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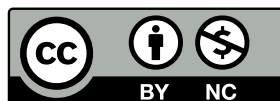
Upcoming Issue

Spring 2011
*Library Wonders
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Doing More with Less: Creative Strategies in the New Economy

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Introduction

In the past year, Oregon libraries and librarians have been asked by administrators, legislators, managers and others to do more with less ... less financial support, less material support, less professional development support, less staffing, and more—er, less. These requests, or rather, directives are popular across the country, as evidenced by the numerous budget cuts, salary and hiring freezes, and library closings we have read about, listened to, and seen in the media in 2010. There is a clear need for creative thinking to address the many issues created by having less of everything. Exemplifying this, an ALA title set to be published in 2011, the *Frugal Librarian: Thriving in Tough Economic Times* will provide strategies for success across all libraries—academic, public, and special—when faced with a troublesome fiscal outlook.

Oregon librarians are ahead of this curve on this type of thinking, and have been doing more with less for some time. Despite their often challenging situations, this state's librarians use creative thinking in order to continue to provide the best services possible to their users. While making do with what they currently have, they are working to meet users' needs, develop professionally, continue to learn, and even subsist on less.

This issue provides insight into how librarians across Oregon are addressing these challenges in their own libraries and lives: Michele DeSilva demonstrates how thinking outside the box and involving library users can lead to great innovations. Robin Paynter and Margaret Mellinger show us how e-learning is helping to meet the professional development needs of underserved librarians statewide, while Nora Barnett provides tips on getting more out of a distance education MLS program. Connie Bennett and LaVena Nohrenberg provide an account of a continually shrinking budget, and their efforts to work creatively within those confines. Carson Mischel shows resourcefulness in creating connections and partnering with other organizations to meet user needs. Emily Ford and Valerie Fishler give practical tips for economical living as well as reducing library expenses. It is my hope that this issue provides you with inspiration and practical information to creatively develop your own strategies for doing more with less in the new economy.

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O I L A O

More Input, Less Guessing:

Using Customer Suggestions to Develop Programs and Services

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Introduction

A perennial question of the library profession is relevancy. For many years this question was primarily about technology and modes of information and entertainment delivery. How would we stay relevant in an ever-changing world of e-books, Google, YouTube, Netflix, and the myriad other sources which vied for our customers' attention and offered to meet their information and entertainment needs? More recently, this question has focused not just on maintaining our relevancy but also on keeping taxpayers and government officials apprised of that same relevancy. One way we have addressed the question has been to augment our traditional offerings. Some of us put coffee shops in our lobbies and rewrote policies about food, drink and noise in less severe language; many of us offer downloads of audio or e-books or check out other less traditional items, like video games or laptops. We market our services as the reliable alternative to Google and offer classes in computer use and job searching. We also offer entertainment in the form of story times, movie nights, book clubs, literary events, and free coffee during finals week. Despite various worst-case scenarios, the numbers—headcounts, program and class attendance, and checkout statistics—show that our efforts to stay relevant and involved in our communities' lives are working extremely well. Especially in these tough economic times, people are using libraries and their services more than ever.

Of course, as the economy presents challenges for our customers so it presents challenges for libraries. We are serving more people in more ways with less money and less staff than we may have had during economically flush times. Thus, it is critical to develop approaches that provide a consistently high level of service without overtaxing already stressed staffs.

One way we provide high quality service is to develop and offer programs and services that are responsive to our population's needs. Whenever adding a new program or service, though, there are several questions to consider. Who will use the service or program? What will it cost the library? How many people have to attend a program or to use a service to make it "worth it"? How will the new offering affect current staffing levels and existing workflows? These questions are even more important in tough economic times, when our willingness or ability to experiment confronts the realities of both shrinking budget lines and stagnant staff numbers.

This is a key time to think about the source of ideas for new services and programs in our organizations. Is the source the library board or upper level management? Or, is it librarians and paraprofessional staff who generate the ideas and propose them to management? The former approach is often referred to as the top-down approach, while the latter is frequently known as bottom-up. I have generally been in favor of the bottom-up approach, believing that the staff who interact with customers and who perform essential routine procedures often have an uncannily accurate sense of what those customers want or how efficient and effective a new procedure will be.

Another method might be called the outside-in method. It involves asking the people we're serving, who I'm going to call customers, what kind of services they would like to have and then acting on their suggestions. While the word customer may have unpleasant associations for some library staff, it probably best describes the way that our users think about themselves in relation to us (Hernon and Altman, 2010). They aren't thinking of themselves as patrons or users, and that affects the kind of service they expect. Jeannette Woodward (2009) notes that customers, "demand high-quality facilities, resources, and services. They



want a library that is focused on their needs, and they have no intention of going out of their way to meet the library's needs or expectations" (178). I use the word not to suggest a commercialization of libraries' services but instead to emphasize our obligation to provide exceptional services that take into account our service population's needs and desires.

Perhaps the primary benefit of the outside-in method is that it shifts the cognitive workload of brainstorming new ideas to the customers. Additionally, it provides a very specific direction for services, saving time and money spent on services later deemed unsuccessful or unnecessary. The suggestion box—either in physical or virtual format—is a common feature in libraries, and it is a useful way to get customer feedback; however, there are other methods for collecting customer feedback that are higher volume, livelier, and more inclusive.

Of course, the outside-in method requires staff work: it is staff that must solicit customers' suggestions, keep track of the results, and translate suggestions into services that support the library's mission. However, the process needn't be an excessive amount of work. Often, we form committees, task forces, or sub-committees to carry out initial research and craft surveys or polls that a less-than-statistically-significant percentage of our customers respond to, at which point we discover that no one has time to tabulate and analyze the data. Half the battle is getting everyone to set aside time in their busy schedules for committee meetings. Then, we form more task forces to implement change. By the time we get around to acting on the suggestions, customers' needs and desires have changed, or, in the case of com-

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munity college libraries, the customers who made the suggestions have transferred to other institutions or entered the work force. No doubt we have only the best of intentions when we start these processes, but the problems inherent in this method are well countered by the outside-in method.

Getting Customer Input

Anyone who has spent a decent amount of time at a service desk—circulation or reference—knows how much customers have to say about the library, good and bad, and, let me note, it is a very worthwhile exercise to record customer compliments; not only do they make staff feel appreciated, but they also let the library track what it's doing right. The circulation desk, particularly, is an underutilized area when it comes to acquiring customer input. Though self-service kiosks have perhaps changed traffic patterns at circulation desks, many customers find they still need to visit that desk frequently. I use the word need intentionally: while customers often have some degree of choice about whether or not they ask a reference question or just flail around in the stacks themselves, they literally have to go to the circulation desk. While performing routine tasks like checking out, picking up holds, getting change, asking directions, or paying fines, customers will often make suggestions to circulation staff. Treating these casual interactions as information gathering opportunities and keeping track of the comments via a staff blog, SharePoint, Intranet, or some such similar method reveals customer needs, likes, and dislikes. Additionally, staff in the stacks also receive not only customer suggestions but also questions that, if tracked, can lead to the discovery of service failures (like unclear signage) and service improvement opportunities.

