they turned to libraries to try to find out something about LGBTQ realities and identities – usually, until recently, to little or no avail other than for dictionary definitions. Silence is “a text easy to misread.” Indeed, silence is complicity.

Librarians have the power to act as catalysts for social change. They have the potential to build inclusive library policies, collections and services within a framework of human rights and social justice, reflecting core values of access and intellectual freedom, inclusivity, diversity and equality, and, particularly in the school library context, duty of care and safety.

Ultimately, librarians have the power to enhance the social climate and everyday life experiences of sexual minority young people so that they become more resilient and thereby lead more meaningful lives as members of communities and as citizens.

Now that same-sex marriage is the law – and no longer just the talk – of the land, perhaps members of the Canadian Library Association will step up to the plate to advocate for greater awareness of the urgent need for LGBTQ policies, services and collections in all library sectors. I have had the good fortune to make presentations at many library conferences across the country, and I welcome expressions of interest from CLA colleagues in achieving greater collaboration for more advocacy, perhaps initially through the formation of a CLA interest group. One person wrote in their conference feedback to me that they would have “preferred a teen librarian to be addressing these issues.” I’m still waiting!

Myths, rationalizations and excuses

Some librarians have gone to extraordinary lengths to downplay LGBTQ library needs, making excuses limited only by human imagination and creativity: “Gay people don’t live in my community – at least they don’t seem to use my library” or “My library doesn’t provide materials geared to specialized needs” or “It’s too difficult to find reviews of these materials” or “My library’s vendor doesn’t handle those items” or “My library can’t afford gay/lesbian
materials” or “The library’s books about AIDS are enough” or “Buying library materials for gay and lesbian library users endorses the way these people live.”

Library collections research
Among the several collection studies undertaken of Canadian library holdings during the past decade or so, one example is the checklist study by Boon and Howard of LGBTQ fiction for teens in nine urban public libraries across Canada. They found wide variations, with 80% or more of the checklist titles held in Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa, but only 60% or so in Halifax, Regina, Winnipeg and Victoria.

A 2006 study of all public libraries in Alberta similarly found wide variations, with Calgary and Edmonton holding 73% of the checklist titles, Grand Prairie 65%, and eight other urban centres at 50% or fewer titles. The most frequently held LGBTQ teen and children’s titles in that study were True Believer (63 libraries), Bad Boy (58) and Touch of the Clown (53); same-sex children’s picture books were very poorly represented.

Subject access


Internet access and censorware
Although commercial software filters have marketed themselves from the beginning as protective tools, in reality they are merely censorware, the latest digital incarnation of old-fashioned censorship. Thousands of innocuous terms are blocked, among them, at various times: breast, alt. sexy, bald, captain, marsexpl, couple, Super Bowl XXXI, groin injury, and the Archie R. Dykes Medical Library. At the same time, many sites on targeted topics are missed.

An important study by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2002 tested access to health information sites for teens by surveying seven commonly used filters (CyberPatrol, Symantec, BESS, 8e6, SmartFilter, Websense, and AOL Parental Controls). The study found that filters had a major negative impact on access, with 25% of general health sites blocked, 50% of sexual health sites such as those dealing with safer sex, and 60% of lesbian and gay health sites. There is little doubt from this study that homophobic censorship by many commercial filters is pervasive; some even target by category in addition to keywords.

Canadian policy and strategy framework for supporting LGBTQ communities
Librarians should adopt a holistic strategy in providing library services and collections for and about LGBTQ users. The place to start (or review and reflect on) is with a Canadian policy framework grounded in human rights concepts of non-discrimination, inclusion, safety and duty of care. Supporting concepts, principles, and language are found in:

- constitutional and legislative jurisprudence, both national and international
- the administration of justice, for example the Hate and Bias Crimes Unit of the Edmonton Police Service
- provincial mandates for public schools, for example the Alberta School Act
- teachers’ associations codes of conduct; for example, the Alberta Teachers’ Association has an educational website on sexual orientation and gender identity issues and resources, and in 1999 became the first teachers’ association in Canada to include gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination, a prohibition extended in 2006 to include trans-identified students and staff
- library associations position statements, both national and international, for example IFLA, UNESCO, ALA and CLA statements including the May 2008 “Statement on Diversity and Inclusion” and the 1995 “Students’ Bill of Information Rights.”
In developing services and collections, librarians should proceed systematically and build on community support. For example, Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel declared at his annual Pride Brunch in June 2007 that “The health of the LGBTQ community is a barometer of the entire community.”

Policy is protection. The following elements should be considered in strategic policy planning: board policies and legislation, community development, professional networking, selection criteria, challenges and reconsideration of materials, collection development, collection access, web access, library access, promotion and marketing, community advocacy, professional development, and a library service charter. And whatever the occasion, seize the teachable moment to educate your community!

