

# OLAQ

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# OLA Quarterly



## President's Conference Issue

Embracing Technology:  
The Deschutes Public Library's Learning 2.0 Program

Cool Tools and Toys for Play and Work

Finding Through Clouds at Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

Passion, Commitment, and Renewal after 25 Years:  
A Conversation between Loretta Rielly and Susan Barnes Whyte

Advocacy and Optimism:  
A cycle for self-renewal

Keeping Up Upkeep

Looking Forward

Summer 2008

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## President's Conference Issue

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OLA Quarterly is indexed in *Library Literature*.

# President's Conference Issue

The OLA presidential theme this year has been, "Keep keeping up and renewing ourselves." This isn't what it might sound like, a theme and an afterthought. Nor is it ambivalent about what's more important: keeping ahead of technological change and the ensuing societal impacts, or how we keep ourselves continually energized and trained to keep changing and articulating the importance of what we do to a public that might be inclined to think we are obsolete. I've come to think of this theme as the what and the how of our work.

That as a profession we are continually updating our skills; implementing new technologies; preparing ourselves to see literacy, access, place, searching, retrieval, research processes, and learning differently are imperative and something in which we are already well-versed. One of my favorite quotes about libraries comes from an academic information technology magazine:

*If you had told people a decade ago that card catalogs would virtually disappear within ten years and would be replaced by our current information-management systems, they would not have believed you. Librarians have been the real heroes of the digital revolution in higher education.*

*They are the ones who have seen the farthest, done the most, accepted the hardest challenges, and demonstrated most clearly the benefits of digital information. In the process, they have turned their own field upside down and have revolutionized their professional training. It is testimony to their*

*success that we take their achievement—and their information-management systems—for granted.*  
(Ayers, 2004)

While this quote comes from the higher education context, the transformation of libraries has been no less striking. But it is not as if all this success in changing our libraries comes without hard work and acting on our deep commitment to the profound values and worth libraries bring to our communities.

This issue has been an opportunity to gather examples of the many projects and changes that libraries are making in their successful efforts to keep up. Who's doing something interesting in regard to technology? Who is delivering an old service in a new guise, who has been at this longer than I have and what sources of inspiration do they find in their work? I might as well have asked, "What do you love about being a librarian?" Because that's what came, projects born of pride and love and realized in Oregon libraries.

Liisa Sjoblom outlines a technology training project involving the entire staff of the Deschutes public library system. In doing so she underscores that library workers of all ranks need to have up to the minute skills and that innovation can spring from every level of the library organization.

Jane Nichols addresses keeping up technologically, literally. The blog Infodoodads has gotten lots of notice in national library circles. Aside from my pleasure in reading this blog, I believe that OLA members should take enormous pride that it comes out of Oregon

State University Libraries. Nichols, one of its contributors, outlines a mindset and strategies that orient her for the information ubiquity of our culture and for being a leader in adopting new technologies and methods.

Heather Brockerman takes on describing the next evolution in library catalog search engines. Visual structures for organizing information sets will necessitate changes in our thinking about search skills and users' approaches to finding information.

Susan Barnes Whyte and Loretta Rielly talk about what keeps them renewed and evolving after 25 years of librarianship. I'm thinking about lifting a quote from their article to print a tattoo for next year's Past President's fundraiser: "Energized by change and comfortable with uncertainty."

Abigail Elder reminds us of what we have to do to keep the ideal of libraries alive and finds renewal in those acts themselves.

And finally, Linda Absher, Oregon's own Lipstick Librarian gives us the straight dope on renewal.

## Reference

Ayers, Edward L. 2004. "The academic culture and the IT culture: their effect on teaching and scholarship." *Educause Review*, 39 (6), (Nov/Dec). <http://connect.educause.edu/Library/EDUCAUSE+Review/TheAcademic-CultureandtheI/40512> (accessed May 9, 2008).

Guest editor  
Sarah Beasley

Portland State University Library

# Embracing Technology:

## The Deschutes Public Library's Learning 2.0 Program

by **Liisa Sjoblom**  
Adult Services Librarian,  
Deschutes Public Library

At the Central Oregon Regional Library Conference in October of 2006, keynote speaker Michele Jeske of the Denver Public Library briefly mentioned this great self-paced technology training program at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (PLCMC) called Learning 2.0. Intrigued, Human Resources Manager Marian Thomas investigated the possibility of doing something similar at the Deschutes Public Library. Our own Learning 2.0 project was born—Embracing Technology.

When taking on any new training program, one should ask “why?” We targeted two very important goals: giving staff the opportunity to explore new online technologies for possible library application; and further developing a district-wide learning culture. Our introductory outline states the following:

*We need to be lifelong learners because our communities change so rapidly and we need to not only be knowledgeable, but also we need to be proactive in educating, inspiring, and encouraging lifelong learning in others. E.T.—Embracing Technology—is one of the key ways we can be connected, be a catalyst for learning, and provide links to the wide world of possibilities.*

The goal is to excite staff about the possibilities of new and emerging technologies and to encourage on-going exploration into the ever-changing world of new communication tools.

Marian Thomas quickly formed a team to plan and execute the program. In addition to Marian, team members include Teen Services Librarian April Witteveen, eServices Manager Wylie Ackerman, and Adult Services Librarian Liisa Sjoblom. We thoroughly reviewed PLCMC's Learning 2.0 site (<http://plcmclearning.blogspot.com>) and planned for a pilot project with the Redmond Library. This mid-sized

branch offered a mix of management, librarians, and library assistants who are motivated to experiment with new library programs. We contacted PLCMC for permission to use their program and linked heavily to their site via our intranet.

The nine-week pilot began in January 2007 with a target completion date of March 12. One of the main challenges was to get staff excited about the project. We felt that it was important to get people on-board quickly and to complete all of the exercises. We created a 30-minute in-person kick-off session covering the history of Web 2.0, some key terms, and information about support. At the end of the presentation we distributed a bookmark with key terms and a time line for completion, plus a short, fun quiz (Figure 1) pitting E.T., the movie against E.T.—Embracing Technology—the learning experience.

Figure 1  
Embracing Technology quiz

### E.T., the Movie

1. What was E.T.?
2. What was the name of E.T.'s friend?
3. What materials did E.T. use to make his phone?
4. What was E.T.'s favorite candy?
5. Who was E.T.'s face modeled after?
6. E.T.'s voice was performed by what movie star?