Not everyone will share their idea with staff, which is why libraries provide suggestion boxes. And, obviously, in the era of blogs and social networks like Twitter and Facebook, there are other ways of soliciting customer feedback—and many libraries have employed this method successfully. But, there are also customers who lack the skills, time, or effort to log on and post comments. Even tech savvy customers, like college students, may simply lack the time or inclination to volunteer their opinions to the library. A colleague, InterLibrary Loan (ILL) Coordinator Lynne Hart, returned from a Northwest ILL conference with a simple, ingenious solution to this problem. Lynne suggested placing one of the library's large, mobile whiteboards in various locations around the library with a sign on it saying, "We want your comments." Then, customers could write directly on the whiteboard. It was quick, easy and an extremely low barrier for our customers. We put it far enough away from a desk so that customers wouldn't feel like they were under surveillance but close enough to keep an eye out for inappropriate graffiti. This method produced many useful and enlightening comments. Surprisingly, customers engaged with one another on the board, often supporting or weighing in on a suggestion that was someone else had written. Not only did we get novel ideas, but we also discovered which of our existing services patrons didn't know about. We had a student worker transcribe the suggestions and comments into a word document, but another quick and easy method of documentation would be to take a picture of the white board. After the data transcription was complete, we'd erase and roll it out to a new location.



In his now classic book on Web usability, *Don't Make Me Think*, Steve Krug (2006) makes a convincing case for doing very simple usability testing in the name of getting good, quick feedback. Similarly, libraries can deploy simplified and informal versions of more formal research methods, such as the tried-and-true survey. During spring term 2009, my library developed a time-sensitive need to better understand how students were using the various library spaces available to them. I put together a short survey, printed it out, and it was handed out to students who were currently in the library. An additional stack of surveys was placed on a table in the middle of our entry way. By the end of the day, I had 100 completed surveys in my hands. Student workers tabulated the responses and transcribed the comments. The resulting report told us what our customers really wanted, versus what we assumed they wanted—and provided valuable guidance as to where we should direct our efforts at working to improve the library's service to students. Our customers wanted more quiet space, more individual study space (as opposed to collaborative work space), and stricter rules about cell phones and noise. Even if students were meeting for group work in the library, as many indicated they were, they seemed to perceive the library as a place to get work done, and they wanted an environment that was conducive to productive work.

Acting on Customer Suggestions


Acquiring customer input is only half of the work. While that's the half that customers can help us with, we need to respond and act on their suggestions. This will, in turn, get our customers to do more work for us—but more on that later. Many of the customer suggestions required only minor changes and were often low cost. Some of the suggestions indicated that we needed to market some services more actively and required no new service development at all. One example of a low-cost, high-impact change was converting the library's second floor to a quiet zone. We added signage to the area and advertised it around the library and on the library's Web site. Because we knew this was something students wanted, the staff time put into this project was an effective and economical use of time. The response has been overwhelmingly positive; students appreciate the clear designations between quiet space and our information commons collaborative work zone on the first floor.

In this case, we were able to act on the suggestions relatively quickly; it is important that customers see us in action. Even if a suggestion can't be acted on immediately, it's important to let customers know that we have heard their suggestions and are working on making progress towards implementing some of them. For example, I also added a page to my library's Web site that draws an explicit connection between the second floor quiet space and the library's recognition of student needs. The worst thing we can do is collect suggestions and then do nothing with them. The customers will notice, and it will hurt the library's credibility.

If we act on customer suggestions and make clear our commitment to satisfying our customers, then they will do some more work for us. Those customers will spread the word about the quality of our services and the relevancy of the library to the community. When tough times present funding challenges, those satisfied customers will be vocal advocates and supporters of the library, again lessening the workload on library staff.



Conclusion

Indubitably, it takes work to solicit, collect, and analyze customer suggestions. However, it takes more work to develop a service, market it, and then assess its value—a process that front loads the work process for staff but often leads to services that are canceled, scaled back, or changed significantly when customer input is finally gathered. Getting customer input doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming. Methods for input should encourage maximum customer participation: the simpler, the better. Of course, this doesn't mean that we should completely discount innovative staff-generated ideas or that we should cease trying to educate our customers about new and better resources and methods for learning. But, in tough times, when we seek to do more with less, we should opt for more input and less guessing and employ the outside-in method for developing services that will be useful to and well used by our customers. 

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Membership has its Benefits:

Continuing Education E-learning Workshops in Hard Times

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Introduction

The Oregon chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has a long history of providing its members with a range of continuing education (CE) and professional development (PD) opportunities since its inception as a state chapter in 1975 (and as the Academic Division of OLA since 1989). Indeed, they are core elements of its mission statement:

“... ACRL-Oregon seeks to support academic libraries and librarians; to foster communication among academic librarians; to promote the development of Oregon academic libraries; to sponsor educational programs of interest to academic librarians; and to serve as liaison between academic librarians and various other academic and library constituencies.” (ACRL Oregon, 2010)

In 2008, a new CE program was started to address the changing needs of the membership, who were hard pressed to keep up with the explosive growth of ideas and new practices in academic librarianship while funding for their CE and PD dwindled due to the current economic turmoil.

A [Brief] History of the Program

When the ACRL Oregon Board realized that it had a small nest egg of funds available in 2006–2007 a lengthy debate ensued as to how to best utilize them; ultimately an e-learning scholarship program was born that would support individual librarians' CE needs via online workshops or courses. During 2008–2009 there were four recipients of e-learning scholarships:

- Claire Rivers, Portland Community College, for *Metadata for Digital Collections*;
- Jacquelyn Ray, Lane Community College, for *Instructional Design for Online Teaching & Learning*;
- John Reppinger, Willamette University, for *Thinking Like a Designer: Web Design & Construction*;
- and lastly Michelle DeSilva, Central Oregon Community College, for *Information in the Social Context*.