But all of these ideas are merely conversation starters, not prescriptive solutions.

Summing up

Librarians can play a critical role in fostering diversity and resiliency. They can create safe places. They can turn pain into opportunity, tolerance into celebration, despair into hope. As Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan said at the BC Library Conference in 2006, “We show wisdom in how we present information to the public.”

Just remember, the worst part of LGBTQ censorship is…%&@%^!%&]+*-]]&$##$$&$$&@##^@!$$&$&$$^%!!!!!!

Otherwise, what message are librarians giving to teenagers, children, their families and friends, and indeed our communities, if we leave the life experiences of sexual minority youth out of our libraries and schools, and out of our library collections and services?

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March 2009 marked the 10th Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute, a program created by library leaders to motivate librarians who are new to the profession and develop their leadership skills. Set at Emerald Lake in the Canadian Rockies, the program uses experiential learning and mentorship to help future library leaders articulate and achieve visions for organizations and for library service as a whole. The following article is the collective expression of the participants’ vision of librarianship 10 years from now. It is written from the perspective of one new librarian’s educational and work experience.

**Vision statement**

What’s a guy to do with an MBA? With so many similarly qualified candidates to choose from, Lee Bryan really felt a need to differentiate himself. Getting an MLIS seemed a natural choice. After all, the chief information officer at his last internship was a librarian, and she'd had so many great opportunities and had a fabulous range of skills to offer.

Of course, getting accepted might be tough, given the competition, but Lee felt that his MBA might provide him with an edge. Lee was sure that being a librarian would open a lot of doors for him, not to mention the associated prestige.

With guidance and a recommendation from his mentor, Lee applied for and was accepted to the MLIS program of his choice. He was pleased to see that the students in his class had been recruited from a variety of cultural and academic backgrounds, among them chemistry, mathematics and geography. The curriculum offered classes that introduced Lee to the core values of the profession including intellectual freedom, strategic adaptation and information coaching. Though Lee had already completed an undergraduate degree in information systems as well as the MBA, he had never been in a program that was so technologically advanced and focused on the end-user experience. Semantic web technologies, user-generated content, and information behaviour all figured prominently in his coursework. The culture of the school emphasized and rewarded innovation, advocacy and active participation geared toward shaping the provincial and national political agenda as it affects the information needs of the public.

The last two semesters were the most exciting. Lee was gaining confidence with his new skills and knowledge. He recognized the opportunities opening before him: as a designer of learning or community spaces in both the corporate and public environment, as well as in libraries; or embedded information expert in corporate research teams, government think tanks, a system design team... even in the design of new user interfaces. There were also established career paths available to pursue, such as information liaison officer for faculty, diversity coordinator for city information and library programs, knowledge facilitator for academic commons, knowledge management, competitive intelligence, and community outreach librarian.

Lee’s confidence was growing, what with the number of organizations that had already approached him and his classmates in the hope of tapping into the resources that librarianship offered. Three weeks before graduating, he accepted a lucrative two-year contract with an automotive company, informing the design of interactive information systems for new products, from the metadata enabling system functionality to the system user’s personalized experience.
Moving on from that position, Lee felt he needed a greater challenge. He had come to realize all the potential that a professional such as he could bring to other research fields and the need for his expertise in various arenas. Being innovative, like most people in the profession, he convinced an environmental advisory board to hire him as part of its climate change and sustainability team. He tailored the position to maximize his skills and best help the advisory board meet its objectives. He monitored and analyzed new legislative initiatives and non-government initiatives at the international level. He helped team experts manipulate data and better understand the situation. Ultimately, the advisory board was able to influence government policy and legislation.

Lee was gratified that his skills and credentials enabled him to form important alliances between diverse groups and to foster transformational change in both organizations and individuals.

Émilie Gagnon, Michelle Sinotte, Sherri Vokey and Aaron Wood wish to thank all of this year’s participants for their invaluable contributions.
Contex te :
Mars 2009 marquait le 10e anniversaire du Northern Exposure to Leadership (NEL), un institut créé par des leaders de bibliothèques dans le but de motiver les nouveaux bibliothécaires et de développer leurs habiletés de leadership. Situé au Emerald Lake Lodge au cœur des montagnes Rocheuses canadiennes, NEL met à profit l’apprentissage expérimental et le mentorat afin d’aider les futurs leaders de bibliothèques à créer, articuler et atteindre une vision pour nos organisations et les services de bibliothèque. L’article qui suit se veut l’expression collective de la vision de la profession, telle qu’elle pourrait devenir d’ici dix ans, développée par les participants du NEL 2009. Cette vision est présentée sous la perspective d’un nouveau bibliothécaire de cette époque, de son parcours académique et professionnel.

