

OLAQ

Volume 9 , Number 2
Diversity Matters (Summer 2003) | Pages

July 2014

Volume 9, Issue 2

(2014). Volume 9, Issue 2. *OLA Quarterly*, 9(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.1701>

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OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

OLA Quarterly



Diversity Matters

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A Brief Historical Overview

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Developing Virtual Spanish-language Resources:
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Deep Change—Diversity at Its Simplest

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OLA Q

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association.

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*Energizing Young
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OLA Quarterly is indexed in *Library Literature*.

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OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2003

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 *Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, please click on the appropriate e-mail link.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 9 • No 3 Fall 2003	Energizing Young Adult Services	July 15, 2003	September 15, 2003	Christine Perkins Oregon Young Adult Network
Vol 9 • No 4 Winter 2003	Other Voices: Library Associations in Oregon	October 15, 2003	December 15, 2003	To be Announced



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Diversity Matters

I know diversity matters to the Oregon library community. Numerous Oregon libraries make a difference by providing outreach services to previously underserved communities, diversifying their collections, or recruiting ethnically or culturally diverse staff. Consider these libraries as examples: The Black Resource Center, located in the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library, offers many library materials relating to the African American experience. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library offers “Hora Des Cuentos en Espanol” (Spanish story time) every Saturday. Southern Oregon University Library is developing the First Nations Tribal Collection, a digital collection focusing on the tribes who lived in or near the Siskiyou-Cascade-Klamath bioregion.

Diversity is a part of the Oregon Library Association’s Vision 2010. This statewide call to action urges us to create a “strong and diverse workforce” by drawing on “the broadest range of skills and abilities from people with diverse educational, experiential, and cultural backgrounds.”

While putting this issue of *OLA Quarterly* together, I queried a number of library professionals about why diversity matters to libraries.

John Helmer, director of the Orbis-Cascade Alliance, said: This is pretty simple minded, but for me it comes down to the fact that you just can’t think outside your own head. The only way to get something new in there is to keep your mouth shut for a bit and listen to someone that has a different perspective and background. Even if you forget about the fact that

it is just “right” to respect other people, on a purely self-interested basis, you do better when you draw on a wider range of human experience. The difficult part is making the time, listening, and looking for your own built-in prejudices.

Sheryl Steinke, school librarian for the Eugene 4J school system, told me: ... As a public school librarian I believe that so much of what children learn about ... happens at school. The best schools are those where people of many ethnicities, religions, ages and persuasions learn and work together. In public schools lacking diversity among the people, the books, magazines and other materials in the library can help to introduce the richness of the human condition.

Xe Yu, in Portland State University’s Cataloging Department, wrote: The most important and difficult thing to achieve, of the many dimensions of diversity, perhaps, is ethnic diversity ... Our problem is that libraries are more interested in diversifying their collections, than in diversifying their ranks. Without a major effort in human resources, libraries may not be able to provide good services to all.

Typically, when someone discusses diversity in libraries, we focus on services or collections. We are, after all, a practical profession intent on improving user services. Contributions to this issue of *OLA Quarterly* will satisfy this practical, professional bent. I hope they also will address that side of us that is needful of introspection and inspiration.

In their careful analysis of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender holdings, Gary Klein and Larry Oberg

offer a search strategy and methodology applicable to assessing collections for other subjects. Michael Shapiro explores a best practices model in his evaluation of web-based Spanish language resources offered by five U.S. public libraries. Bridging the emerging generation gap among library staff, Annie Zeidman-Karpinski and Karen Munro examine the virtues of online chat. Examining another type of gap, Jey Wann and Maresa Kirk ponder the value our profession places on educational attainment. Carolyn Avery’s thoughtful piece reminds us that embracing diversity in libraries means incorporating services and collections to support users with visual impairments or physical disabilities. Finally, Sandra Rios Balderrama’s provocative essay anchors this issue. Her vision of diversity bestows new but not effortless levels to which we should aspire—deep change above and beyond the mundane.

While we can be proud of the steps that our profession and Oregon libraries have taken to honor diversity, we should not be complacent. Respecting the diversity of opinions of others can counter political climates that measure someone’s patriotism by measuring one’s level of conformity. Enhancing our understanding of gender, ethnicity, disability, or culture can dismiss notions that make someone automatically suspicious because of physical appearance or religious beliefs. Especially in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, the health and welfare of libraries, if not our nation, may be incumbent on promoting and sustaining diversity.

—Faye Chadwell
University of Oregon Libraries
Guest Editor

A Hitchhiker's Guide to Chat

by Karen Munro
Literature Librarian
University of Oregon

and by

Annie Zeidman-Karpinski
Science and Technology
Services Librarian
University of Oregon

Librarianship is going gray. A 1999 Readex survey, drawing from the same year's ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, tells us that 45 percent of responding librarians were between 45 and 54 years old. Only 13 percent were younger than 35 years old, which puts Annie (33) and me (29) in the minority camp. And while it's not the years in your life that count so much as the life in your years, it's been interesting for us to compare notes on starting our careers at the University of Oregon. There are some small but noticeable differences between our generation of librarians (we are both 2002 MLIS graduates) and the librarians who are mentoring us. Our mentors may default to print more often than we do, while we turn first to electronic resources, or even the Web. They know bushels about the history of the library, the university, the publishers, our vendors. We know XML. They pick up the phone or type an e-mail. We chat.