The face of the existing ACRL Oregon E-Scholarship program changed when group subscriptions to the popular ACRL National E-learning Live Webcasts (see for example, <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/events/elearning/index.cfm>) became available. Rather than serving the continuing education needs of one person at a time, it was possible to offer continuing education workshops to many people at once. The group subscriptions enabled ACRL Oregon to provide CE opportunities across the entire membership. Also, it was an opportunity to bring together groups of librarians at sites across the state to participate in



the online workshops and network with other librarians. Members and non-members were welcome to attend the live sessions, increasing CE opportunities for both academic and non-academic library staff. To publicize the events, ACRL Oregon sent “save the date” messages directly to its membership e-mail list, to the *LIBS-OR* and *ACRL-NW* discussions lists, entered them in the *Northwest Central* events list, and published them on the *ACRL Oregon Continuing Education Web page* (<http://www.olaweb.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=68063>), *ACRL Oregon Blog* (<http://acrloreion.org/>), and in the *OLA Hotline* (<http://olahotline.wordpress.com/>). The ACRL Oregon Board has even received e-mails from colleagues in Washington State inquiring whether they too are eligible to attend (yes, they can)!

The 2010 inaugural series of workshops included:

- *Marketing Ideas That Work in Academic Libraries: Pecha Kucha Presentations*
- *Check In with Location Based Mobile Services: Foursquare and Libraries*
- *The Not-So-Distant Librarian: Online Library Instruction to Engage Students and Faculty*
- and *So You Want to Create an Interactive Information Literacy Tutorial?*

The in-person, “live” sessions were held at academic libraries along the I-5 corridor in western Oregon to allow easy access by the majority of our membership (many thanks to our host sites: Chemeketa Community College, Oregon State University, Portland Community College, and Southern Oregon University libraries). Equitable access was a major concern for the ACRL Oregon Board who wanted to make any CE activities it sponsors available to all members. Luckily, ACRL National also provides an archived version of each workshop soon after the live event, and allows (nay encourages) the URL to be sent out to all ACRL Oregon members. This has been an ideal situation for a membership organization like ACRL Oregon whose members are spread out across a rather large state, and with members’ time and travel funds at a premium.

In-person attendance to the inaugural series has varied, from a low of three to a high of ten. The audience has drawn members and non-members alike, though the Board does not currently have an accurate method to determine how many members have attended the workshops in person or viewed the archived workshops. Feedback regarding the series has been positive, though limited. In the future the Board will seek more advance input about which workshops to offer by polling the membership and soliciting additional feedback on how to improve member services. The ACRL Oregon Board has heard of positive results from attendance at the workshops. For example, Elaine Hirsch, Lewis & Clark College Library Advancement Coordinator, was inspired to propose a program on marketing for the OLA 2011 Annual Conference after attending the *Marketing Ideas That Work in Academic Libraries* session (personal communication, 2010). In addition, after a stimulating discussion at OSU Libraries, academic and public librarians set up a meeting to continue their conversation over some adult beverages.



Margot Conahan, ACRL Professional Development Manager, has called ACRL Oregon trailblazers for our innovative program to provide ACRL National e-learning opportunities that enrich our membership’s professional development (though perhaps she was referring to our basketball team!) (personal communication, 2010). Indeed a quick review of other ACRL chapter Web sites reveals that ACRL Oregon is a leader in CE and PD among the chapters, offering a full range of conferences, workshops, and scholarships.

| ACRL Chapters’ Continuing Education Quick Facts: |
|--|
| <p>Of the 42 ACRL chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 have their own annual academic library conference 24 sponsor programs at their state library association's annual conference 12 provide in-person CE workshops 7 provide at least one type of online CE workshops, including: in-person attendance to online webinars, webinars available from providers other than ACRL 2 offer professional development/CE grants |

Program Pluses

- This program ensures that more CE opportunities are available to the ACRL Oregon membership (and even non-members) throughout the year. Previously, only the ACRL-OR/WA annual conference and programs at the OLA Annual Conference offered those opportunities.
- More CE opportunities are closer to where our members actually live and work. The four in-person sites represent the areas where the lion’s share of our membership is located, and the archived online version of the workshop is available to all members 24/7 shortly after the in-person session, dramatically reducing the effect of the geographic divide present in our state.
- It is greener! Providing CE opportunities closer to members’ homes and online reduces the carbon footprint of the organization.
- Members can use their available CE and PD funding to attend additional conferences and workshops (the workshops are approximately a \$200 value for the current cost of membership which is approximately \$110).

- As a networking tool to meet other area academic librarians, the in-person events are wonderful venues with time before and after the workshop to meet and discuss.
- ACRL National offers a 'frequent learner' (ACRL 2009) program, which rewards those who register for three workshops with a fourth workshop at no additional cost. Thus, ACRL Oregon will be able to maximize its offerings to four workshops per year.
- Focus on topics of interest specifically to academic librarians. However, it should be noted that many of the online workshops available via the Oregon State Library's sponsored LYRASIS program are of interest to non-academic librarians as well. Readers are encouraged to visit Northwest Central events Web page (<http://www.nwcentral.org/events>) and limit the results by type (online/Web-based). The ACRL Oregon blog (<http://acrloreign.org/>) also features Northwest Central's academic RSS feed on its homepage, which is an easy way to keep up with what CE is being offered!
- ACRL National also makes some funds available to chapters to help underwrite operating costs. In 2010, ACRL Oregon applied some of those funds to partially offset the registration fees for the online workshops, further maximizing the limited budget.

Program Issues

- Timing the sessions has been surprisingly challenging due to varying term schedules, conference conflicts (OLA Annual, ALA Annual & Midwinter, ACRL Oregon and Washington Joint Fall Conference, ACRL National Conferences, etc), 9 month vs. 12 month contract librarians' schedules, holidays, etc. Fortunately, the archived version of the workshop is available any time a member wants to view it!
- To launch the program the Board selected the online workshops, but as ACRL Oregon is a membership organization, the Board would like to involve the membership more closely in choosing sessions, receiving feedback, and developing the direction of the program.
- On the administrative side, we had to iron out some difficulties related to payment and logins for the series. Thankfully, all of these issues were resolved due to the hard work and careful attention of Shirley Roberts, OLA Association Manager, and Margot Conahan, Kathryn Deiss, and David Connolly in the ACRL National Office.
- ACRL National and other organizations also offer multi-week, in-depth courses; although to date no known courses allow groups to register. For instance, ACRL offered a multi-week class on research methods in summer/fall 2010, but it was not possible to register as a group. It would be beneficial to the profession as a whole if a structure were created for groups to register, as there is a need for more in-depth engagement with contemporary issues and concepts. And of course, it would be great




to be able to offer our membership both apples (one-shot online workshops that give an overview of a topic) and oranges (multi-week, in-depth courses that explore concepts and practices deeply).