Vision :
Qu’est-ce qu’un gars peut bien faire avec un MBA en poche ? Les candidats qualifiés ne manquent pas. Lee Bryan sentait le besoin de se différencier des autres. Obtenir une Maîtrise en sciences de l’information apparaissait comme un choix tout naturel. Après tout, la Chef de l’information, où il avait effectué son dernier stage de MBA, était une bibliothécaire ; ne s’était-elle pas vue offrir une foule d’opportunités enrichissantes au cours de sa carrière, en plus d’être une professionnelle compétente dotée d’une vaste gamme d’habiletés.

Bien sûr, être accepté pourrait s’avérer difficile, la compétition étant très forte. Toutefois, Lee croyait que son MBA pourrait l’aider à se démarquer. Devenir bibliothécaire pourrait lui ouvrir de nombreuses portes, sans mentionner le prestige associé à la profession.

Guidé et recommandé par son mentor, Lee tenta sa chance et fut accepté à la Maîtrise en sciences de l’information de son choix. Il fut heureux de découvrir que les étudiants de sa classe provenaient de cultures et de domaines complètement différents tels que la chimie, les mathématiques, la géographie, etc. Le curriculum familiarisa Lee avec les valeurs profondes de la profession ; la liberté intellectuelle, l’adaptation stratégique et le mentorat informationnel. Malgré qu’il ait déjà un Baccalauréat en Système d’information et un MBA, Lee n’avait jamais été dans un programme aussi avancé technologiquement et centré sur l’expérience de l’usager. Les technologies du Web sémantique, le contenu généré par les usagers et l’étude du comportement informationnel, présentaient un impact non négligeable sur les besoins informationnels de la population.

Les deux dernières sessions furent les plus excitantes. Grâce à ses nouvelles compétences et connaissances, la confiance de Lee augmentait. De nouvelles opportunités s’ouvraient à lui et à la profession : le design d’espace communautaire ou d’apprentissage autant en milieu corporatif et communautaire qu’en bibliothèque, devenir spécialiste de l’information intégré à une équipe de recherche en entreprise ou encore, être rattaché à un institut gouvernemental ou une équipe de design des systèmes. Il pouvait même se consacrer au design d’interface novateur pour les usagers. Il y avait également une foule de sentiers déjà tracés, tout aussi stimulants, qu’il pouvait emprunter : agente de liaison en information pour une faculté universitaire, coordinateur de diversité pour les...
programmes de bibliothèques et d’information municipale, guide en acquisition des connaissances pour les étudiants universitaires, bibliothécaire en gestion des connaissances ou veille stratégique et finalement, bibliothécaire de liaison et de proximité avec la communauté.

Plusieurs organisations l’avaient déjà approchées lui, ou ses camarades de classe, dans l’espoir de profiter des avantages offerts par la profession. Trois semaines avant sa graduation, il accepta finalement un lucrative contrat de deux ans avec une compagnie automobile. Son travail consisterait à supporter le design des systèmes d’information interactifs destinés aux nouveaux produits, de la création des métadonnées permettant les fonctionnalités systèmes à l’expérience personnalisée de l’usager.

Suite à cette expérience, Lee sentait qu’il avait besoin de plus grands défis. Il prenait conscience de tout le potentiel qu’un professionnel tel que lui pouvait offrir à une équipe de recherche et le besoin grandissant pour une expertise telle que la sienne dans plusieurs domaines.

Étant innovateur, comme la plupart des gens dans la profession, il convainquit un Conseil consultatif environnemental de l’engager et de l’intégrer à son équipe de gestion des changements climatiques et de la durabilité. Il façonnant le poste afin de maximiser l’utilisation de ses compétences et habiletés afin d’atteindre les objectifs du Conseil. Il surveilla et analysa les nouvelles législations à l’étude et les initiatives des organismes non-gouvernementaux à l’échelle internationale. Il aidait les experts de l’équipe à interpréter les données et à mieux saisir la situation.

Ultimement, le Conseil consultatif fut capable d’influencer les politiques gouvernementales et la législation internationale dans le domaine des changements climatiques.

Lee trouvait gratifiant que ses habiletés et sa crédibilité lui permette de former des alliances stratégiques entre les différents groupes d’intervenants permettant des changements transformationnels dans les organisations et les chez les individus.

Émilie Gagnon has graduated from l’École de Bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l’information (EBSI) of l’Université de Montréal in 2006. She is specialized in Strategic Information Management. She works has an Information Specialist in the Business Information Centre at Rio Tinto Alcan’s head office in Montreal since 2006.
Randy Gatley, teen services librarian at the Vancouver Public Library, knows teens. He knows that the key to drawing them into the library is overcoming barriers (such as fears about outstanding fines) and stereotypes (libraries are boring or intimidating); he also knows that when they do visit, often it’s not for the books – instead, it’s to sit at the computer stations, where they “spend a lot of time with social networking and playing games”.