### E.T. at DPLS

1. What is a blog?
2. What is a podcast?
3. What does an alert do and how do you create one?
4. How do you access your library account thru the OPAC?
5. How do you find out about current public programs?
6. Where do you go to download an audiobook?



Everyone received a paper copy of the quiz wrapped in a tube around a pen—their very own “youtube.” Completed quizzes were sent to Marian who issued the first incentive, a treat bag of chocolate, small alien toys, and a poem by Carl Sandburg (for those who do not know, E.T.’s face was partially modeled after Carl Sandburg). The responses to the quiz gave us an idea about who would be participating. The other key tools used to monitor progress were the personal blogs that staff created using Blogger (<http://www.blogger.com>). Weekly reminders were sent to staff to keep them on track and encourage continued participation. Throughout their exploration staff commented on their progress and experiences, both good and bad. The last blog message provided a chance to comment on the experience and provided an indication that they were finished. The final incentive of a \$10 movie gift card was sent to participants who completed all exercises.

At the end of the pilot six of 19 Redmond staff completed the program and provided feedback through a short survey. Results of that survey are listed in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**  
Pilot survey questions with responses.

1. What was the most valuable part of the learning experience?
  - Trying out something new – 2
  - Getting up to speed on new technology – 5
  - Sharing your thoughts on a blog – 0
  - Being creative – 1
  - Other – 0
2. What were the barriers for you in completing the program?
  - Time – 7
  - Lack of interest – 0
  - Objectives were not clear – 0
  - Too much to wade through – 1
  - Not enough computers – 0
  - Other – 0
3. What did you think of the kick-off in the beginning?
  - Not needed – 0
  - Didn’t need the E.T. exercise – 0
  - Informative and fun; keep as is – 8
  - Keep informative part only – 0
  - Other – 0
4. What is helpful to have weekly reminders?
  - Yes – 7
  - No – 1
5. What do you recommend be modified before it is rolled out to other staff?
  - Shorter narrative to read – 2
  - Provide fewer options – 2
  - Provide estimated length of time for each segment – 3
  - Have options for learning, including read only for knowledge and practice exercises for those who want/need a deeper experience and more enhanced knowledge – 3
  - Other – 0
6. General comments – a chance to provide some open feedback.
  - Numerous comments provided.



Everyone found value in the introductory kick-off and they all liked trying out the new technology. The major drawback was time. Twenty-two activities, one less than PLCMC, were still too many. Before rolling it out to the rest of the staff the team needed to shorten the lesson plans and really make the learning experience relevant to the Deschutes Public Library.

The team reviewed the 22 exercises and managed to pare it down to a lean 14

exercises over nine weeks. We also took each of the exercises and wrote them for our own Web site. We were concerned that PLCMC would take down or alter their site as they updated their program. At this time none of our exercises link directly to the PLCMC site. We also moved the sequence of exercises around to logically fit what we wanted to emphasize. Figure 3 lists the current topics covered by Embracing Technology.

**Figure 3**  
**Embracing Technology – 14 Items**

Week 1	Item 1: Learning 2.0/Library 2.0—What’s This All About? Item 2: Lifelong Learners—Are You One?
Week 2	Item 3: Create a Blog and Record Your Thoughts Item 4: Online Social Networking
Week 3	Item 5: Exploring the DPL Intranet
Week 4	Item 6: Make Life “Really Simple” with RSS and a Newsreader
Week 5	Item 7: Explore New Reads with NoveList Item 8: DPL Audiobooks – Expand Your Options! Item 9: The DPL Catalog – Your Friend and Ally
Week 6	Item 10: Learn About Tagging and Discover Del.icio.us
Week 7	Item 11: What are Wikis? And Why Are They Important to Libraries?
Week 8	Item 12: Photosharing with Flickr
Week 9	Item 13: Audio/Visual 2.0—Podcasts at DPL Item 14: Audio/Visual 2.0—YouTube Video Hosting



We also realized early on that we needed to create a shorter version for part-time staff, primarily working in Circulation. They do not have the same amount of time to devote to the exercises and also use shared computers, e-mail and related communication tasks. The short version, called Jump Start (Figure 4, right), runs for five weeks and involves eight different exercises. Instead of creating a blog where progress is monitored, they complete a short quiz at the end of the five weeks.

Everyone in the Deschutes Public Library system was invited to participate between June and September of 2007 with staggered completion by department or branch through November. The Learning 2.0 Team provided orientations and followed up with support and encouragement through the weekly reminders (Figure 5, right).

Blogs were monitored for progress and we often took time to comment on postings to encourage the social nature of the entire experience. As people finished, movie gift cards were sent to staff.

Results were and continue to be positive. Participation was voluntary for the initial run in 2007, but strongly encouraged, especially for staff providing reference service. Half of the staff participated to some extent and one third completed all of the exercises. Blog commentary showed some areas such as YouTube and flickr were more enjoyable than others. The RSS feeds exercise was the least-liked activity. Some blogs were quite creative and everyone indicated that they really liked the chance to explore. Many wished they had more time and those who did the short version wanted to do the longer version.

**Figure 4**  
**Jump Start – 8 Items**

Week 1	Item 1: Learning 2.0/Library 2.0—What’s This All About? Item 2: Lifelong Learners—Are You One?
Week 2	Item 3: Online Social Networking
Week 3	Item 4: Exploring the DPL Intranet
Week 4	Item 5: The DPL Catalog—Your Friend and Ally Item 6: Explore New Reads with NoveList
Week 5	Item 7: Audio/Visual 2.0—Podcasts at DPL Item 8: Audio/Visual 2.0— YouTube Video Hosting:

**Figure 5**  
**Sample Weekly Reminder for Week 5**

The Learning 2.0 Committee hopes that the past few weeks have been educational, fun, and maybe a bit challenging. Your blogs are looking great, and we encourage you to continue describing your experiences with this project (along with any other random musings you might like to share) through Blogger.

If you didn’t receive a Week 5 reminder (we’re still learning how to use some advanced features of Outlook!) and missed out on the exercises last week, please take a moment to go back to these easy lessons. Learn about some of the new (or new-ish) things that DPL has to offer our patrons. Have you tried out any of these services?

Week 6 brings us to the concept of tagging and the Web 2.0 tool known as De.licio.us. Perhaps you’ve noticed a “Tag this” button on your web browser tool bar, or have heard the word De.licio.us bantered around in a context other than describing treats available in the breakroom...this is it! I personally adore this tool because it allows me to save as many web pages as I want without the fear of cluttering my Bookmarks folder. Go forth and tag, and don’t forget your local support liaisons if you run across any snafus!