Conclusion

The recently published Oregon Library Association *Vision 2020* statement expresses the importance of a collaboration vision for librarians across the state.

“In 2020, Oregon librarians will rely on dynamic professional networks—local, state-wide and beyond—for resources, support and expertise. Together our libraries will:

- Create and share opportunities for professional development and training.
- Develop and share best practices, standards, technologies, templates and tools.”
(OLA 2010, p.2)

Professional organizations such as ACRL Oregon play an important role in the future of Oregon libraries by providing important continuing education and professional development opportunities to their membership in an era when doing more with less is a daily reality. 

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Leverage Locally for Effective Distance Education

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Contemplating the theme of “doing more with less”, I asked classmates in my fully online MLIS program what they felt they had “less of” than their on-campus peers. They cited:

- Interaction with other students
- Interaction with instructors
- The physical library’s resources
- In-person reference assistance
- Opportunities to get to know professors well enough to ask for references and develop informal mentoring relationships

Despite these disadvantages, there are ways an online library science student can do more with what he or she has:

Go to classes, workshops, and events for librarians offered in your community

These are great ways to meet and interact with librarians and library science students. In my first month of library school, I attended a free PubMed Training offered by the National Library of Medicine. At this training I met the librarian who offered me my first paid library position. Northwest Central (<http://www.nwcentral.org/>) lists library classes, workshops, conferences and events. Email lists for local and regional professional library associations are good resources as well. The more of these you can attend in person, the more relationships you can develop with other students and professionals.

Attend conferences

Conferences, both large and small, provide opportunities to meet other library students and professionals, while learning more about practices in the field. Don’t be deterred if conference attendance is not in your student budget. Find and apply for conference scholarships and travel stipends. Professional organizations offer them to students, as do many LIS programs. My first conference was the annual conference of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of Medical Library Association. Because it was a smaller conference, the atmosphere there was conducive to meeting new people and engaging in conversations with them. I met librarians who encouraged me to contact them after the conference about volunteering and interning.

Volunteer and intern

This can help you to develop informal mentoring relationships. Additionally, this work provides access to a physical library, something that many of my classmates wished they had. Seek out unadvertised internships and volunteer positions where you want to work. Volunteering and interning can be an excellent way to explore different areas of librarianship. Talk to your intern or volunteer supervisor about what your duties will entail, and offer to help in areas where you see a need.



Near the end of my academic library reference internship I heard that the consumer health reference section hadn't been weeded in a few decades. Seeing an opportunity, I volunteered to do the weeding project. Armed with the collection development policy, I learned as I went, meeting periodically with librarians to answer the questions I had. When the project was done, the library had a spreadsheet with my recommendations of which books to: keep, toss, replace with newer editions, move to the circulating collection, and also, new title suggestions to update the collection. Through this project, I gained more experience and a better understanding of yet another area of librarianship.

In conclusion, make the most of being a distance learning student through resourcefulness and involvement in activities going on where you live. Go to professional workshops and classes. Apply for conference scholarships. Volunteer and intern. Find opportunities to participate in your local community of librarians. Let your inner librarian shine! 🌟



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Eating the Elephant in Eugene

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“How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.”
(Hogan, 2004)

Back in 2007, although everyone agreed that Eugene Public Library’s (EPL) reliance on time limited funding—a library local option levy supporting just over 50 percent of the library’s operating budget—was not sustainable, the discussion focused on how big a “bite” of the library’s budget the general fund could absorb.

The library local option levy was renewed through fiscal year 2011 (FY11) at a reduced level, with commitments to Eugene voters that library services would stay at the same level and that it was to be the last levy. It was not the first time—nor the only service area—where Eugene’s then City Council chose to fund a priority service area beyond the city’s revenue capacity. The city’s overstretched general fund was brought into balance using reserves, setting the stage for difficult budget decisions in the years ahead.

During those earlier budget discussions, we were frequently reminded that the library’s local option levy would be expiring at the end of FY11. Some felt that the library was over-extended and that since the city could not afford to sustain our existing service level, the only real option was drastic reduction of library services, leaving other parts of the city unaffected.

When our current City Manager, Jon Ruiz, came on board in the spring of 2008, one of his first challenges was to bring Eugene’s budget into a sustainable balance. He began his approach with an organizational culture survey, in which we learned that the organization’s culture was “Passive/Defensive” while staff completing the survey described the optimal culture as “Constructive.”

The ink was barely dry on the survey results when, in July 2008, the city’s budget deficit was significantly exacerbated with the news: “Eugene chip plant Hynix will close, erasing 1,400 jobs” (Rogoway, 2008). This was a loss of seven percent of the city’s direct tax revenue and the reserves set aside to deal with such contingency had been used to balance previous budgets, including library operations.

Our City Manager used the budget situation as an opportunity for hands-on practice in organizational cultural change. He started by challenging city staff with the “bridge problem”: four people need to cross a bridge in the dark, which can only bear the weight of two people at one time. One can cross in one minute, one in two minutes, one takes five minutes, and the fourth takes ten minutes; they have a single lamp, which is needed to light each crossing. What is the shortest length of time in which this can be done? The answer is seventeen minutes.

The first handful of city staff finding this solution were formed into the moderators of a “think tank” group to put their mind power towards the budget challenges, in our first use of the virtual collaboration tool, SharePoint. The “17 minute solution” also became a communication metaphor for the innovative problem solving approach. Other strategies engaged city staff at every level across the entire organization, in forums new to us, such as cross-departmental teams. Using World War II imagery, ideas were collected into a “Victory Garden” and vetted for feasibility and ability to implement in the short timeline. The staff of EPL participated fully in the think tank, the Victory Garden, and All Staff meetings, generating more than 200 creative, potentially money-saving ideas. In



this first year we got rid of bottled water, eliminated food at our All Staff meetings, lowered the travel budget—in retrospect, the easy choices. Citywide, we managed to trim \$2.5 million from our \$523 million FY09 budget.

It turned out that FY09 was just the warm-up. As the economy worsened, the FY10 budget was projecting a \$12 million budget gap.