Well, actually, some of our most senior reference librarians chat, and we've been known to use a telephone now and then. So the distinctions aren't really that clear. But online chatting (and text messaging, the analogous form of communication on cell phones and PDAs) is widely considered the hallmark of gadget-loving, tech-savvy, attention-deficient Generation Y-ers, and to a certain extent, this perception may be fair. Online chatting, or instant messaging, as it's also called, evolved in tandem with online bulletin boards, discussion groups, and listservs. Chatting is still a favorite means of communication for millions of college students and their party planners. It's instantaneous, highly informal, and most of the time it requires little to no intellectual investment. It's electronic gossip. A typical workplace chat message is a one-liner fired off to a colleague in the middle of the day, commenting on a problem or asking for some feedback. (I just sent a chat message to Annie, asking how old she is, because I needed to know for this article and couldn't remember.) A

typical recreational chat session is a virtual kaffeeklatsch, during which the conversation may range from international politics to recipes for crême brûlée, and during which any or all participants may be doing several other things at once.

Resistance may not be exactly futile, but chat and similar technologies are here to stay. And there's no disputing chat's usefulness. When one of us worked at a dot-com, our computer screens were visible to all and we had little privacy—chatting was the fastest, most private way to discuss important things like why the CEO was selling stock during a supposed blackout period. In a high-tech courtroom where a friend worked, the judge maintained a chat session with her clerk throughout a trial. The clerk was able to ask the judge procedural questions as the trial was going on, taking advantage of the instantaneous and relatively unobtrusive nature of chatting. Librarians in small institutions may find chat a cheap or even free way of providing digital reference service. And if you use software that permits more than two people to chat at the same time, the difference between e-mail (quick) and chat (instant) suddenly makes virtual meetings a workable reality.

Obviously, chat has both potential benefits and drawbacks. Regardless, it's finding its way into workplaces and universities from the ground up, and we're better off knowing what it is and how our patrons are using it, than we are sticking our heads in the sand. So, in the spirit of eager techie catholicism that is one of the best qualities of Generation Y, Annie and I offer you a highly informal Hitchhiker's Guide to Chat.

ICQ History Log For: 331978649 kmunro
Started on Tue Mar 18 16:36:44 2003
(See Annotation 1)

kmunro 3:01 PM ready when you are, chica.
zed 3:14 PM whoops. i here now
kmunro 3:14 PM excellent! shall we begin?
kmunro 3:16 PM ok, so we wanted to chat
a little to show howit's done.

Annotation 1

Both Annie and I let our typos remain in this chat's transcript to give a better sense of how rapid and informal the exchange tends to be (and how much interpretation can be required).



kmunro 3:16 PM or how not to do it, maybe.
 kmunro 3:16 PM first things first?
 zed 3:16 PM that's right. i set my comptuer up and thenyou signed up and i had to authorize you inorder to get this going.
 kmunro 3:17 PM we're using icq, a free download fromthe internet.
 kmunro 3:17 PM i'm using the lite version, annie's got thefull meal deal.
 zed 3:17 PM after typing each message ihave to click thesend button which i totally hate*ANNOYED*
(See Annotation 2)
 zed 3:18 PM ok the lite version is at <http://www.icq.com/download/>
 zed 3:19 PM i went all out and down-loaded the pro versionfor some functionality.
 kmunro 3:19 PM hang on a second, i've got a colleague here.
(See Annotation 3)
 zed 3:20 PM AIM from AOL is a big product. i jsut hatedoing anthing with AOL. and one of the reveiws of ICQ said it was for the "birkenstock" crowd.;-)
 kmunro 3:21 PM ok, i'm back.
 kmunro 3:21 PM why is icq for birkenstockers?
 zed 3:21 PM no problem. i was actually emailing someone as well. i like that i can do whatever adn when there's a message from you it starts a thingy blinking on my toolbar.
 kmunro 3:22 PM yes, you get the blinky thing because you turned off the sound.
(See Annotation 4)
 zed 3:22 PM no idea why ICQ is for the birkenstock crowd. i like to think it means we're smarter, more discriminating
 kmunro 3:22 PM it's cute, but a little startling.
 kmunro 3:22 PM funny cross-post.
 kmunro 3:22 PM that happens a lot with chat, i find.
 kmunro 3:23 PM i find it's a good idea to over-explain what i'm saying, thinking, doing...while i'm doing it.
 kmunro 3:23 PM and it works better to parse thoughts into smaller bits, send

them one bit at a time, so i don't get too far behind in the flow of htngs.
 zed 3:23 PM jeez. smaller bits?
 kmunro 3:23 PM also, most chat apps don't let you send huge chunks of text all at once. or they slow down, at least.
 kmunro 3:24 PM smaller bits, yeah.
 kmunro 3:24 PM like this. one thought at a time.
 zed 3:24 PM you ran into a text limit once. right? how many lines, you think?
 kmunro 3:24 PM the text limit on icq is a character limit, i think. i could try to hit it...
 zed 3:25 PM well...the suspense is killing me. how many lines?
 kmunro 3:25 PM ok, jsut did it. it's 450 characters.
 zed 3:32 PM if you were a student asking a reference question. and I used a database like, lexis, when I showed it to you the i'd have to explain more about lexis, which form exactly i'm using, how i'm getting in, and so on. we could co-browse.
 kmunro 3:33 PM or browse simulta-neously, at least. i think co-browse is an imprecise term to use here.
 zed 3:34 PM co-browsing/simultaneous browse would be good, unless there were network problems or whatever. can be painfully slow. and other technical issues, like authentication, log in, etc.
 kmunro 3:34 PM well, i was just thinking that if we're already chatting, as a student and a librarian, it would be simple for us both to go to online sources and for the librarian to walk the student through them.
 zed 3:35 PM let's say i asked for an article from *The Oregonian*
 kmunro 3:35 PM for instance, i could tell you that i'm in Lexis Academic (and walk you through getting into it in the first place), and tell you that I chose Western News Sources and specified *The Oregonian*
 zed 3:35 PM librarian can walk student through them, but it can be time consum-ing. helps to ask student. describe what

Annotation 2

In our actual chat, this was a graphic emoticon; a picture of a person looking annoyed, that Annie included by clicking on it in the ICQ menu of emoticons.