Embracing Technology has proved to be a worthwhile learning program for staff and it is now part of the general orientation for new staff. The initial E.T. quiz is no longer required, but it is shared during the kick-off sessions which are still given by team members. As staff finish, they also receive the movie gift card. Participation is generally initiated by the department manager. Current plans are to review the exercises each September and update as necessary.

We found this to be a very worthwhile endeavor and can recommend it to any library looking to get staff involved in their

own learning. Not only are staff learning about new and emerging technologies, the team learned much from the development process. From working with surveys, forms, and discussion forums on our intranet, to selecting Web links, to participating in the activities, we developed a model for future online training programs. We encourage others to embrace technology and develop similar programs in your library!

Documents for the Deschutes Public Library's Embracing Technology program are available online at <http://www.nwcentral.org> (search "embracing technology").

**NEW THIS SEASON!**



**Oregon Coastal Access Guide**  
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**Strand**  
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Bonnie Henderson

In *Strand*, travel writer and amateur naturalist Bonnie Henderson traces the stories of wrack washed up on the mile-long stretch of Oregon beach she has walked regularly for more than a decade. The burned hull of a long-abandoned fishing boat, a glass fishing float, and an athletic shoe are a few of the starting points for odysseys that reach across the globe, from Coos Bay, Oregon, to fishing villages on the coast of Hokkaido, Japan.

Available October 2008. Paperback, \$18.95. To order, call 800-426-3797 or visit [oregonstate.edu/dept/press](http://oregonstate.edu/dept/press).



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# Cool Tools and Toys for Play and Work

by Jane Nichols  
Humanities and  
Social Sciences Librarian,  
Oregon State University

OCLC's 2005 report, *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*, highlighted the phrase 'keep keeping up' to call attention to the need for libraries and the people who work in them to keep current with changes in information technology, the Internet, and the devices we use (De Rosa, et al., 2005). What a challenge! We are all acutely aware of the need to track changes and we all devise our own strategies to do so. Like many, I employ several strategies for keeping up with technological innovations and for adopting innovations. My strategies include: subscribing to listservs and rss feeds, contributing to a group blog, using wiki software for group projects, and generally being open to incorporating new ways of doing my day-to-day work.

My prevailing strategy is to divide technological innovations I want to watch and learn about into hardware and software. Thinking about technology like this makes me feel less overwhelmed and helps me better track changes. I offer this as just one approach, knowing that everyone will do what works best for them when deciding what to watch and how deeply they will explore new trends.

## Practice with Hardware

In the early 1990s, I set the intention to learn about computers and took an introductory computer class at a local community college. The instructor gave advice that I still find useful. He suggested reviewing ads for computers to maintain awareness of developments in hardware. At the time he meant ads directed at

people who build their own computers. Now I browse ads showing the breadth of consumer electronics and imagine how libraries might use these "toys." For example, will library users want to check out book readers, laptops, video cameras, game consoles, or other devices? Or, what new services might library staff create and what new skills might be gained when using these tools?

My short list of possible electronics to play with is below. What would yours include? Examples of possible uses are included, though there are certainly many additional inspired uses.

Digital cameras can be used for taking photos of your library events, for use in written or oral presentations or to post on Web pages, and many other reasons. Many libraries offer cameras for check out and some, like Ann Arbor District Library, give classes on how to use them.

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Cell phones and other hand-held devices such as smartphones and PDAs are being used by libraries for text messaging reference services. LibrarianInBlack blogged about South Eastern Louisiana University's early experience with their text message reference service using Altarama's Reference by SMS. In February 2008, Joe Murphy from Yale University's Kline Science Library guest posted on Tame The Web. He described Yale's use of an Apple iPhone for their Txt a Librarian service and for posting to their Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Small laptops are increasing in numbers and options. You may be familiar with the Asus Eee PC or the XO Laptop from the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Project. Many Web sites describing the OLPC Project and laptop can be found on the Internet. I especially enjoyed the YouTube review, "A Librarian Reviews the XO Laptop" by YouTuber rashford of Portland, OR (rashford also writes the blog "Librarian by Design"). Several other small laptops are listed at the site Laptoping. Recently small laptops have become popular for use at conferences because of their portability, novelty, and lower cost.

Microphones, webcams, and headphones are common accessories for computers and laptops. Yet, using these for services such as video chat reference is still new territory for many libraries. Two leading the way with a Skype a Librarian service are The Ohio University Libraries and University of Waterloo Library. Skype requires use of a microphone and a webcam. Char Booth was recognized as a Mover and Shaker for her role in developing OU's Skype a Librarian service.

E-book readers' merits are still debated even though many libraries have provided lending services for several years. With the release of the Amazon Kindle, libraries once again can evaluate if and how they will incorporate readers into their services.

Video cameras offer libraries numerous creative options. A quick search for 'library' or 'libraries' on YouTube or blip.tv returns numerous instructional and promotional videos. Other uses for cameras are making them available for check out and creating video contests where library users submit their videos.

Game consoles and games are very popular with our users and many libraries are mulling if they should or how they will incorporate games and gaming into their collections and services. Others provide the usual range of services such as game and game console checkout and game nights. Libraries also incorporate games into their instruction and orientation programs. The Ubiquitous Librarian's post "CeLIBration 2007—recap (Diddy ain't got nothin' on us)" describes Georgia Tech's successful orientation program featuring games.

This isn't meant to be a definitive list and like any list, arguments can be made to remove or include items. The list is intended to give libraries and library staff something to react to (a starting point) when thinking about what skills they want to gain or services they want to consider developing. As I compiled this list, I discovered similar lists from Stephen Abram and David Lee King. You can see what they chose in their blog posts titled Technology Petting Zoos from February 5, 2008 and Topeka's Techie Toybox from October 23, 2007 respectively.

### **Exploring Social Software**

After deciding which hardware or "toys" you want to learn more about, dive into the mix of social software and social networking sites. You probably have heard of and used many of these or similar Web hosted services. Flickr and YouTube are just two obvious matches to the electronics listed above because of their photo and video



hosting services. Common to all of these is the ability to connect with others whether creating a document together, commenting on a post, or friending someone.