Anyone familiar with the habits of young people will not be surprised to hear that computers draw kids to the library. Canadian youth are, in fact, among the most wired in the world. They see the Internet as one of the most powerful ways to connect with and make new friends. But sitting at a computer, in a library or at home, can lull a kid into a false sense of security. Many young people think that the messages they send online, or the pictures that they post, are private, seen only by the friend they are sending them to (according to the Media Awareness Network, 43% of kids in grades 8 and 9 have their own computer connected to the Internet and 77% of the same age group use instant messaging). But they could not be more wrong – and this is where librarians can help.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) has a mandate of protecting and promoting the privacy rights of individuals. Given the enthusiasm with which Canadian teens use the Internet and engage in activities like social networking, OPC is reaching out to young people to help them learn how to protect their privacy when they are online and to help them build secure online identities. They recently launched youthprivacy.ca,

Tips You Can Share for Protecting Online Privacy

- Be careful: think twice about with whom, and where, you share your personal information such as your name, age, address, e-mail, telephone number, or social insurance number.
- Think before you click. Don’t do or say anything online that you wouldn’t do or say offline.
- Protect your personal safety. What you post online can affect your personal safety – especially if you tell people where you’re going to be at specific times.
- Keep your password safe and change it regularly. Choose a password that can’t be easily guessed.
- Giving out personal information to strangers online is the same as giving it to “real-world” strangers - and just as inadvisable.
- Be aware that information that you put on the Internet is not private – and can’t be deleted. Information you post now could be there years after it’s relevant to you.
- When doing online surveys or making purchases, question why people want your personal information. Make it clear that you do not wish your information to be disclosed to any third party.
- Be discreet. Remember – what you post stays online forever, so if you don’t want future job and college interviewers to see it don’t post it!
an interactive web site that offers advice about how youth can protect their personal information and take charge of how their identity is being shaped online.

Some of the key messages kids will find on the site include “think before you click” (encouraging them not to do or say anything online that they wouldn’t do or say offline); “know who your friends are” (making the point that, online, you can never be 100% sure of who you’re talking to); “pay attention to privacy settings” (only allowing friends to see social networking pages, posts, photos and applications); and many more tips and tricks that will ensure a safe online experience. The goal of the site is to capture the attention of young people so they’ll be motivated to start protecting their privacy when they are online and out in the real world.

Youthprivacy.ca has tools for youth – and for parents and educators too

Youthprivacy.ca has more than just information on protecting privacy – there is a privacy quiz that teens can take (the questions change every time you take the quiz); a recent video contest that asked young people to create video public service announcements about privacy; and a blog for youth to discuss how technology affects their privacy. The entire site allows young people to explore their information rights and find material that will help them understand that what they put online now might be permanent and could be accessed years and years after it is relevant to them.

Parents and educators find this site valuable too. Since kids are so tech-savvy today, adults need to understand how all these new technologies can significantly impact a kid’s privacy. The site features detailed explanations about how people can capture online information about kids and use it for their own purposes, and what kids can do to protect their information so that it can’t be used without their permission.

How librarians can help

Ask Teen Services Librarian Randy Gatley if he notices whether kids are concerned about their privacy and he doesn’t talk about social networking sites or online predators. But his answer clearly demonstrates how tech-savvy kids are and how they can easily grasp how their personal privacy could be violated with the right tools in place.

“Kids are concerned about their privacy when it directly affects them,” he says. “The privacy issue often comes up when I’m talking with them about fines. One kid had a large fine that he couldn’t afford – he was afraid that the security gates, at the entrance to the library, would somehow alert the library staff about the fines on his card and that they’d grab him and take something from him as collateral until he could pay the fines. He was avoiding the library because of that fear!”

Gatley spoke with this kid, reassured him that no one at the library would learn of his fines until they actually swiped his card – and then gave him a “fresh start” by clearing his fine and giving him a new card. Librarians everywhere can give every kid a fresh start when it comes to personal privacy, one young person at a time, by referring them to youthprivacy.ca and advising them to think about the things they are putting online before they actually post them.

Kristen is a senior public education officer at the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.
“Have degree, will travel” is an attitude some library school graduates have embraced in order to get their foot in the door, myself included. After various assistantships, volunteering and internships in libraries and archives, my own entry into professional librarianship would be located in remote Labrador. This was a place I knew very little about before relocating to work for the College of the North Atlantic’s Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus. This article is about my experience as an early-career librarian living and working in Labrador.