Annotation 3

An interruption is another common event in chat; from "RL," or "Real Life." It's considered good etiquette to explain what's going on if you're going to be distracted for more than a minute or two.

Annotation 4

ICQ provides audio alerts when another chatter sends you a message.



Annotation 5

Chat slang for “Lots of Laughs” or “Laughing Out Loud,” meaning the chatter is amused.

Annotation 6

There are a variety of ways of sending folks your contact information. Chat software makes it easy to exchange the numbers and screen names of friends. Some people even put this information on their business cards—both the paper and electronic PDA versions.

you see... so you know they are on the same page you are.

kmunro 3:36 PM yes, exactly, getting the student lead the safari is a much better mode.

kmunro 3:36 PM on the bright side, you can do things like paste in the lexis disclaimer:

kmunro 3:36 PM Access to certain freelance articles and other features within this publication (i.e. photographs, classifieds, etc...) may not be available.

kmunro 3:36 PM easy-peasy.

zed 3:36 PM we are also using a lot more complete sentences and grammar than most folks.

kmunro 3:37 PM plus, our speling is beter. *GIGGLING*

kmunro 3:37 PM but chat can be fun adn useful for librarians to do P2P as well.

zed 3:37 PM is P2P different from f2f?

kmunro 3:37 PM not just as a teaching or reference tool, but as peer support. i, for instance, have used icq to get your opinion on several things recently.

zed 3:38 PM yeah. i sometimes i even respond! LOL

(See Annotation 5)

kmunro 3:38 PM hee. i misused p2p, i think. i just meant in the general sense, peer relationship building. not file-sharing.

kmunro 3:38 PM your responses have been wonderfully helpful, actually.

kmunro 3:38 PM you've reviewed a Web page I was working on, in real time as i made changes.

zed 3:39 PM you can use chat as email, really.but faster. still, if i'm not at my desk, you'd be in the same situation.

kmunro 3:39 PM true, if you're not at your desk i could send your cell a text message using icq or another chat software

kmunro 3:49 PM icq is nice because it's pretty light, pretty trouble-free, but there are always snafus. and because chat speeds up teh interaction, waiting for the computer to unfreeze can seem really...long.

zed 3:50 PM or for teh student to stop emailing or chatting with someone else or....the lag time can be really annoying
kmunro 3:50 PM one of the joys of the reference desk.

zed 3:53 PM in my other job, folks found that except fot he delays, bad grammar and typos doing reference this way was a lot like any reference interview.

kmunro 3:53 PM and you can vary your font size, style, and color (and use the emoticons, if you're bold), for emphasis and so on. as in a conversation.

kmunro 3:54 PM you can also change the background of the field where you type your text in. mine's a restful taupe.

kmunro 3:56 PM so, we set this up by downloading the free software and installing it on our ocmputers.

kmunro 3:57 PM all right. and then we were assigned an icq number. mine is ***** [9 digit number]. it's not easy to remember.

(See Annotation 6)

kmunro 3:58 pm but you get to choose your own icq name, right?

zed 3:58 PM yeah. you get a name. actually i think you can even use ones that are taken now. not sure.

kmunro 3:59 PM the ID number and online name of the person you're chatting with appear at the top of the ICQ window while you chat. the ICQ window only takes up a small part of your screen, so you can see other programs at the same time.

zed 3:59 PM make sure you keep everythign as private and generic as possible. otherwise you'll be getting a lot of bored folks “chatting” with you. and with those fun blinking things on your toolbar [and beeping uh-ohs] it can be annoying to get rid of someone trying to sell you 6 months of viagra

kmunro 3:59 PM your own ICQ number displays on the little window that disappears into the taskbar. it's like the control panel.

kmunro 4:00 PM now...can anyone icq you



if they know your number, or do they have to be authorized?

zed 4:01 PM anyone can try to chat with me, but first i'll have to authorize them. its a setting too.

zed 4:02 PM comes as a "system notice"

kmunro 4:02 PM can you block people from icqing you?

kmunro 4:02 PM the way you can block email addresses from sending to you?

(See Annotation 7)

zed 4:02 PM uh. wait. until i authorize, i think i don't see even a message. and you can block folks from chatting with you.

kmunro 4:03 PM so there's a balance of privacy and accessibility. can you de-authorize someone who gets out of line?

zed 4:03 PM yup. and you can send folks other icq numbers.

kmunro 4:05 PM okay, that's so you have easy access and can just click on our user names to start chatting with us, right?

zed 4:07 PM you can put folks on an "ignore list" to boot them off.

kmunro 4:08 PM keep me posted. brb.
(See Annotation 8)

kmunro 4:20 PM ok, just to recap (without ever having closed out this chat session), we're recording the session by....? annie? how are you doing this? the full version of icq has better transcript capacity than the lite version, i think.

zed 4:21 PM in the "pro" vesion i actually have a history button in the middle of this chat screen. and when i click it i see our conversation, but in reverse. very surreal actually. I can then save this as a text file.

kmunro 4:23 PM and can you email the transcript to someone?

zed 4:25 PM yup. its now on my desk top. i'll email it to you.


kmunro 4:26 PM great. i just got your email, and i have the entire log of the chat.

kmunro 4:34 PM don't know. anything else we should cover?

zed 4:35 PM nothing i can currently remember. see ya!

kmunro 4:35 PM cu.