Web hosted productivity software such as Google Docs and Zoho foster collaboration. Participants use the Web-based software to create documents online and can collaborate with anyone who is given permission to access the online document. (You may recognize Google Docs from its former incarnation as Writely.) Because Google Docs and Zoho are Internet-based, working with colleagues, regardless of their location, is a snap. New to Zoho is their redesign for the iPhone. In their blog post “Zoho for iPhone Redesigned” from June 6, 2008, commenters note that mobile versions for other phones are in development.

Wiki software is well known because of Wikipedia. Libraries and librarians have employed wiki software in numerous ways: for professional conferences and committee work, work projects, subject guides, and more. A well known subject guide using wiki software is Chad Boeninger’s Biz Wiki. Other notable wikis are Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki and the Library Instruction Wiki.

WebBlog software is very common among libraries and librarians as a way to promote services, discuss issues affecting librarianship, and more. Many of us are familiar with text blogs which fill the biblioblogosphere. Other types of blogging include mobile blogging or moblogging, and video blogging, also called vlogging or v-blogging. Mobile blogging entails using a mobile device to post entries to a blog. Often photos and videos taken with a cell phone are included. A video blog primarily consists of posted videos regardless of the tools used to create the videos.

Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Ning enable people to con-

nect with friends and colleagues as well as with organizations, causes, events, and more. Librarians and libraries are exploring these as ways to connect with each other, their users, and to promote their services.

Widgets are increasingly popping up on library Web sites. For example, many libraries use a Meebo widget for their chat service and embed the widget on their library home page or on individual librarian pages. So what exactly is a widget? From Wikipedia’s definition, it can be described as a small Web-based application or code that can be placed into a Web site. By embedding widgets featuring video, photo, or more, librarians can spice up static html pages without acquiring expert programming skills. Sites like Sprout make it even easier by enabling you to build, publish, and manage your own widgets.

Social bookmarking sites like del.icio.us, Furl, and Digg let you save your favorite Web sites for later access. Librarians are finding creative ways of incorporating bookmarked sites into their work. Some librarians include a tag cloud—words representing the saved sites shaped in the form of a cloud—on a library course page. Anne-Marie Deitering’s WR 222: Everything’s an Argument course page is one example.

Media sharing sites like Flickr and Vimeo are great for hosting photos and videos. Many libraries use media sharing sites to store content for use on Web sites, in presentations, and as a way to promote and make visible the library, its events and services. One nice example (ok, maybe I’m biased!) is Oregon State University Library’s display of its Northwest Art Collection on Flickr.

Games, massive multiplayer online games and alternate reality games continue to be hot topics of discussion. For some libraries the discussion centers on whether to collect and lend games. Other libraries question how to incorporate games into



bibliographic information services, programming, and library events. Blogs exploring issues of games and gaming may help libraries looking at these issues. Examples include Research Quest, information.games and News about Games and Gaming from the American Library Association's Games and Gaming Member Interest Group.

Now that you've seen this list, what might you add or subtract? Which sites would you choose to focus on? Muddling through the decision of which software will be most impactful for us and our libraries will take time for exploration. Regardless of what is chosen, it's apparent that social software and the devices used with them are no longer a fad.

### Reading

One more piece critical to keeping up is learning about others' experiences. We all know about keeping up with journal literature and many of us subscribe to e-mail listservs. Add to this, setting up a RSS reader to follow blogs and other sites which offer feeds including journals and listservs.

With the many choices of feed readers, you are likely to find one matching your preferences. I have stuck with Bloglines, while colleagues swear by NetVibes or Google Reader. Other options include PageFlakes and Yahoo Pipes. After choosing a reader, the next challenge is deciding on which sites to subscribe to and how many. My feed reader quickly ballooned with subscriptions to many more feeds than I realistically could read. So I continually evaluate my feeds and attempt to harness my enthusiasm by focusing on blogs and sites that consistently contribute content over time and that provoke and engage me. Some that have recently caught my eye, as well as some well established sites, are in the sidebar.

#### Common Craft

<http://www.commoncraft.com/>

#### Designing Better Libraries

<http://dbl.lishost.org/blog/>

#### Educause Connects Contributed by Educause Learning Initiative

<http://connect.educause.edu/Library/ELI/>

#### Info-fetishist

<http://info-fetishist.org>

#### Infomational

<http://infomational.wordpress.com/>

#### LibrarianInBlack.net

<http://librarianinblack.typepad.com/librarianinblack/>


#### Read Write Web

<http://www.readwriteweb.com/>

#### Web Social Architecture and the post "A Conceptual Map of the Social Web"

<http://www.websocialarchitecture.com>



Keeping up has become more complex. However, cultivating a sense of play and adventure will hopefully prevent this from becoming just another chore. Add to that an item posted on the Info-fetishist blog stating, “sometimes even when the social or informational or educational or other payoff is there for the taking, developing new social networks takes work, and energy—and sometimes we have to pick and choose where to spend it,” which is also true about keeping up with changes in libraries and technology. 

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- AdventNet, Inc. Zoho. <http://www.zoho.com/>
- AdventNet, Inc. Zoho. Zoho for iPhone-Redesigned. <http://blogs.zoho.com/creator/zoho-for-iphone-redesigned/>
- Amazon.com, Inc. Kindle: Amazon's New Wireless Reading Device. <http://www.amazon.com/Kindle-Amazon's-Wireless-Reading-Device/dp/B000FI73MA>
- American Library Association's Games and Gaming Member Interest Group. News about Games and Gaming. <http://gaming.ala.org/news/>
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# Finding Through Clouds at Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

by **Heather Brockerman**  
*Technical Services Librarian,  
 Corvallis-Benton County Public  
 Library*

The general reaction to AquaBrowser, the library search tool most known for its “word cloud” is one of extremes: people, patrons and staff alike, tend to love it or they hate it. It’s either fun, intuitive, and serendipitous or too busy, dumbed-down, and commercial. Regardless of how you feel about it, and whatever its drawbacks, AquaBrowser is a supplement to the traditional Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), and that’s a good thing.

AquaBrowser presents the searcher with three main tools: search, discover, and refine. To initiate a search, the user enters keyword(s) in the search box, with results appearing in the middle pane of the screen in standard OPAC format. To the left of the middle pane

is the spiderweb-like word cloud, allowing the user to click on related terms, with each click generating a new result set. To the right is the refine menu, an in-context limits list allowing the user to click on results grouped by format, author, subject, language, and series.