City of Eugene Finance Division

Chronology of the Estimated FY10 Operating Deficit for the City of Eugene General Fund

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|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|---|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| March 2008 \$1,050,000 Deficit | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>•Projected FY10 Operating Deficit</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,050,000</td> </tr> </table> | •Projected FY10 Operating Deficit | \$1,050,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Projected FY10 Operating Deficit | \$1,050,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| November 2008 \$8,000,000 Deficit | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>•Projected FY10 Operating Deficit</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,050,000 +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Property Tax Revenue Loss</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,700,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Slower Growth in Taxable Value</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Loss</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Increase in Projected COLA Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•4 Patrol Officers/ Bike Patrol - FY09 Budget Committee Additions</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$900,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Other Revenue Reductions</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$750,000</td> </tr> </table> | •Projected FY10 Operating Deficit | \$1,050,000 + | •Property Tax Revenue Loss | \$2,700,000 | •Slower Growth in Taxable Value | \$400,000 | •EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Loss | \$800,000 | •Increase in Projected COLA Costs | \$1,400,000 | •4 Patrol Officers/ Bike Patrol - FY09 Budget Committee Additions | \$900,000 | •Other Revenue Reductions | \$750,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Projected FY10 Operating Deficit | \$1,050,000 + | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Property Tax Revenue Loss | \$2,700,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Slower Growth in Taxable Value | \$400,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Loss | \$800,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Increase in Projected COLA Costs | \$1,400,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •4 Patrol Officers/ Bike Patrol - FY09 Budget Committee Additions | \$900,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| •Other Revenue Reductions | \$750,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| February 2009 \$12,000,000 Deficit | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>•FY10 Operating Deficit Projected</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,050,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Property Tax Revenue Loss</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$2,700,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Slower Growth in Taxable Value</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Loss</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Increase in Projected COLA Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,400,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•4 Patrol Officers/ Bike Patrol - FY09 Budget Committee Additions</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$900,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Other Revenue Reductions</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$750,000 +</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Reduction</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•State-Shared Revenue Reduction</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$250,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Reduced Court Fine Revenues</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Property Tax Collection Rate Reduction</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$700,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Other Charges for Services Reduction</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$800,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>•Lower Interest Earnings</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$350,000</td> </tr> </table> | •FY10 Operating Deficit Projected | \$1,050,000 | •Property Tax Revenue Loss | \$2,700,000 | •Slower Growth in Taxable Value | \$400,000 | •EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Loss | \$800,000 | •Increase in Projected COLA Costs | \$1,400,000 | •4 Patrol Officers/ Bike Patrol - FY09 Budget Committee Additions | \$900,000 | •Other Revenue Reductions | \$750,000 + | •EWEB Contribution in Lieu of Taxes Reduction | \$1,100,000 | •State-Shared Revenue Reduction | \$250,000 | •Reduced Court Fine Revenues | \$800,000 | •Property Tax Collection Rate Reduction | \$700,000 | •Other Charges for Services Reduction | \$800,000 | •Lower Interest Earnings | \$350,000 |
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In the face of the challenge, the City Manager made a public commitment to three goals, which gave staff renewed energy towards a constructive and strategic approach to the budget discussions:

- a balanced budget;
- no reduction of services to the public;
- no layoff of current employees (J. Ruiz, personal communication, June 26, 2009).

As we went into the second year of budget reduction discussions, there were many new strategies introduced—a voluntary furlough program, a temporary hiring freeze, a “foot-print reduction” through reorganizations allowing elimination of vacant positions, and an initiative to aggressively seek grant funds. Citywide, we explored new ways of working across city departments in ways that would maintain service while reducing personnel costs.



The FY10 result for EPL was a staff reduction of 3.0 FTE in vacancies, from the 106.5 FTE staff needed for our three location, 64 hour/week, seven day operation. We eliminated a bureaucratic level in the library, which allowed creation of two new management positions with responsibility in areas where we wanted to focus resources: customer experience and the virtual branch. A \$100,000 cut in the materials budget was offset by the Eugene Public Library Foundation, who committed to raise and donate that amount to the library in FY10. The Friends of the Eugene Public Library continued their ongoing pledge to underwrite all library programs, and upped their contribution to \$100,000 annually as well.

The centerpiece of FY10's plan was to be achieved through a proposed COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) freeze plan for all five of the city's employee groups, four of which were represented by four different unions. As the City Manager explained to staff later, "Because personnel costs comprise more than 70 percent of the General Fund budget, reductions in personnel costs were unavoidable in addressing the FY10 \$12 million budget gap. Our first choice was to keep everyone fully employed, with full benefits and without reducing pay-checks, by asking all employees to take a one-time, one-year freeze on their COLA increase. This would have translated to ongoing savings by not raising the base for future personnel costs" (J. Ruiz, personal communication, April 15, 2010).

The FY10 plan as designed was not wholly successful, as one union did not agree to the COLA freeze for their members. As sufficient savings could not then be achieved by COLA freezes, our second choice was to keep everyone employed with full benefits, by implementing mandatory reduced work hours. We preferred this over our third choice, which would have been to begin layoffs at that time. The city believed we had the contractual right to implement a temporary, reduced hours schedule and felt it was the best thing to do to keep all our employees working and avoid layoffs. The union disagreed. In the spring of FY10, the city received the arbitrator's ruling on the resulting grievance, which was in favor of the union. The resulting loss of budget savings increased the shortfall for FY10 and beyond.

The first two years of the process had taken enormous energy from the entire organization. As Eugene faced the third year of budget reductions, we focused on creating a sustainable, long-term solution. The approach was city wide, and deliberately strategic, rather than across-the-board. At this juncture, the city could no longer realistically commit to no layoffs or service reductions. The goals for the FY11 budget were commitment to:

- Develop and maintain a sustainable budget;
- Maintain and provide services;
- Retain jobs of as many city employees as possible.

In the library, we started by reviewing the staff ideas not yet implemented. We reviewed parts of the library where work had recently been restructured, such as the "footprint reduction" taken in FY10, the reorganization of the EPL's management team in FY08 and again in FY10, and specific workgroups or task areas (magazines, interlibrary loan). We looked at areas where changes were anticipated to affect workload (Express Check, automated telephone assistance). We looked at areas of work recently studied across our full department (administration, technology, and marketing).



As we prepared the FY11 proposals, we kept in mind the priority of public access to our library. We tried to be realistic about sustainable levels of staffing in each area and whether a change or reduction could be absorbed without a major impact on public services. Because the savings targets required it, we also prepared proposals that had significant effects on services to the public, including cutting evening and weekend hours at the branches, closing on Fridays at Eugene’s Downtown Library, or seriously cutting the materials budget.

We also prepared several alternate ways of implementing the options, evaluating each one on how well it preserved services to the public, and whether or not it: minimized staff impact, accomplished the target savings, and was sustainable operationally over the long-term.