(See Annotation 9)

zed 4:35 PM okcubye 

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Annotation 7

There are actually several different ways to avoid folks, everything from total banishment to fluctuating "visibility" depending on user preferences.

Annotation 8

Chat slang for "Be Right Back."

Annotation 9

Chat slang for "See You."

Ebsco ad to go here



Ten Things To Know About Chat

1. Check your perfectionism at the door. Chat is a rapid-fire, by-the-seat-of-your-pants medium. Users rarely bother with capital letters, punctuation, or proper grammar. This can be a shock to the system, but it can also be relaxing to know you're not being judged by your typos.
2. Don't take it personally. Remember that chatting is usually fast and informal, and people may not bother with some finer points of etiquette. While most chatters are polite and respectful, it can take time to get used to the speed of the exchange, the shorthand usages, and some of the slang.
3. Learn to duck and cover. If you use chat with co-workers, you may want to master the art of the "away" message. Chatting is great, but sometimes you want to focus on a task without interruption: At those times, an "I'm not here" message is your best friend. If you use chat for reference, make sure you know how to set up a message that tells patrons the service is closed.
4. Be realistic. Chat works best for short, relatively simple reference questions. For longer, more complex research, nothing beats good old-fashioned face time.
5. Play the field. Experiment with more than one chat application to compare features like privacy, browser support, spam protection, and add-ons. See the *College and Research Libraries* article cited at the end of this article for an idea of some criteria that a real-world library used in deciding what software to adopt.
6. Be a good host. If you're using chat to provide reference service, make sure you're comfortable with your role as "moderator" of the exchange. Remember that your patrons can't see or hear you, so all your cues will have to come through what you type. You may feel that you're over-explaining what you're doing, but it's better to do that than to leave a patron hanging in cyberspace, wondering what's going on.
7. Play to chat's strengths. Remember that you can use chat to cut and paste URLs, boilerplate, standardized responses, and other useful information. (Remember copyright restrictions though!) Chat can also be a great medium for people with hearing loss.
8. Protect your privacy. Just as you wouldn't give personal information out at the reference desk, keep your chat reference transactions professional. Chat handles don't carry a domain name the way e-mail addresses do, so it's impossible to see whether the patron you're chatting with is a student, a fellow employee, or someone else entirely. Libraries that use chat for reference may set up generic librarian accounts for employees to use.
9. Learn to block. We hope you'll never have to do it, but knowing how to ban, block, or ignore another chatter's messages is crucial if you use chat for reference (or even just within the workplace). Problem patrons (and Viagra salesmen) exist online just as they do in the real world.
10. Have fun. Learn to use the shorthand, the emoticons, the slang. Your chat experience will probably be a lot more satisfying if you know that "<bg> ty tfn" means "Big grin, thank you, ta ta for now"—in short, it means you've made someone's day, and they're off to make good use of what they've just learned from their favorite reference librarian.



With All Due Respect

by Maresa Kirk
Mark O. Hatfield Library
Willamette University

and by

Jey Wann
Oregon State Library

In the library world, we've been committed to diversity since before it became popular. We take pride in maintaining diverse collections, treating all patrons with respect, and providing users with equal access to information

When we think about diversity within the workplace, we probably think about relatively recognizable categories such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, or disability. We've all had training and know that we must not discriminate on the basis of these characteristics.

Most libraries have built-in divisions: management and non-management; librarian and support staff; public services and technical services; salaried staff and volunteers. Within these groups, there may be further divisions, such as reference and circulation, acquisitions and cataloging, etc. Beyond these are less formal divisions based on personal style, interests, and educational background.

Because we are members of the Oregon Library Association's Support Staff Division (SSD), we became curious about the educational attainment of library support staff. A 1997 survey by the Support Staff Interest Round Table of the American Library Association found that paraprofessionals hold a wide variety of degrees. (See http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Our_Association/Round_Tables/LSSIRT/Strategic_Plan3/Issues_Survey/Results.pdf.) Of the 2,089 respondents, 64 had a master's in library science (MLS), 116 had another master's degree, and 10 had a Ph.D. An informal survey of the authors' paraprofessional co-workers and SSD colleagues found educational attainment ranging from high school to multiple bachelor's degrees. Two respondents had three bachelor's degrees each and there were also various vocational certifications and associate's degrees. Some individuals are working towards their bachelor's degree or towards their master's degree. Several had earned master's degrees, and one person had both an MLS and a Ph.D.


With these informal data in mind, we wondered whether we are guilty of being less respectful of coworkers based on their educational level. Are we guilty of being

education snobs? Of not paying closer attention to suggestions from colleagues without a college degree? Or are we reverse-education snobs who discount the suggestions of coworkers with undergraduate or graduate degrees?

Those of us who work in libraries value diversity. We also value literacy and knowledge. Consequently, we value formal education. Positions that include the word "librarian" in the title are generally not open to those without an MLS. Some non-librarian positions may require a bachelor's degree. Other times, job applicants may substitute college education for work experience. Respect for education is built into our workplaces. Although it makes sense to pay attention to educational background, we need to be careful about giving it more value than it deserves.