A quick way to experience these AquaBrowser tools is to search for a term that has many different meanings such as the word “mercury.” This search in the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library implementation of AquaBrowser retrieves 212 titles. To the left, the search term sits in the center of the word cloud with various associations branching from it: some, such as “automobile,” “flight,” and “ford” and more informative than others.

City of Corvallis | Español

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 Aisea • Bookmobile • Corvallis • Monroe • Philomath

Home My Account Audiobooks Books Databases Movies/DVD Music

Discover Author  Search [Print](#) [Help](#)

Results 1 - 10 of 209 for **mercury**, sorted by:

**Mercury**  
 Christine Taylor-Butler  
 Call number: J, 523.41 TAYLOR-B  
 Year: 2005  
 Found: Mercury (10)  
 Series: Scholastic news nonfiction readers

**Mercury**  
 Robin Birch  
 Call number: J, 523.41 BIRCH  
 Year: 2004  
 Found: Mercury (6)  
 Series: The solar system

**Select Location**  
 Showing results from:

**Refine**

**Format**

- > Book (117)
- > Music (68)
- > Movie (15)
- > Sound recording (5)
- > Sheet music (3)
- > Serial (1)

**Author**

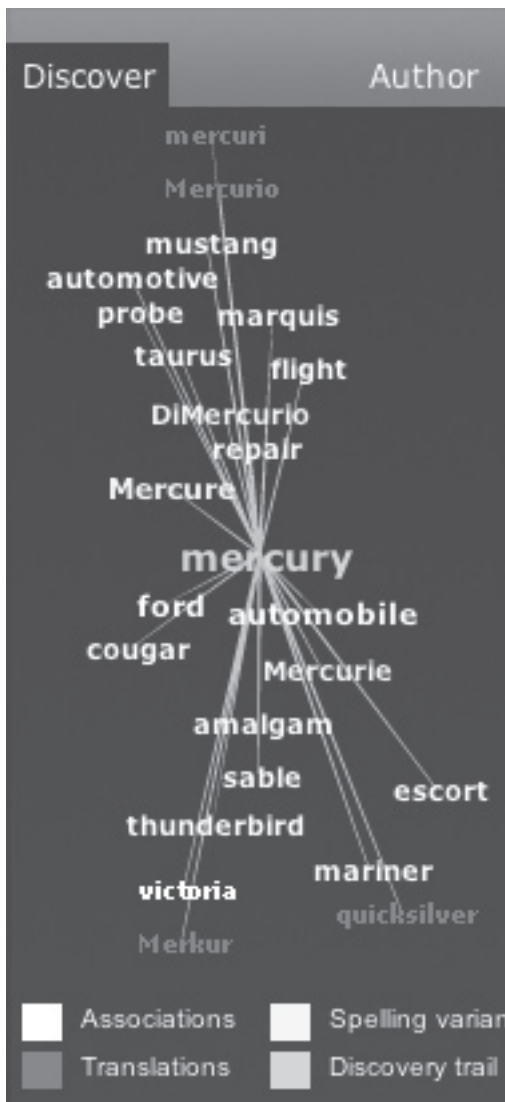
- > Clark, Terri (3)
- > Michaels, Leonard (3)
- > Twain, Shania (3)
- > 137 more...

**Subject**

- > Rock music (29)
- > Automobiles (17)

Associations     Spelling variant  
 Translations     Discovery trail

On the other side is a list of links which indicate, among other things, that there are 117 books matching this term, that 30 matching items also had the subject heading Rock music, and that 16 matching items are in the Chilton's total car care series.



Depending on your searching expertise, your information need, and your patience with extraneous information, these results can determine whether you are in the love it or hate it group.

If, as searcher (or a librarian), you knew that the library owned a collection of Chilton's repair books and you were looking for Mercury the car, this would be a very convoluted method of getting what you needed. Instead, you might be better served with the standard OPAC interface where you can do a keyword search for "mercury Chilton." This retrieves 16 matches, all Chilton repair manuals covering Mercury.

On the other hand, if you only had a vague sense of what you were looking for, the AquaBrowser's word cloud might be more appealing. By clicking your way from "Mercury" to "flight" to "space," each with a new set of results and related terms, you might happily discover items you didn't know existed, without ever having to learn the database syntax.

Approaching the standard OPAC with this same vague sense will result in a very different perception of results. The search retrieves the same number of hits, 212, but requires far more cognitive work. The first three items are 101 horsekeeping tips ("mercury thermometer" is in the contents note), *Best of Dusty Springfield* (published by Mercury Records), and *The astronauts: the story of Project Mercury*. A searcher would have to be fairly knowledgeable about the database infrastructure to know that clicking on the title record, then on the subject heading Project Mercury (U.S.) would retrieve highly relevant results, and that each of those results would then have additional subjects on which to click. AquaBrowser makes this discovery process transparent.

It is very easy and entirely understandable to get frustrated with the standard OPAC results, and many people do, librarians and patrons alike. But there is one very important thing to keep in mind—the search conducted above was keyword. Many people conduct keyword searches on standard OPACs and then throw up their



hands in frustration at the results, saying the OPAC doesn't work. The OPAC is working, but the translation between the searcher's intent and the resulting display is nearly nonexistent. That's where supplemental discovery tools such as AquaBrowser (Endeca and VuFind are others) step in.

I am not in favor of throwing out the traditional OPAC and starting all over. Instead, I think that various tools need to supplement the standard online catalog, at least until a dynamic combination of searching and discovering is created. As a cataloger, my passion has been the maintenance and refinement of our authority database and I have profound respect for the robust structure of the MARC record format. Whether we consciously admit to it or not, the library world tends to believe we are stuck with the standard OPAC, a conviction perpetuated by hesitant ILS vendors, lack of time and money, and the unfortunate assumption that MARC records and authority files are just too difficult to manipulate. Unlike online bookstores and search engines, we have a powerful infrastructure from which to build. Our problem is we have done very little to mask this infrastructure with a public interface.

One way to think of this issue is the online bookstore arena. The employee of a huge online bookstore is going to use an interface conducive to finding and retrieving an item that has been ordered. This is probably not the same interface the customer used in order to find, or discover, the item in the first place. The two information needs are different, with different cognitive forces behind them, but they are equally important and need a solid, shared foundation. The MARC and authority-controlled database is as important as it ever was, but

just as important is creating state-of-the-art interfaces that push data out to the same extent that they organize it internally.