The FY11 budget eventually approved for EPL was an additional 4 percent reduction, to \$10.2 million, with a loss of an additional 4.2 FTE of staff. The library employees affected by the FY11 Footprint Reduction included staff in circulation, technology, community relations, technical services, and the branches, with thirteen full time employees reduced to part-time, nine part-time employees with reduced hours, and, as required by the union contract, six probationary part-time employees were laid off (all six have since been rehired or declined the opportunity). The reductions involved an “Employee In Transition” process, managed centrally by human resources staff, with individuals choosing retirement, to move to positions elsewhere in the city, or to accept “hybrid” positions at two classification levels, in order to retain full time hours. We also used support from the city’s Employee Assistance Program to help the library staff better cope with these changes.

While in this assessment period, we learned that EPL had received a star rating from Library Journal. This gave an additional lens with which to measure public service impact of each option—or as Library Journal put it, libraries are “using the LJ Index outputs to advocate for better funding from both public and private sources to expand their capacity to deliver services” (Fialkoff, 2009). The city also began a citizen input process, “Eugene Counts,” to reaffirm that we were on the right track in identifying the services that are important to Eugene residents (Monroe, 2010).

Once we realized there would be a reduction in some services, an extensive strategic communication plan was developed. Our new Customer Experience Manager had community relations experience. This, combined with her duty to represent the patrons’ perspective, was helpful in preparing the staff and the public for these changes.

It was important to keep the focus on the City of Eugene’s commitment to EPL by deciding to maintain our core services:

- Keep all three library locations;
- Keep the same schedule of open hours, including evenings and weekends;
- Continue to offer a wide range of library materials and free events for all ages;
- Continue and expand the resources available 24/7 at the library Web site.

All communications were framed with an emphasis on the services we retained, and to explain the steps taken to protect these services, as well as to achieve necessary budget savings.

Library staff had been engaged throughout the process in offering potential solutions. This helped them to more fully understand the need for the changes and to trust that the decisions were viable solutions to maintaining core library services with minimal patron impact. The City Manager openly and frequently communicated with city staff through-



out the budget process, in emails and during staff meetings. Library staff received regular updates—in meetings, by email, and one on one—from the Library Director about impacts specific to the library, both the changes to staffing levels and library services. When it came close to the time to implement the service changes, all managers and supervisors worked closely with their staff to prepare for communicating with patrons.

This preparation included giving staff tools to facilitate these communications: written literature, guidance in how best to explain the changes, practice in answering questions, and preparing for potential interactions with unhappy patrons. The communications team developed a one page flyer, *Message from the Director*, which served as the central piece for all of the communication strategies.

This flyer honored the community’s commitment to the library and the services that were still going to be available to them, while also providing specific information about the changes and their impact on patrons’ library experience. The flyer also offered staff something written to provide patrons, and some sample wording for how to articulate the changes within the context of maintaining our essential services. The Customer Experience Manager attended work unit meetings to provide staff with tips for communicating with patrons, and she practiced potential scenarios with them.

The flyer was made available to all library patrons a few weeks prior to the actual service changes. Building on the messages in this flyer, more targeted communication strategies were developed for each of the specific library services affected:

- the holds service (charging a fee for unclaimed holds);
- interlibrary loan (charging a fee);
- no longer circulating magazines;
- raising overdue fines;
- reduction to the library’s budget for new materials and subscriptions;
- an increase in the fee for extended Internet use by non-card holders.

For each of these services, we considered the best approach for communicating the change depending on the service impacted and the users of that service. Decisions were made regarding the form of communication (flyer, brochure, Web site message, conversation, etc.), the depth of information, and striking the right tone.

One of the more involved communication plans was for a new unclaimed holds charge. The first step was identifying a label for the fee; the decision was call it a re-shelving fee, which most directly communicated what the fee represented and the cost. The aim was to encourage patrons to cancel or suspend requests before time and money were spent on pulling the items for them. It was important that patrons learned about the new fee prior to placing any additional hold requests, so messages were added to the steps patrons go through while placing a hold request via the online catalog, “Once your item is HELD; if you do not pick it up, your account will be charged a \$1 re-shelving fee.” When a requested item was ready, the email notifications to patrons included information about the re-shelving fee and how to avoid being charged the fee. Informational bookmarks and flyers were placed around the shelves where patrons collected their held items. These communication pieces were all disseminated a few weeks prior to the implementation of the fee. For the first few weeks after





A Message from the Director The City Budget & Your Library

Connie J. Bennett



Working at Eugene Public Library, I'm frequently inspired by our community's enthusiastic support of library services. Results of recent surveys and meetings to determine residents' priorities have shown clearly how highly Eugene Public Library is valued. City leadership has responded by declaring a strong commitment to the library, even as they are forced to make tough budget decisions in this economic downturn.

During the City's budget planning process, hundreds of ideas were proposed to address the fiscal shortfall. Some proposals would have seriously affected local access to library services. At a time when we hear every day about cutbacks at public libraries across the U.S., I'm glad to report that after extensive analysis and evaluation, **the City of Eugene has decided to:**

- **Keep all three Library locations: Downtown, Sheldon, and Bethel.**
- **Keep the same schedule of open hours, including evenings and weekends.**
- **Continue to offer a wide range of Library materials and free events for all ages.**
- **Continue and expand services and resources available 24/7 at the Library website.**

To protect these essential services, the Library must take other steps to achieve the necessary savings. As a result, when the new budget year begins in July, some library policies and procedures will be adjusted to increase efficiency and save money. Changes you will see include:

- Eugene residents' library cards will be renewed every two years, instead of every year.
- Overdue fines will be raised to 50¢ per day (adult items) and 25¢ per day for children's and young adult items. (This is to encourage on-time return, which saves processing costs.)
- A \$1 re-shelving fee will be charged for "held" items not picked up. (This is to encourage you to cancel requests for any items you no longer want, *before* time and money are spent to pull them aside for you. If you're not sure how to cancel or suspend requests, please ask staff.)
- A \$5 fee will be charged for each item borrowed from another library system (Interlibrary Loan).
- An automated phone assistant is now available any time, day or night, for you to check due dates, renew loans, and more. (These services are also available online, plus you can pay fines and fees online with VISA/MasterCard.)
- Current and back issues of magazines will be available to read at the Library and online through the Library website, but will no longer check out. (In this, we're following in many other libraries' footsteps; lending print copies of magazines is very expensive and labor-intensive.)
- The coming year's budget for purchasing new books and other materials will be reduced. New items will continue to be added, but fewer than in recent years.

As you can see, this list offers ways that Library users can help the cause – and avoid fines – by adopting a few simple and easy habits that will allow us to continue to provide excellent library services as cost-effectively as possible.

To learn about additional ways to support the Library, please contact the Eugene Public Library Foundation at 541-338-7018 or www.epfoundation.org, or the Friends of Eugene Public Library at 541-484-1452 or www.friendseugenelibrary.org. If you have questions about these policy and service changes, please call LaVena Nohrenberg, the Library's Customer Experience Manager, at 541-682-8314.