One thing that unites us is on-the-job learning. The longer we've been in the workforce, the more likely that we have learned skills on the job. Many skills we use every day—from book repair to designing Web pages to applying for grants—we learned on the job. We probably learned these skills informally from co-workers, in-house, at workshops sponsored by library associations, or in classes that are not part of a formal degree program.

If we look at all of our co-workers, from volunteers and student assistants to library directors, we are amazed at what they know and can do. This knowledge and these skills make library staff everywhere dynamic. They allow us to keep up with the demands of our field.

To continue meeting challenges, and to foster the diversity that libraries affirm, we must treat all of our colleagues with respect, regardless of the level of formal education they have attained. We are not suggesting that libraries alter position requirements; nor are we assigning value to anyone's level of education. We are saying that the most important thing is what we do, not how we learned to do it. 



Gay-Themed Books in Oregon Public and Academic Libraries:

A Brief Historical Overview

by Larry R. Oberg
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and by

Gary M. Klein
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Introduction

The publication of gay-themed books that document the everyday lives and history of gay men and women and their place in this and other societies has witnessed enormous growth over the past few decades. In 1950, a young person who came to an Oregon public or academic library to write a paper or seek answers to troubling questions about sexual orientation would have found fewer than 20 titles listed in any subject catalog in the state, and, in many, none at all. The listed books would have presented homosexuality as a medical or psychological condition, something to be repressed or, better yet, “cured.” Asking for help at the reference desk might have turned up a few additional titles available elsewhere, but the stigma attached to the topic most often ensured that our young patron’s search would be limited to a furtive glance at the card catalog and the “h” volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

In most medium-to-large Oregon libraries today, patrons find listings for hundreds of gay-themed books under a wide range of relevant subject headings. They also find knowledgeable and enthusiastic librarians to help them pursue searches in large consortial catalogs and other Web-based resources. Were the librarian to guide today’s patron to OCLC’s WorldCat, they would discover nearly 25,000 unique English-language titles on gay-themed topics classified under no fewer than 240 relevant subject headings. Librarians today have a wide range of professional and bibliographic resources at their disposal to ensure that they become informed guides to this literature.

This study does not answer all of the questions librarians might ask about building collections and providing services in support of the gay community, but it does provide a current snapshot of gay-themed collections in Oregon libraries. It also offers suggestions and a rationale for building these collections and lists resources of use to librarians.

Study Design

The present study is designed to assess the strengths of gay-themed collections in Oregon libraries and to determine if libraries of different types, sizes, and locations share common collecting patterns. The authors also sought to understand how Oregon libraries are responding to the needs of Oregon’s GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) communities and, by extension, to the rapid growth of the literature on gay-themed topics over the past decades. The authors did not include periodicals, videos, and other non-book materials within this survey’s scope. Nor did they seek to determine the proportion of pro- to anti-gay titles or the “quality” of these collections. Because of the subjectivity involved in determining if a novel is, or is not, a “gay” novel, fiction is also excluded.

Methodology

Using a single search statement for each of the 60 libraries and library systems surveyed, on March 26, 2003, the authors queried OCLC’s WorldCat database to determine how many of the English language book titles these libraries held cover lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender topics. Working through the FirstSearch platform, they used the WorldCat database to obtain uniform access to the libraries’ holdings. The combination of the WorldCat database and the FirstSearch search engine made possible the use of a single, albeit complex, search statement of more than 100 characters, a search string that would not have been executable on most online public access catalogs. Unlike local catalogs, which can include unique or undocumented processing options, the WorldCat database offers a consistent protocol for searching bibliographic records.

To facilitate comparison, the libraries surveyed were divided into five categories: state-supported academic libraries, private nonreligious colleges and universities, private religious colleges, community colleges, and



public libraries and library systems. Several of these institutions (George Fox University, Lewis and Clark College, University of Oregon, Willamette University, and Portland Community College) had multiple OCLC holding codes in WorldCat. Database queries for these institutions were performed against all of their OCLC symbols.

To minimize false hits, the search string adopted was tested extensively by performing keyword searches of the subject headings field using wild cards to capture variations of major words. By focusing on subject heading fields, it was possible to avoid retrieving such non-GLBT phrases as “the gay nineties” which appear frequently in title and contents fields. The query statement also incorporated a tool to minimize possibly including personal authors whose first, middle, or last name is “gay.” The search formulation is: (su: gay* or su: lesbian* or su: bisexual* or su: transsexual* or su: transvesti* or su: transgender* or su: homophobic* or su: homosexual* or su: heterosex*) not (pn: gay) and ln= “eng” and dt: “bks.”

The authors used the WorldCat

database to separate the records retrieved by publication dates and group them by decade from the 1940s forward. (Earlier imprint dates are consolidated as “pre-1940s.”) In order to facilitate comparisons, the authors sought current enrollment statistics for each academic institution and current population statistics for each public library and library district.

The authors required that every library or library system selected for the survey 1) serve an Oregon institution of higher education, or serve the citizens of Oregon as a public library; 2) hold current membership in the OCLC consortium; and 3) store their bibliographic holdings information in OCLC’s WorldCat database. Because a large number of public libraries in Oregon do not place their bibliographic holdings directly in WorldCat, the authors chose 18 public library systems, with holdings listed in WorldCat, to represent the state’s 143 public libraries and library systems. This is a search strategy and research methodology that would lend itself to replication, not only for GLBT literature, but in many other subject areas as well.