The era of libraries as the sole providers of information has passed, but that does not mean we should step aside. We have a much longer history behind us than any Web site or search engine out there, and we have every reason to be proud of and use that history. We know how to organize information, how to retrieve it, and how to help people find it. What we need to work on is allowing our patrons to do all these things for themselves, while we work behind the scenes to facilitate their information retrieval. With our knowledge and passion driving such things as relevance ranking strategies, natural language conversion methods, and in-context readers' advisory, the possibilities of new online catalogs and discovery tools are exciting. This also means dedicating time and staff, jumping early and lightly onto emerging Web technologies, and recognizing that one interface is probably not going to be all things to all people.

It is easy to get caught up in the idea that these new technologies are too commercial or frivolous, but I like to respond to this argument (within myself and to others) with the title of a blog entry by Stephen J. Dubner: "If public libraries didn't exist, could you start one today?" (2007). I believe we could and that the online public interface would look a lot like Amazon, eBay, and AquaBrowser. 🌿

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# Passion, Commitment, and Renewal after 25 Years:

A Conversation between Loretta Rielly and Susan Barnes Whyte

by **Susan Barnes Whyte**  
*Library Director,  
Linfield College*

and

**Loretta Rielly**  
*Humanities and  
Social Sciences Librarian,  
Oregon State University*

Susan Barnes Whyte started as a librarian in 1982 as a cataloger at Mt. Angel Abbey library. She received her MLS from Emory University. She actually learned cataloging by typing card sets! And she learned online searching using a phone stuck in a duplex where every minute counted and cost. She worked in technical services for the first decade of her professional life and then moved to public services in 1990 at Linfield College. At Linfield she created the distance learning library services program for adult degree students, co-taught the first online class in 1993, and then moved to the director position in 1999. As director, she continues to co-teach in the Mass Communication Department and in course-integrated information literacy sessions. Her passion throughout her librarian career has been to create learning environments with faculty so that students begin to be able to think their way through myriad sources of information, i.e., to create informed skeptics of us all.

Loretta Rielly began her professional life as an English composition teacher at two midwestern universities. While she liked teaching and the students, she didn't like grading papers or, sometimes, reading them. ("If I had to read one more paper comparing living at home to living in a dorm, I would have had to be committed.") Librarianship provided a career in an academic setting where she could work with students but not have to be the authority figure. She earned her MLS in 1988; her first position was as bibliographic instruction coordinator at Northern Illinois University. She came to OSU as library instruction coordinator in 1990.

Susan and Loretta met at the OLA conference in Ashland in 1991 where, with their then pregnant friend, Connie Anderson, they held the first meeting of OLA's Library Instruction Round Table. Loretta and Susan discovered their affinity for working together and collaborated on several confer-

ences and workshops. This collaboration led to the first LOEX of the West, held at Willamette University, which continues to thrive today. Loretta and Susan also started a traveling gig focused on student learning back before this became the norm. And, what fun we had!

**LR:** Susan, you said you want to talk about passion. Why?

**SBW:** Because passion drives me and sustains me even when I think I need a sabbatical. Passion for students and learning, passion for what we say we do in the academy, and passion for libraries which represent knowledge in all forms open for the world to learn about. I'm driven by learning and by the students who at a place like Linfield open their souls to ideas, questions, and different points of view.

**LR:** Let's back up. What do you mean by "passion for what we say we do in the academy?"

**SBW:** Ah ha! Because I think that we are not always clear about what we do in higher education and that it is not always apparent to our students that our primary role is to participate in their learning and research. Over the years, I have found that sometimes we get so tied in knots about policy, accreditation, assessment, resources, that we can lose track of the essential role we all play in academia to pass knowledge on and to make new knowledge for the next generation of citizens in our democracy.

**LR:** It's not just passing it on, though. It's helping students learn to discover their own knowledge. I feel my role is more passive. I'm thinking of a consultation with a student about her research paper on doors in Hawthorne.



We sat at a computer and shared words—when I said “portal” she took off. All she needed was a new way to think about a door as a metaphor. Twenty minutes later, she was scanning articles in Project Muse, looking at bibliographies, and telling me what she was finding. All I had to do was sit back, listen, and occasionally encourage her to focus. I love being present at the moment of discovery.

**SBW:** Yes, I couldn’t agree more. I love that discovery with students. But, I don’t think our role is “passive.” One thing that has changed a lot since 1982 is the wealth of sources easily discoverable, and yet, the words still matter. Librarians are still experts at lateral thinking, and coming up with synonymous words so that those suggestions can go a long way towards opening doors, so to speak, and to nudge students to think beyond their conception of the world of knowledge. That nudging is teaching and when the light bulb goes on for the student, I am lit as well. Discovery is fun, never dull, constant puzzle solving.

**SBW:** Loretta, 25 years later, what makes you happy about coming to work 20 years later?

**LR:** People. Students, yes, but also my colleagues. We’ve hired quite a few new librarians over the past five years and I’m learning so much from them. I have a blog! I have RSS feeds! I do Jing presentations! I Captivate! I’m having so much fun learning new things and finding new ways to share information in my teaching. I teach a credit class in literary research for the English department and am always looking for ways to keep students and myself engaged. (I get bored easily.) Some of the new social tools allow students to collaborate in exciting new ways. I’m starting to work on a project for my class next year using one of the timeline creators such as [http://www.x](http://www.xtimeline.com)

<http://www.dipity.com> to trace a literary work from publication to the critical conversations that followed, placing these in the historical, social, and cultural contexts that influence new readings, new understanding of a literary text.

**SBW:** Yes, it’s imperative as a professional that we discover what rejuvenates us intellectually, isn’t it? For some, that means changing jobs every five years or moving on to another university. For others, perhaps more place-bound, I think we would all agree that as librarians, all is changing all of the time and we only need to participate, take risks, and keep on trying new ways to engage with students and faculty. Remember, Loretta, when Jerry Campbell declared that the reference desk was dead, oh, about 15 years ago. And, what do we see? We see across academic librarianship, new approaches to how we do reference, IM, chat, reference consultations, email, Facebook all are examples of new approaches. The important component to renewal is to continue to imagine and get excited about the potential. With experience we can add in the “why does this matter” question and reflect about other experiments in librarianship, some of which have played well and some of which have not. The best part about librarianship is the collaboration with our colleagues.