Thank you for your cooperation and support!



the fee was implemented, we focused on educating patrons on how to best manage their hold requests, including an instructional handout on suspending and canceling holds. During the education period, we regularly waived the patron's first re-shelving fee.

Woven through all the communications was a reassurance to our patrons that we cared about their library experience. The Customer Experience Manager's contact information was widely publicized, giving patrons a direct avenue for communicating their reactions to these changes. Most patrons communicated their feelings directly with staff, and the staff did a tremendous job of expressing empathy while keeping the focus on all the services we were able to preserve. Some patrons wrote notes, emailed, and called to ask their questions and express their unhappiness. Overwhelmingly, our patrons understood the necessity to make changes and were grateful for all that didn't change. They frequently mentioned that they weren't happy with the changes, but understood that this was necessary to keep the library open.

Now several months into the third year of this process, EPL has resized our services to sustainably weather the coming challenges ahead—the end of the local option levy, the PERS increases, and the continued bleak economic picture. Moreover, the organizational culture in the library, as well as citywide, has improved after three years of constructive, strategic work together.

We are fortunate that the citizens of Eugene are committed to library services. Citizen surveys consistently report the strong value our community places on the library and its role in their life. To sustain this level of commitment to library services, Eugene Public Library will continually remind people of the important role it plays in keeping our community strong. 🌿

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DIY Library:

Connecting with the Library Community to Form Effective Collaborations

by **Carson Mischel**
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Library Coordinator,
NW Documentary Arts & Media

Starting Out

In January 2010 I took on the task of building a resource center and lending library for a small non-profit organization, NW Documentary Arts & Media. At the time, I was fresh out of library school, brimming with enthusiasm and anxious to dive into the profession. I had worked as a volunteer with NW Documentary in the past and was already in love with their mission and the work they were doing. I was confident that I could make a valuable contribution by building a resource center that would benefit the organization's educational workshops and draw new members in from the community. The resource center would house a collection of reference books, non-fiction DVDs, offer research assistance and provide access to online resources. Looking back, I realize I must have had my green librarian blinders on as I did not fully anticipate the challenges that were headed my way as an inexperienced librarian flying solo in a small organization.

When I began working as NW Documentary's Library Coordinator, the existing library collection was very humble, housed on one small shelving unit, and mostly out-of-date. Although I had worked as a volunteer with the organization in the past, I had never paid much attention to the library collection until it was suddenly my responsibility. While studying this small, dusty collection with renewed purpose, a little hobgoblin of doubt appeared on my shoulder, questioning my every turn and doubting the efficacy of my vision.

To ease my doubt I did what every good library student would do in this situation, I plunged into research-mode. I searched through the professional literature for any information on being a solo-librarian with a small budget. I poured through the archives of blogs for personal accounts from librarians on building something out of next to nothing. To my disappointment, I found very little helpful information. Was I sailing in uncharted waters? That nasty hobgoblin of doubt was becoming more insistent.

I began contacting librarians in my community who were working in small organizations with small budgets, seeking their guidance on everything from building a collection to designing a database. This is where I finally struck gold. The people I spoke with were experienced, insightful, and more than willing to sit down and talk to me. Through these valuable connections I realized I was not alone and that we were all facing similar challenges with budget constraints. These conversations have led to collaborative library programs that build on our individual organization's strengths to bring our communities together. To date, I have worked with information professionals at the Oregon Historical Society and Bitch Media to create collaborative programs for our members, and have begun working with organizations such as Qcenter and the Independent Publishing Resource Center to plan future programs. I have learned that my most valuable tools for building a successful library and resource center with a very small budget are creativity and collaboration.

First Connections

The very first connections I made with other solo-librarians in small, specialized libraries came about as a result of talking to other professionals in our field. When I initially began looking into building our resource center at NW Documentary I talked about the project to anyone who would listen. I had lunch with former colleagues, emailed the people with whom I had attended library school, posted to email lists, started a blog, and asked for advice from co-workers. Fortunately, I found everyone I spoke with about the project to be



enthusiastic and encouraging, and many offered advice and suggestions about other people or organizations to contact. These early conversations were more valuable to my progress than I could have expected and resulted in a world of networking opportunities that would eventually lead to the development of collaborative programming.

Professional conferences, library collectives, and planned social events for library-workers proved to be an excellent way to network with other professionals and find fresh ears with whom to share my vision and my apprehensions. Portland is home to a very tight-knit and active community of library professionals who host a variety of events throughout the year including Inter-Library Lush and the Annual Librarian Prom. Meeting new people at these types of gatherings opened a lot of doors for me, but I soon realized that additional learning opportunities existed outside these professional circles as well. Many small non-profit organizations, similar to the one I am working in, do not have the budget to hire an MLS librarian to run their resource centers and rely on volunteers or part-time “non-professionals.” These dedicated volunteers and employees are experts on their collections, their users, and all of the ins and outs of their library, but you will not find them waltzing around at the Librarian Prom or present on the Oregon Special Library Association’s email list. Once I widened my net, I met several new people involved in running successful small libraries.

In an effort to find solo-librarians in my area that have had experience with the same issues I was now facing, I began by searching for organizations similar to NW Documentary in size and budget. I searched online for arts & education organizations, small colleges, museums, historical societies, and other non-profits--browsing their Web sites for any information on a library or resource center. Many of the organizations did have resource collections and most of those had contact information for their librarian or resource center manager. From there I sent out simple, personal emails introducing myself and my plans for our new resource center. I received many positive responses and was then able to continue the dialogue with any questions I had (what do you use to catalog your collection? How do you handle donations?) as well as express an interest in working together in the future. Many of these email conversations led to face-to-face meetings where I was able to visit a variety of resource centers and discuss the challenges and successes we were all facing.

Planning Programming

As I met with my fellow solo-librarians around Portland, it became evident that we were all struggling with planning effective programming with the limited time, space, and budget we were allotted. We were spending most of our time managing our collections and supervising volunteers and had very little time left for hosting programs--something we all felt would improve our resource centers and benefit our users. I began approaching these other librarians with proposed programs that would utilize each organization’s resources and appeal to our respective communities. As an example, NW Documentary hosted a program with Bitch Media that invited participants to use a selection of books and materials brought from Bitch Media’s library to develop a personal narrative which they then recorded in NW Documentary’s audio recording booth. The result was a fun afternoon in which people from the NW Documentary community and those from the Bitch Media community came together in our office, explored each organization’s resources, met new people, and were able to create an audio documentary. The collaborative programs I have co-hosted have been



incredibly successful and plans for future programs, including film screenings, discussion panels, creative workshops, and tours are in the works.