Settling in

Centrally located, the small town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB, or shortened to Goose Bay) is the area’s transportation and administrative hub, with a population of approximately 7,500. Labrador is the vast and rugged “mainland” part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, while Newfoundland is commonly referred to as “the island.” Labrador is nearly three times the size of Newfoundland but is home to less than 10% of the province’s population with fewer than 30,000 people in total. Its nickname, “The Big Land,” seems wholly appropriate when I take the single daily flight to Halifax, marvelling over the endless black spruce, big open skies and unforgiving terrain.

The Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus Library is one of the libraries and learning resource centres serving the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) across Newfoundland and Labrador. With 17 campuses throughout the province, and one in the Middle East state of Qatar, plus a Distributed Learning Service, CNA has programs in academics, applied arts, business studies, health sciences, engineering technology, industrial trades, information technology, tourism and natural resources. Professionally, it presents a dynamic environment in which to practise librarianship, serving both theoretical academic study and hands-on vocational training.

On the mainland, the two campuses are Labrador West (serving Labrador City and Wabush) and Happy Valley-Goose Bay (serving HVGB, North West River, Sheshatshiu, Mud Lake and the coast). These two campuses are connected by a 534-kilometre drive on the gravel Trans-Labrador Highway. In addition, the latter is responsible for six learning centres in North West River/Sheshatshiu, located near HVGB, and the coastal communities of Rigolet, Hopedale, Natuashish, Nain and Port Hope Simpson. It is a unique public post-secondary system whereby each campus provides a local flavour. Offerings vary throughout the system depending on interests and...
Linking Canada’s Information Professionals

needs, and can fluctuate within each campus from year to year. Programs are often developed in anticipation of major economic development projects. For example, multiple parties are keenly monitoring whether the proposed Lower Churchill hydro-electric project will go forward or not following the environmental assessment review currently in progress. Issues have been raised concerning the Lower Churchill project from Innu Nation land claims and impact benefits to opposition from Gros Morne National Park officials. It will be interesting to see how things unfold in the coming months and what the implications will be for either scenario.

The College also provides the opportunity for adult learners to complete the high school curriculum via a multi-tiered Adult Basic Education program. In the Library, there may be students learning the basics of constructing a brief essay alongside graduate students of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) completing their field research. On average, there are a few hundred HVGB students each year and it does not take long to know most of their names and what they are studying. Most of the students are from Labrador or the island, with the occasional international student, and they seem to appreciate the opportunity to attend school closer to home. Many go on to complete degrees at partner universities after fulfilling first-year requirements through the College.

When I started as Librarian in the summer of 2007, the library was in the middle of relocating and transforming itself. A new library space had been built into a $5.5 million campus extension and the physical setup was to occur that summer. I remember entering the library for the first time, to be confronted with a few stacks that came from the old library space, and walls lined with boxes of books awaiting new shelving. Most of the major furniture and equipment purchasing had been done before I came on. I was given a long list of items to expect, with a month to go before the fall semester. At times it seemed like a library jigsaw puzzle, making all of the pieces fall into place with limited design plans to consult.

Due to the hiring schedule, my predecessor and I never met in person. Former Librarian Junli Diao left a welcome information packet for me and generously answered my questions via email until I got settled. The provincial Library Services staff team was extremely helpful during my training period and continues to be a source of support and guidance. Our Library Clerk, Marjorie Barnes, was a tremendous help in my getting acquainted with the library’s history, the institutional culture, and the practicalities of living in Goose Bay. I am particularly thankful to Marjorie for being a wonderful co-worker and a friend.

Feeling at home

The HVGB Campus Library provides services to CNA and MUN students and employees and members of the general public. The collection consists of periodicals, books, audiovisual materials and electronic resources. Managed to support and reflect local curricula, the collection holds at present approximately 4,000 titles and 8,500 items. In addition to reference and access assistance, the reserve desk and computer lab are heavily used as well. A neighbouring Success Centre provides for group discussion, tutoring and additional computer access.
Recognizing the importance of leisure reading, we try to make some general-interest materials available for all patrons. iLink, CNA’s online library catalogue (http://sirsi1.cna.nl.ca), enables users to locate and retrieve/request materials from any of the Campus libraries across the province. During library orientation sessions, I encourage students not to let the look of a smaller library be deceiving. Intercampus loans allow us to quickly borrow or lend materials internally. We may request interlibrary loans or document delivery services through the Atlantic Scholarly Information Network.

As part of a co-location agreement between CNA and MUN, the Library and Archives of the Labrador Institute of Memorial University are now housed in a dedicated space in the HVGB Campus Library. The Library staff oversees the Labrador Institute Collection as part of our regular duties. The Collection focuses largely on ethnohistory, environmental research, and documentation of Labrador circa the late 1800s onward. Digitization projects are being worked on for preservation and access purposes. Amongst other related collections of interest are MUN’s Centre for Newfoundland Studies in St. John’s, and the Them Days Labrador Archives in Goose Bay.