**LR:** I love chat reference! I thought I would hate it but students have responded so positively. Most of our chat questions end with a “thank you” or “this is awesome.” And students are fine with giving their e-mail if a question can’t be answered during the chat. They seem to be more patient than they are at the desk, probably because they can work on something else while they chat with us. At the desk, they can’t multitask in the same way. Chat also bridges space. A couple of years ago a candidate we inter-



viewed said, “To the distance ed student, we’re the ones who are distant.” That comment changed my thinking about service to students: meeting them where they are is literal as well as figurative.

**SBW:** Yes, I love that quote. I think that’s another idea that I love about librarianship now. When I was in graduate school, my training was all about the management and control of collections and the management and control of the reference interview and the reference process. I like this new world, pushed by technology and by traditional-aged students’ prowess with that technology. I think it’s more interesting that we in the library have to focus more upon people now, their research habits, their discovery models. It brings into question what we’re about as librarians and makes us think harder about what we do and why we do it. I think that’s healthy for us as a profession. Even though I ran technical services operations in several libraries for a decade, I’ve never really been that interested in control as my leading idea.

**LR:** But you’re a manager? Doesn’t that require control?

**SBW:** Actually, what I’ve come to realize over the past almost decade of being a director, is that as a leader, I cannot control and do not wish to do so with my colleagues.

**LR:** You’re a director in the theatrical sense—someone who plans and suggests and lets the actors discover the truth of the characters and the script.

**SBW:** And my favorite teaching and leadership metaphor has always been as a leader of a jazz ensemble. There is a theme, but variations fly and riffs can be wonderful to listen to. As I learned to let go and let even the discordant notes tumble, in the end we

create a library environment that works well for Linfield students and faculty. And, I hope, for each of us. Leading and managing are not perfect because human beings are bundles of unexpected behaviors and contradictions, but I always believe in the value of people.

**LR:** I’m in a larger institution so I don’t get to know students as well as you do but I still value the connections I make with them, in the classroom, on chat, at the desk, on the phone, wandering around the stacks. OSU is creating tools that we hope will enable students to discover and create without our intervention. Not everyone wants to ask for help, and because of staff and budget issues, we can’t meet with as many classes as we’d like. We’re looking at alternatives that take the library to the classroom. Our “Course Assignment Pages” (<http://ica.library.oregonstate.edu/course-guides>) suggest paths for students and include a chat box and e-mail link for students to ask questions if they don’t understand. And they do ask. I’ve heard concerns about moving from high touch to high tech. I think today’s students concept of high touch is different than ours. I love the creative aspect of libraries and changing to meet new needs.

**SBW:** I resonate with Loretta’s sentence above about creativity and change in libraries. That is fun for me. I also have enjoyed working my way into leadership positions and like the large view these positions bring to my perspective of librarianship. I cannot always say I love budget work, but I do like bringing the library perspective and unique library ethos to other departments at Linfield and to other organizations. The future is bright for libraries and librarianship both in terms of the teaching and learning which Loretta and I are passionate about, and also in terms of the promise of digitization new

*See Passion, Commitment and Renewal page 24*



# Advocacy and Optimism:

## A cycle for self-renewal

by **Abigail Elder**  
*Outreach Coordinator,  
Multnomah County Library*

**I**t is easy, at times, to despair the future of Oregon libraries. In the past few years, there have been cuts and layoffs, controversies, and closures; a variety of disappointments affecting every type of library, in almost every region of the state. In such times, it's vital that we take care of ourselves, as well as our patrons and our libraries. Fortunately, the very act of advocating on behalf of libraries can be a work of self-renewal.

I put my faith in the optimistic nature of libraries. Each person who walks through the doors of a library is an optimist, with complete confidence that the right information, service, event or resource is simply waiting to be found. Like our patrons, we are optimists, too. We cheerfully check out books and materials, knowing full well that some of them won't come back to the library. We begin each reference question with the assumption that there is an answer and we can find it. We believe in our work, ourselves, and our community.

But it is not enough to merely possess an optimistic outlook; one risks becoming unrealistic and ultimately ignored if that optimism is not accompanied by action. Helen Keller wrote of optimism: "the world is sown with good; but unless I turn my glad thoughts into practical living and till my own field, I cannot reap a kernel of the good."

One meaningful way to act optimistically is to be politically aware and active. It's not a realm that comes easily to library people. At the reference desk, we work to remain neutral and provide all points of view. So it was a struggle for me to be a library advocate the first time I attended OLA Legislative Day in Salem.

Imagine my delight when I found that I hardly had to say anything! My representatives were eager to be the advocates—they love libraries! They told me about their neighborhood library, their children's school library, the library in the town where they grew up. They were animated and enthusiastic, and it was easy to steer the conversation toward the modest ways that they could help Oregon libraries. With the relationship officially started, it's now natural to drop them the occasional e-mail and alert them of upcoming matters of interest to libraries.

Likewise, I was quite reluctant last year when Janet Webster asked me to join Connie Bennett and testify before a legislative budget committee. My voice trembled and my testimony sounded insufficient as I heard myself read it aloud. I fully expected the legislators to question my statistics and vigorously disagree with my every fact. Instead, they smiled and nodded and asked only one question, "Did Eugene Public Library still host a Read to the Dogs program?" Regardless of what they decided in those budget sessions, it was apparent that they, too, loved and valued libraries. I left the hearing room a little like I do after voting or donating blood: a little shaky, a little overwhelmed, but satisfied that I had done something good.

Advocacy's great blessing is that it requires us to temporarily step away from the micro-dramas and the detailed spreadsheets of our daily work. It gets us unstuck from the minutiae by refocusing our attention on what is truly important. As advocates, we can talk proudly about the rich history of libraries, their role in a democracy, and the strong values we cherish. It's a privilege




to talk about things greater than our daily work, and advocacy provides that platform. Advocacy is a way to take the mundane, tedious and stressful daily tasks and put them in proper perspective.

When we promote libraries to others, we ourselves are reminded of the personal reasons why we choose to work in libraries. We have an audience with whom we can share our favorite stories—of the lives changed, discoveries made, and relationships fostered. And in telling the stories to others and seeing their reactions, we are hearing them again for the first time. We are reminded, once again, of how lucky we are to work in such an important place.

Like an astronaut viewing the earth from space, advocates stop seeing borders and divisions, and start seeing the commonalities. Once outside the library building, we can see the library in its environment and fully appreciate its impact on the community. As we step away from our desks, we walk into a place where people are, just like my legislators, eager to share their love of libraries.