Figure 1
Number of unique titles of gay-themed books written in English,
cataloged in OCLC, by year of publication
 (compiled March 26, 2003)

	<i>all years</i>	<i>2000-03</i>	<i>1990-99</i>	<i>1980-89</i>	<i>1970-79</i>	<i>1960-69</i>	<i>1950-59</i>	<i>1940-49</i>	<i>pre1940</i>
(percentages are computed separately for each time span)									
43,659 libraries worldwide									
in OCLC	24,128	3,735	11,120	4,199	2,812	1,483	336	81	362
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
all 60 institutions surveyed									
in Oregon	6,224	977	3,523	1,073	454	109	52	10	26
% of OCLC holdings	25.8%	26.2%	31.7%	25.6%	16.1%	7.3%	15.5%	12.3%	7.2%
ORBIS consortium members									
in Oregon	4,291	587	2,362	797	366	100	48	8	23
% of OCLC holdings	17.8%	15.7%	21.2%	19.0%	13.0%	6.7%	14.3%	9.9%	6.4%
OPALL consortium members									
in Oregon	499	32	202	133	95	23	12	0	2
% of OCLC holdings	2.1%	0.9%	1.8%	3.2%	3.4%	1.6%	3.6%	0.0%	0.6%

The complete dataset for all 60 institutions surveyed is available as an Excel spreadsheet from:

<http://www.willamette.edu/~gklein/GLBT-details.xls>

Study Results

- The libraries included in this survey collectively own 25.8 percent of all English-language gay-themed books cataloged in the OCLC WorldCat database.
- State-supported academic libraries, as a class, provide access to 15 percent of the English-language gay-themed books cataloged in the database. Larger Oregon libraries own disproportionately more gay-themed books than smaller libraries. (This finding holds true in each of the five categories of libraries surveyed.)
- Private religious college libraries in Oregon, in the aggregate, own fewer gay-themed books than any of the other four categories surveyed.
- Individual community college libraries in Oregon, on the average, own fewer gay-themed books than libraries in the other four categories. (The average community college library owns 69 gay-themed books. The averages for other categories are: private religious colleges, 86; public libraries, 206; private nonreligious colleges and universities, 250; state colleges and universities, 508.)
- The size of the gay-themed book collections owned by individual Oregon libraries varies greatly within each of the five categories surveyed. (This continues to hold true when population size and institutional mission are taken into consideration.)
- A comparison of the publication dates of the gay-themed books held by Oregon libraries confirms a dramatic increase in this literature over the past several decades.

Conclusions

Academic and public libraries located in traditionally liberal areas, Portland, Corvallis, Eugene, and Ashland, for example, tend to have the largest gay-themed collections. Libraries in traditionally conservative areas tend to have the smallest. A few libraries, however, do not conform to this pattern and have surprisingly large collections for their size, category, or location. Two-thirds of all gay-themed titles in the private nonreligious college and university category, for example, are held by a single library (Willamette University) and 35 percent of the titles owned by the private religious colleges are held by one library (University of Portland). It may be hypothesized that these libraries are conscientiously choosing to develop these collections or that individual librarians and faculty selectors are leaving their mark.

It is significant that although Oregon accounts for only one percent of the nation's population, its libraries hold 25 percent of the nation's gay-themed books. Like the collections themselves, access has improved greatly since our young student first searched the subject catalog back in the 1950s. Today, consolidated access to branch, satellite and departmental collections facilitates local searching; online access to other library catalogs in the region, state, and nation is commonly available; and regional consortial catalogs, Pioneer, OPALL, and Orbis, for example, assure rapid delivery of vast quantities of common holdings. To depend upon "the kindness of strangers" in order to avoid collecting these materials locally, however, is a violation of our professional obligation. If we do not systematically and adequately collect gay-themed materials, we ignore a literature of growing importance and the immediate needs of a considerable segment of our user community.



Figure 2
 Number of unique titles of gay-themed books, written in English,
 cataloged in OCLC (compiled March 26, 2003)