We have the pleasure of serving many Aboriginal students who are Inuit, Innu or Métis. The College works closely with the Nunatsiavut government, the Innu Nation and the Labrador Métis Nation. It is not unusual to hear students conversing in Innu-aimun or Inuktitut in the hallways. At our campus, cultural awareness and the celebration of diversity are strong points of pride. One of the things that drew me to librarianship was the opportunity to work in a context where learning and research were part of the job. On top of that, I have found learning from patrons to be just as enjoyable and informative. Whether speaking with an Innu student from Sheshatshiu, or colleagues from India and Nigeria, I have benefited greatly from listening to their perspectives and personal stories.

In one instance, I was initially amused by a student from Nain, on the north coast, who felt overwhelmed by the number of vehicles in Goose Bay (there are two traffic lights in town), but I can see how it would be a culture shock. Labrador in general may seem completely new for a student who comes up from Port aux Basques on the island, given a noted distinction between Newfoundland and Labrador. However, regional pride and ties to home are generally strong throughout the province, regardless of where you happen to find yourself.

Despite three-metre-high snow banks and aggressive mosquito seasons, it has been an excellent learning and life experience to engage in professional librarianship here. I arrived sight unseen but with faith that the rewards would be great. Of course, not everyone can feasibly uproot themselves for a job opportunity far away from home. I would encourage anybody to consider it, even if not everything about a position checks all the boxes. In addition to building my career, I have been touched by the charms of this place, the people and the surrounding wilderness.

Patricia Y. Kim is the Librarian at the College of the North Atlantic’s Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus. She also serves as Treasurer on the local Melville Public Library Board.
Access to East European and Eurasian Culture: Publishing, Acquisitions, Digitization, Metadata

It is not too difficult to get all wrapped up in daily concerns about our own library and that of the wider library community in our province or country. Within the library literature we read about publishing problems, the trials of acquisitions staff, the exciting field of digitization (especially with Google Books recently in the news), and the effect that metadata will have upon cataloguing practices.

Perhaps we don’t often think much beyond our own country. If that is so, it comes as a pleasant surprise to find a volume that discusses these same issues in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. There have been long-term effects from the collapse of the Soviet Union and other governments in East Central Europe. Chief among these were changes in the scholarly publishing industry of these countries: it became very difficult for libraries to obtain books and journals. At the same time, there has been a growing awareness of, and hunger for, information found in various electronic formats – online journals, e-books and online catalogues, to name just a few. “The essays published in the present volume demonstrate that Slavic librarians, far from ignoring change, have embraced new technologies that are impacting scholarly communication” (p. viii).

This volume does bring to our attention the wonderful work being done in, for example, Russia, Bulgaria and Ukraine. It also includes several articles about projects in the United States, at universities in Illinois, Washington and North Carolina. The articles are selected from papers presented to a 2006 conference discussing access and preservation of Slavic and Eurasian materials.

This collection provides a useful focus for anyone interested in Slavic materials. But, in my opinion, it could have been stronger had it described European counterparts to the American university projects.

Reviewed by Brian Rountree, who teaches cataloguing, collection development and other courses in the Library and Information Technology Program at Red River College in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Making Library Web Sites Usable: A LITA Guide

Before delving into how to make library websites usable, we should think about why. Some early 1990s websites promoted the idea of website as art form – create an attractive page with little concern for usability. A holdover from this time is to encourage the use of images and ensure the site remains pleasing to the eye. But, as the editors state, libraries cannot ignore the need to make their websites both easier to use and more attuned to what users expect from websites in general. Library websites are challenged by the need to both describe services and provide actual resource access. Case studies in this book illustrate what drives some libraries to change their websites: single sign-on access, campus portals, organization-wide templates, and the growth in both local and remote electronic resources.

Making Library Web Sites Usable is a how-to book giving practical advice on all aspects of library website usability testing. The main objective is to promote usability testing with a well-planned collection of chapters written by experts who offer advice based on their own successes and failures. The editors jointly contribute to the opening chapter, “Usability for Library Web Sites,” and an extremely useful annotated bibliography. Separately, they have written three of the seven chapters discussing primary assessment techniques: “Heuristics,”

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“Surveys,” “Focus Group Interviews,” “Card Sorting,” “Paper Prototypes,” “Usability Testing” and “Web Server Logs Analysis.” Three chapters dealing with general issues follow, and the book concludes with six case studies, three devoted to academic libraries, and one each for a public library, a corporate library and a government library. The case studies aptly demonstrate key ideas introduced in the principles section.