I sometimes attend fairs and events, staffing a table with pencils, stickers and library flyers. The tables on either side of me frequently have better giveaways, but people make a beeline straight for the library table. Do they have a burning reference question? A desperate desire for a red sparkly pencil? Nope—they need to tell me how much they love their library. We owe it to our citizens to repeat those stories and share them with elected officials and decision makers. If the average citizen takes the time to sing the praises of the library, shouldn't we? Don't we owe it to ourselves and to them?

Staffing phone banks, raising money, and giving speeches are outside our comfort zone. But these acts help us to deepen our connections with like-minded volunteers, people we may know only as library patrons on the other side of the desk. Working alongside them, seeing them donating their time, energy, and money to the library cause inspires us to provide them with library services worthy of their efforts.

Advocacy isn't easy, but fortunately it's a growth process. It's rarely accomplished through one grand gesture; instead, it's composed of dozens of little encounters. This process provides renewal, as each interaction is another chance to revisit relationships already planted, while we tenderly sow new ones. Advocacy stretches us little by little, to try new things, develop new skills, and take risks. It provides an outlet for spending our natural optimism, and in turn, replenishes it. 





# Keeping Up Upkeep

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by **Linda Absher**  
*Humanities Librarian,  
Portland State University*

**R**enewal. That was the charge from Sarah Beasley, our president for the 2007–2008 year, to the OLA masses. And I, conscientious mass that I am, decided to take up the banner during the year. And what a year! After much experimentation and lengthy explanations to my spouse and various legal authorities, I have come up with some handy-dandy tips guaranteed to make going to work a transformative and renewing adventure.

Don't know what to do with all that complimentary chocolate you dumped out of the vendors' bowls and into your freebie ALA conference bag last summer? Melt in a microwave and mix with shredded library fine slips and rubber-bands. Slather over shoulders and legs for an exfoliating experience you'll never forget.

Tired of the sight of teenagers perennially bored out of their minds during your carefully-planned craft hours? Have them paint your nails with scenarios from their favorite YA novel. Give freebie reading tattoo stickers to those who can fit you in for weekly appointments.

Need a revenue generator for your library? Pulp withdrawn serials and layer it in bathtubs, letting it ferment into a mush. When it heats up to something over body temperature, have the Friends of the Library group sell it as a rejuvenating spa bath.

Charge extra for baths tinted different colors with makeup from lost-and-found.

Offer your patrons programs to stave off dementia via mental exercises. Start by having them figure out library staffing schedules during peak vacation times.

Want to shake up your wardrobe? Try on various cardigans left behind by inattentive committee members out on a lunch break.

Face lifts too expensive? Try a low-cost alternative using binding clamps and thermal glue strips. Have pillows strewn about the workplace to make sure you have safe places to land when you pass out every five minutes.

Teach the children who attend your story hour time how to sew couture knock-offs. If they or their parents complain, tell them you have a collection of very large Barbie dolls.

Looking for ways to keep your staff mentally nimble? Inform them that due to budget cuts, the main library is closing and all materials and units have to be shoved into the smallest branch library. Two weeks from today.


No need to thank me for these suggestions. Just make sure to donate to my legal defense fund. 🌿

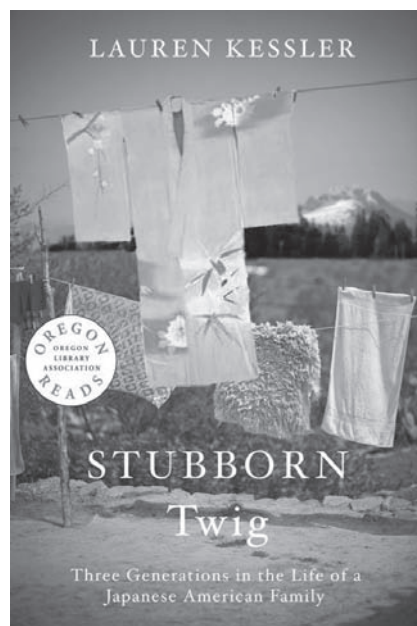


# Looking Forward

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*Recommended by  
Sarah Beasley,  
OLA President*

Among the great things happening in Oregon libraries in the coming year will be the Oregon Reads activities. See details about this project on the Oregon Reads Web site at <http://www.oregonreads2009.org/>. You can still order discounted copies of the first trade edition of *Stubborn Twig* through OLA's memberclicks Web site <https://web.memberclicks.com/mc/quickForm/viewForm.do?orgId=ola&formId=43160>. Watch the OLA Hotline for information about ordering the Oregon State University Press edition with an introduction by Governor Ted Kulongoski and terrific new cover art. 



## Passion, Commitment, and Renewal

Continued from page 19


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and new media tools which create mashups (video, audio, and text) and hence new ways of seeing and learning about ideas.

**LR:** One of the things I've been thinking about lately is how social networking will transform libraries. Libraries have always been places where people come together to meet, hear talks, read. We need to accommodate new generations that want to share their ideas with everyone, everywhere—as simple as being able to contribute reviews of the books they've read. They want to know what their peers think about *Astonishing X-Men*—they probably care more about what their peers think than what a librarian thinks.

**SBW:** And, We can't be afraid that if we let students put stuff into our catalogs, that they'll put bad stuff. We've always been about the sharing of ideas.

**SBW:** In the end, what drives us always has been the promise of change and better service and connection for people, students, faculty and each other.

**LR:** Yes, we're very lucky to be energized by change and comfortable with uncertainty. 





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# OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2008

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association. Beginning with volume 3, number 4 the *Quarterly* is indexed in Library Literature. Each issue of the *OLA Quarterly* is developed by a guest editor(s), on a topic decided by the Publications Committee. To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact any member of the Publications Committee by visiting <http://www.olaweb.org/org/pubs.shtml>.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 14 • No 3 Fall 2008	<i>Professional Development</i>	July 15, 2008	September 15, 2008	<i>Stephanie Miller &amp; Abigail Elder</i> Multnomah County Library
Vol 14 • No 4 Winter 2008	<i>Disaster Preparedness</i>	October 15, 2008	December 15, 2008	<i>Alex Toth</i> Editor-in-Chief, Pacific University  <i>Kristen Kern</i> Associate Editor, PSU  <i>Judith Norton</i> Associate Editor, OHSU  <i>Shawna Gandy</i> Associate Editor Oregon Historical Society



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