I have discovered numerous benefits to collaborating with these other organizations to bring successful programming to our library users. These programs have given our small organization the opportunity to bring all of our strengths, experience, equipment, and space to the table while working with organizations that supplement our weaknesses. Sharing planning and marketing responsibilities along with expenses has allowed me to offer more effective programs to my community than would have been possible had I tried to do it alone. Working with other organizations has given us the opportunity to increase our membership by introducing diverse communities to NW Documentary and our resource center. As an added benefit, our members have had the opportunity to experience a variety of other community organizations and services to which they might not have otherwise been exposed.

Looking Ahead

It has been almost a year since I accepted the task of being a solo-librarian at NW Documentary and I am now more excited than ever about the future of our resource center. The hobgoblin of doubt has quieted considerably and my confidence has grown with each new experience. Meeting fellow solo-librarians and having the opportunity to collaborate with them has added both value and pleasure to my work. My colleagues and I have seen great success through working together and I have begun looking towards a future of collaborative opportunities that go beyond programming including marketing, grant-writing, cooperative cataloging, and sharing of resources. In a time when library budgets seem to be shrinking every day and staff-cuts are always a threat, learning how to be an effective and creative collaborator could be the difference between success and failure. Reaching out to my fellow library professionals when I was feeling most discouraged about the future of our library was the best thing I could have done--librarians are always willing to help. 🌿



Living on a Dime:

Tips for Living Well and Happily with Less

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Introduction

These days, libraries are being asked to do more with less, as are many of us in our personal lives. When economic hardship affects libraries, it also affects library workers' personal lives. You or someone in your life might be underemployed or unemployed. You may have reduced your working hours or taken furloughs that have resulted in some sort of personal economic hardship. We thought we might share with you some of the things that we do in our personal lives to live more on a dime than on a dollar.

Living on a dime is about choosing wisely and not denying oneself. Trying to live more thriftily does not mean you need to stop enjoying life's pleasures or torture yourself with what you can't have. It comes down to your philosophy of life. The first step to any monetary lifestyle change is for you to sit down and decide what your priorities are. What makes you happy? Is going out to dinner with friends important? Do you feel at your best after a good workout at the gym? If so, work those items into your budget and cut from other areas that aren't as important to you. It will help immensely if you have your family and friends on board with your budgetary constraints. Not only will they provide a support network, but they might also join you in your venture to pursue these changes.

Tips for Home

Organize a clothing exchange (aka Naked Lady Parties)—We all have clothes in our closets that don't fit quite right anymore, or that we never wear. Our children keep growing and needing new items. Hosting or attending a clothing exchange with your friends and acquaintances can be a great way to get new clothes for your kids and family, as well as some new duds for yourself. Typically the remnants of these exchanges can be donated to homeless shelters where the clothing items can go to good use as well.

Canning—Canning and food preservation are a great way to skim off of your budget. When the beautiful Oregon bounty of produce grows in the summer, preserve your tomatoes, beans, fruits, and other veggies. Then crack them open in winter. There are classes and information available through the extension service. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>

Thrifting—Save money by shopping for your clothing and various household needs in second hand and resale shops or at garage sales, and follow blogs like Frugal Living NW, to find daily tips on where and how to save.

Buy in bulk—Purchase regularly used items (toilet paper, flour and sugar, and even meats) in bulk. You could even split these purchases with friends.

Get friends and families to be allies—Family and friends can be a support network for your new lifestyle, and they may even participate.

Lower expectations—Most kids are happy with a box. Generic can do as well as a name brand in some cases.



Free is a very good price!—Take advantage of free entertainment offerings. One example is the McMenamins’ summer concert series. Check the newspaper for a listing of free and low cost activities for families. And of course, use your public library to reserve movies!

Lunch Club—Instead of buying your lunch at work, organize a lunch club. A lunch club is essentially a group of friends who trade food. Cook and pack up meals into separate containers, one for each friend in your club, and trade lunches. Instead of eating out at lunch, you get a few meals to take to work that week, without eating the same leftover soup every day. Cook one meal, get several!

Use Your Library—It is so much more than just books. And even with a waiting list for some items it is a bargain. For example: movies, TV series, work out videos, documentaries; music; computers; magazines; children’s story time; book clubs for children and adults; classes for a variety of interests; lectures; homework help; museum passes; and of course books - cookbooks, biographies, non-fiction, knitting, gardening, mysteries, romances, crafting, home repair—well the list goes on and on.

Tips for Libraries

Use free software for library work and library services—In Oregon that might mean using Spark for your chat in connection with L-Net. Use Jing for Screenshots and videos and use OpenOffice for general computing.

Save on utilities—When you leave your office turn off the lights. Set the thermostat to a lower temperature for when the building closes, and use signage to encourage patrons to turn off the lights when leaving the restroom.

Consider part-time positions—There don’t seem to be many opportunities for librarians and library workers to work part time. If your organization is lucky enough to have the money to hire for a position, consider suggesting the position be part-time. Many people might like the opportunity to work less than full-time.

Go paperless—Do you mail print newsletters to your patrons? Have you ever considered changing the format to e-mail? You could start by having patrons “opt-in” to e-mail newsletters. The more the program grows, the more you save on printing and paper costs. Another way to share information paperlessly is to display news announcements on an LCD screen instead of posting paper flyers around the library building.

Resources

Craigslist: search for free or cheap used household items.

Dacyczyn, A. (1998). *The complete tightwad gazette: Promoting thrift as a viable alternative lifestyle*. New York: Villard Books.

Farrell, C. (2010). *The new frugality: How to consume less, save more, and live better*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.



Frugal Living NW: Follow the blog for timely saving tips, including local deals, coupons and more at <http://www.frugallivingnw.com/>.

Smallwood, C. (Ed.). (2011). *The frugal librarian: Thriving in tough economic times*. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions.

Your local public library: find it with the Oregon State Library Directory at <http://libdir.osl.state.or.us/>

Keep up with changing times!



Northwest Central
nwcentral.org

Northwest Central is *your* community-driven online clearinghouse for library continuing education. Log onto nwcentral.org and join the community of life-long library learners.

- **Events Calendar:** Learn about upcoming trainings, online and in-person, on all sorts of library topics.
- **Resource Database:** Find tutorials, conference presentations, web links and other free training resources to help you do your job better.
- **RSS Feeds:** Subscribe to a feed to find out what's new.
- **Community connections:** Share your expertise – post your resources and calendar listings to this community-driven database.

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

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