	<i>Fall 2001 enrollment</i>	<i># gbt books</i>	<i>% of OCLC</i>		<i>Population served</i>	<i># gbt books</i>	<i>% of OCLC</i>
<u>State supported institutions</u>	73,375	3,556	14.7%	<u>Public library systems</u>		3,703	15.3%
Eastern Oregon University	2,971	147	0.6%	Albany PL	41,650	284	1.2%
Oregon Institute of Technology	3,070	53	0.2%	Chemeketa Coop Reg L	n/a	125	0.5%
Oregon State University	18,013	1,272	5.3%	Coos Bay PL	26,301	415	1.7%
Portland State University	20,024	1,543	6.4%	Corvallis-Benton PL	79,000	1,369	5.7%
Southern Oregon University	5,465	683	2.8%	Dalles-Wasco Co PL	21,017	0	0.0%
University of Oregon	18,956	2,597	10.8%	Deschutes Co PL	122,050	382	1.6%
Western Oregon University	4,876	199	0.8%	Douglas Co L	101,200	307	1.3%
				Eugene PL	140,550	1,272	5.3%
<u>Private nonreligious colleges</u>	13,366	2,501	10.4%	Hood River Co PL	7,000	10	0.0%
Lewis & Clark College	2,947	816	3.4%	Jackson Co L	184,700	587	2.4%
Linfield College	2,542	458	1.9%	Josephine Co L	76,850	189	0.8%
Marylhurst University	937	159	0.7%	Klamath Co L	64,200	208	0.9%
Nat'l Col. of Naturopathic Medicine	459	13	0.1%	Lib Info Net Clackamas Co	n/a	821	3.4%
Oregon Graduate Institute	see OHSU	0	0.0%	Lincoln Co L Dist	n/a	283	1.2%
Oregon Health & Science Univ.	1976	65	0.3%	Multnomah Co L	666,350	2,484	10.3%
Pacific University	2,293	312	1.3%	Salem PL	139,320	724	3.0%
Reed College	1,420	599	2.5%	Tillamook Co L	24,600	177	0.7%
Western States Chiropractic Col.	331	1	0.0%	Washington Co Coop L	n/a	1,094	4.5%
Willamette University	2,437	1,667	6.9%				
<u>Private religious colleges</u>	9,869	864	3.6%				
Cascade College	330	3	0.0%				
Concordia University	1,040	97	0.4%				
George Fox University	2,637	214	0.9%				
Mt Angel Seminary	155	170	0.7%				
Multnomah Bible College	844	100	0.4%				
Northwest Christian College	480	58	0.2%				
University of Portland	3,087	331	1.4%				
Warner Pacific College	571	66	0.3%				
Western Baptist College	725	34	0.1%				
Western Seminary	n/a	118	0.5%				
<u>Community colleges</u>	85,468	1,034	4.3%				
Blue Mountain CC	2,143	56	0.2%				
Central Oregon CC	4,452	155	0.6%				
Chemeketa CC	10,762	110	0.5%				
Clackamas CC	6,715	89	0.4%				
Clatsop CC	1,522	63	0.3%				
Columbia Gorge CC	793	88	0.4%				
Lane CC	10,737	133	0.6%				
Linn-Benton CC	4,747	87	0.4%				
Mt Hood CC	8,771	37	0.2%				
Oregon Coast CC	416	8	0.0%				
Portland CC	24,882	486	2.0%				
Rogue CC	4,343	41	0.2%				
Southwestern Oregon CC	3,194	31	0.1%				
Treasure Valley CC	550	31	0.1%				
Umpqua CC	1,441	60	0.2%				

Fall 2001 enrollment data from Oregon Student Assistance Commission, Office of Degree Authorization.

http://www.osscc.state.or.us/oda/enrollment_2001.html

Population data obtained from "Directory of Oregon Public & Volunteer Libraries, 2002."

<http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/pldir.htm>




Recommendations and Resources

The following are recommendations and resources for building a collection of gay-themed materials. Depending upon the size of the gay community served, the curriculum of the school, and the research needs of the community, a few or many of these suggestions will be appropriate to a particular library.

- Conduct an environmental scan to determine the need for gay-themed materials that satisfy community, curricular, student and research requirements.
- Add GLBT literature to the collection development policy statement.
- Allocate resources for the purchase of gay-themed materials.
- Assign responsibility for the selection of gay-themed materials to selectors held accountable for filling gaps and building the current collection.
- Remember that available gay-themed materials are highly diverse. Consider the various types and their importance to your clientele, e.g., the coming out process, guides for parents of gay and lesbian children, gay history, fiction that treats GLBT topics.
- Build awareness of the GLBT literature amongst subject selectors.
- Solicit suggestions for the purchase of gay-themed materials from local organizations serving the GLBT community.
- Prepare bibliographies and publicize gay-themed materials.
- Collect at an appropriate level; do not force patrons to rely unduly upon ILL or consortial collections.
- Use commonly consulted selection tools to identify gay-themed materials,

e.g., *Library Journal*, *American Libraries*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Choice*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Book Review Digest*. Use specialized resources, e.g., *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, *Alternative Press Index*, to develop more comprehensive collections.

- Use the Lambda Literary Awards and the American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgendered Round Table's Book Award lists as buying guides.
- Include the gay biweekly news magazine, *The Advocate*, in your collection. It is a useful resource for readers and selectors alike. 

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Diversity and Special Services

by Carolynn Avery
*Talking Book and
Braille Services
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Libraries meet their communities' needs by providing diversity in their collections and their formats and by providing access to a diverse population. One might think that Talking Book and Braille Services (TBABS) of the Oregon State Library doesn't deal with much diversity. Our service population is vision impaired. Period. Right? So why is the Regional Librarian writing about diversity matters? What possible insight can she have into this subject?

Actually, as the spokesperson for Oregon's Talking Books and Braille Services, I bring a valid but often overlooked viewpoint to this discussion. Diversity is not limited to culture or religion or race. It includes a wide array of abilities. Most libraries, by nature of their dependence on print materials, videos, and computers, have great appeal to the sighted and even the deaf populations. What about those segments of the population who, for various reasons, may not be able to access knowledge or entertainment through books or video screens?

Increasingly, public and academic libraries are expanding audio book collections and providing computer screen enlargers and screen readers in order to serve this user group. However, shrinking budgets may not cover basic services, let alone such enhancements. A library's ability to provide these additional services is also limited by the relatively small number of individuals who have need of these services, and by the difficulty they may have just getting to the library building.

The mandate for libraries is to provide information to all segments of the population. Can community and school libraries fulfill this mandate on their own? Probably not entirely. Probably not with the constraints surrounding us. But with assistance from special libraries the answer is a resounding "yes!" Oregon public and academic libraries can provide assistance to those with visual impairments or physical disabilities courtesy of the very special collection of

TBABS at the Oregon State Library.

TBABS provides Braille materials, talking books (cassettes) and playback machines, and descriptive videos to Oregonians who have vision impairments or physical disabilities (including dyslexia) and are unable to read regular printed materials. TBABS doesn't just have a few titles: the National Library Service has about 60,000 titles on tape and 5,000 in Braille.