Readers will save themselves time and effort by studying this book before embarking on any library website review. Recommended for all large libraries and particularly useful for academic libraries.

Reviewed by Karen Jensen, Science Cataloguing Librarian, McGill University, Montreal.

Recruiting, Training, and Retention of Science and Technology Librarians

Subject specialist librarians are hard to find. This seems to be particularly true in academic libraries that focus on science and technology. Job postings usually include wording such as: “A bachelor’s or master’s degree in a science or engineering subject, or a minimum of two years of experience as a science librarian at the professional level.” One begins to wonder which came first, the subject specialty or the library degree?

The articles in this volume explore both sides of the question and demonstrate that there is no right answer. There are many recruitment approaches, including the personal approach, career changes (from scientist to librarian), and attendance at career fairs at the undergraduate level. Once recruitment has taken place there is the important task of training the librarian in the skills used in the particular library as well as making sure that competencies for the job are taught, retained and evaluated.

But even in the best of all possible worlds, everyone knows that sometimes another position looks more exciting and inviting. Therefore, several articles look at creative ways to retain the new (and not so new) science and technology librarian.

This book would be a valuable addition to any science and technology library collection, to any library science program, and for anyone interested in these topics.

Reviewed by Brian Rountree.

Teen Girls and Technology: What’s the Problem, What’s the Solution?

Teen Girls and Technology is divided into three sections: Part I: Teen Girls’ Tech Reality, Part II: Elements for Success, and Part III: Technology Enhanced Learning Activities. In Part I, Farmer identifies the problem. While girls in elementary school tend to use technology in the same way as boys, this changes as girls move into middle school and, by high school, teen girls are at risk with regard to technology. Farmer goes on to explore societal, family, social, economic, government and academic issues and their impact on teen girls’ use of technology, presenting international and national (American) recommendations.

In Part II, Farmer discusses the various elements necessary for success, including the role of adults, technology resources, access to technology and use of technology. In Part III, she discusses in-school, community-based and family-based learning, including a variety of activities.

Teachers, librarians and individuals working with youth groups will all find Teen Girls and Technology a very useful handbook. Highly recommended reading for anyone interested in teenaged girls and technology.

Reviewed by Brenda Dillon, Teacher-Librarian at Philip Pocock Catholic Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario.
Any visit to Newfoundland should take you through the breathtaking Gros Morne National Park. A couple of must-see features of the park are the Long Range Mountains and the spectacular Western Brook Fiord. Gros Morne was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1989. It is an area of rugged natural beauty, possessing a variety of features including sandy beaches, fiords, flatlands, waterfalls and mountains.

While the natural scenery is certainly an attraction, the communities bordering the park are in themselves interesting. On the southeast side, just outside the park, Deer Lake, with a population of just under 5,000, acts as a gateway for travellers entering the park. Approximately three hours away, on the northwest edge of Gros Morne, is the seaside community of Cow Head, with a population of about 500. Part of the town sits on the mainland around Shallow Bay, with the remainder perched on the peninsula, connected to the mainland by only a narrow sandbar. Not surprisingly, the public library is a fixture in both communities.

One of the incredible things about the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Library system is the sheer number of libraries in the province – there are 96 of them, serving a population of about 509,000. It really is remarkable that they have been able to operate libraries in so many small communities throughout the province. It is also a testament to the importance of libraries to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In a March 2009 press release announcing library facility funding, Joan Burke, the Minister of Education said,

Libraries are key players in helping advance education, literacy and help contribute to community development, especially in rural areas of the province. Keep in mind, many communities are miles away from the nearest bookstore and not all homes have access to computers and the Internet.

— www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2009/edu/0317n02.htm

Deer Lake and Cow Head Public Libraries

Mary-Jo Romaniuk & Martina King

Deer Lake Fast Facts
Size of collection: 12,774
Annual circulation (2008-09): 41,451
Reference queries: 24,460
Public access computers: 8
Number of members: 1,761
Hours: Open approx. 33 hours per week
Board members (2008-09):
Helen Caines, Chair; Patricia Bouzanne, Vice-chair; William Hayden, Secretary; Ross Wight, Treasurer; Betty Ball, Shauna Barter, Cathy Roberts, Barb Bridger, Vaughn Harbin

Cow Head Fast Facts
Size of collection: 5,430
Annual circulation (2008-09): 5,672
Reference queries: 635
Public access computers: 5
Number of members: 305
Hours: Open 15 hours per week
Board members (2008-09):
Nancy Brown, Chair; Sarah Payne, Secretary/Treasurer; Melina King, Valetta Payne, Darlene Wells, Dena Payne, Jackie Combdon

Top photo, Deer Lake Public Library
Bottom photo, Cow Head Public Library
Deer Lake

Deer Lake was named when the first Europeans to arrive, never having seen caribou before, called them “deer” when they saw herds crossing the lake. There are no deer in Newfoundland, according to Worneta Cramm, the librarian at the Deer Lake Public Library since 1974. She is joined by Loretta Wight, who has worked at the library for 10 years, and Tina Rose, who has been there five years. The library serves as an information hub for tourists visiting Deer Lake in the summer. As Worneta says, “If the girls at the library don’t know it, no one does!” When asked what she enjoys about her work, Worneta replied, “Every day you learn something new, and the people that you meet are so enjoyable.” Worneta is a proud member of the planning board for the Western District Conference, to take place this September in Corner Brook, which will bring all the division staff from the 31 libraries in the Western District together to discuss library issues, listen to author talks and share solutions to their challenges.

The library building has had a tumultuous past. Originally it was a school that the town planned to renovate and turn into a library. But during the renovations it caught fire and burned down. Undeterred, the town built the current building in the same spot, and the library opened in January 1975. Recently, the library, like others in the province, has received a modernization grant. This grant will be used to replace shelving, and future grants will be used to replace the more than 30-year-old siding, doors and windows.

Deer Lake Public Library provided a vibrant summer reading camp until the basement space in which the program was offered required repair for a leaky foundation. The foundation has been repaired, and the library looks forward to restoring the program this summer.

Worneta Cramm has a keen interest in local history, and the library has become the keeper of local information for the town. All of the high school yearbooks, for example, are collected in the library. Worneta says that many university students come home for the summer and find the books useful.

Because high school students in Deer Lake are required to complete 30 hours of community service, the library gets many volunteer students. Worneta puts them to work clipping articles from the Corner Brook Western Star. (Deer Lake no longer has its own newspaper.) The library has a complete print archive from 1979 to the present and some coverage between 1968 and 1979. Not all the residents of the town have access to the Internet in their homes, so the print archive is particularly important. Without the project, children might have difficulty finding articles for their school heritage projects. The project also provides visitors with information about local people, places and events on a year-round basis.

Cow Head

Cow Head has a combination of unique natural wonders and the charm of a small seaside town that has not yet given itself over to commercialization. It is irresistible.

One of the main attractions in Cow Head is the Gros Morne Theatre Festival, which runs from May to September. The professional theatre company presents nine productions a season, with two plays a night.
Attendees come from all over the world. The focus of the festival is on celebrating the people and culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. This year they are performing the work of award-winning playwright David French, who was born in the tiny outport of Coley’s Point.

According to Librarian Nora Shears, the peninsula is called “The Head” not because it is shaped like the head of a cow, but rather because of a rock of that shape, which can only be seen from the sea. Nora’s source of information was her grandfather, John L. Payne, who was the peninsula lighthouse keeper responsible for guiding boats safely to shore. Nora is a native of Cow Head and has a very strong familial link to the area. Her great-grandfather, Jesse L. Payne, was the first lighthouse keeper, then came her grandfather, and finally the last keeper was her uncle, Jesse Payne. The light became inactive in 1988.

Nora Shears completed her library technician diploma at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador and has been working as the librarian in Cow Head for 14 years. “The job description has changed,” said Nora with a knowing smile, “now we are guides to online forms and processes.”

Cow Head Public Library is located off of the main road in town, which follows the shore. The library is a purpose-built, locally designed building, shaped like a small version of a hockey arena: two octagons connected in the middle. A few years ago, town council suggested that the library could move into the K12 school building to streamline building maintenance costs. However, the community was quick to point out that the library building serves many roles, including an important one as a meeting place for community groups and, as Nora says, “a social place for people to drop by.”

The library continues to work closely with the school, hosting class visits. It also operates a preschool reading circle, using materials purchased with grants from the early childhood literacy department of education.

With the help of summer interns funded by CAP (Community Access Program Newfoundland and Labrador), the library offers cyber camps that cover all the necessities of computer training. Nora and her staff also offer a post-secondary readiness program. Another vital role the library plays is as a bridge between town residents and distant governmental and educational institutions. The closest post-secondary institution is a two-hour drive away, so Nora provides distance education support to students who wish to stay in Cow Head while getting their education.

**Worth a visit**

There are many reasons to visit both of these towns, with their fascinating geological settings, captivating scenery, local delicacies, popular festivals and enthralling histories. Most deserving of mention are the people of Deer Lake and Cow Head, who not only are talented, welcoming, and knowledgeable about the local history and geography of the area, but who also have a commitment to preserving their respective community's integrity and history. The public libraries are integral to both towns, and they nurture and preserve the rich traditions of the residents.

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