Before coming to TBABS, I spent six years working as a public librarian in Corvallis. For three of those years, I also worked as a cataloguer and reference librarian for DB-LINK's National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind at Western Oregon University. These experiences acquainted me with the information and entertainment needs of people who are vision impaired and with the limits public and academic libraries face serving these users—limits imposed by budget and space considerations, as well as by the small number of users in each community who might need these materials, compared to the community at large.

Accommodations for TBABS in the State Library are expensive and space consuming. Consider the amount of space taken up by tax forms and instructions in most libraries each year for a limited time. Now imagine the extra space and cost for each library to provide that information in Braille. TBABS can and does provide this tax information in Braille each year. Those volumes are only a supplement to the complete TBABS cassette tape and Braille book collection, a collection that required 13,275 square feet of stack space and circulated 348,224 books in 2001 and 2002.

Is the staff at TBABS concerned about collection diversity? You bet. TBABS users can request non-fiction and fiction, adult and juvenile materials. They have access to Spanish, Russian, and Japanese language materials; children's large print books and Twin-Vision books (Braille overlays in regular children's picture books);



newspapers and magazines in Braille and on tape; old-time radio shows and contemporary videos.

TBABS members also have home access to Web-Braille on a password-protected site. This Web-based service provides the full text (in an electronic form of grade 2 Braille) of thousands of Braille books and all Braille magazines currently produced by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Also offered by NLS via TBABS membership is access to a music collection consisting of music scores in Braille and large print; Braille and large print textbooks and books about music; music appreciation cassettes, including interviews and opera lectures; and self-instructional cassettes for voice, piano, organ, electronic keyboard, guitar, recorder, accordion, banjo, harmonica, and other instruments. This material contains more than 20,000 music-related items.


Whom does TBABS serve?

- The 90-year-old widower with macular degeneration who wants to listen to the Bible.
- The blind parent whose sighted 3-year-old wants to see pictures as well as hear the words.
- The 22-year-old student looking for career guidance.
- The 45-year-old businessman who wants to know more about the Middle East.
- The visually impaired student needing to read a novel for class.
- The 65-year-old grandmother whose arthritis won't allow her to hold the books of her favorite author anymore.
- The grandfather who wants to share his favorite childhood stories with

his grandchildren; he can't see the print well enough to read but can listen to the cassettes with them.

- The skier with two broken arms who still wants to read his favorite authors.
- The school librarian helping a teacher find Braille materials for her class.

What else does the staff at TBABS do to provide diverse services? Like librarians everywhere, we provide readers' advisory and ILL services. We provide referrals to people seeking books that NLS hasn't produced—usually we send them to their local libraries. We provide copies of books for reading discussion groups. We provide phone numbers and addresses to local support groups and national information services. We give tours of our facility. We connect Braille readers with libraries and schools for special storytimes. We do outreach to senior centers, retirement homes, and support groups.

Yes, diversity matters—in collections, in communities, and in libraries. We need to reach out to the visually impaired or physically disabled and let them know what is available locally and from Talking Book and Braille Services. The Talking Book and Braille Services can partner with each and every public and academic library in Oregon. Together we can provide service to a portion of the state's population that by its very nature is not likely to use the major parts of most library collections. 



Developing Virtual Spanish-Language Resources:

Exploring a Best Practices Model for Public Libraries

by Michael Shapiro
President and founder
Libros Sin Fronteras

If developing and maintaining an English-language virtual collection is a daunting task, then adding issues of a second language complicates matters considerably. How should public libraries compare the funding of their Spanish-language print collections to that of Spanish-language virtual collections? Should library Web pages be bilingual when a significant percentage of a community's population speaks another language? Are subscription-based, Spanish-language electronic resources necessary acquisitions for U.S. public libraries? Should libraries link to high quality, Spanish-language electronic resources that are free? Is a Spanish bilingual interface an important feature for libraries to consider when evaluating OPACs or subscribing to electronic resources? Is the digital divide broadened when libraries choose not to develop Spanish-language interfaces on their Web pages or not to purchase Spanish-language electronic resources? Ultimately, do questions of universal access point to public libraries developing Spanish-language virtual collections in the same way that they do English-language virtual collections? How numerous must the Spanish-language population be to merit dedicating funds to these resources? If public libraries are not presently able to build Spanish-language components into their Web presence, at what point might they in the future?

There are no easy answers to the above questions. Indeed, the more one seeks published information on the topic, the more surprised one becomes at how infrequently library literature discusses it.



Delving into areas of virtual library collection development in Spanish is an unending exercise in opening Pandora's box.

In part this deficiency is understandable. Delving into areas of virtual library collection development in Spanish is an unending exercise in opening Pandora's box. Many topics most central to developing virtual library collections—liaison with library users, collection evaluation, resource sharing, budgeting, the development of collection policies and reviews—are complicated further in the context of developing virtual Spanish-language library resources. Bringing forth these issues, one naturally runs into other related and equally thorny issues, such as libraries and librarians moving into the world of content creation, the “English Only” movement rising within government and public institutions, and age, class and ethnicity as they affect public library service. Research combining these areas with questions of Spanish-language electronic resource development for public libraries approaches the non-existent. What does exist are excellent examples of what some public libraries are doing and a body of research setting forth sound guidelines for the creation of Spanish-language digital resources on public library Web sites.

Evaluation of Five Public Libraries

I have semi-randomly and fully unscientifically selected five public library systems to examine their virtual Spanish-language resources. At various times and by different people, these five have been considered leaders in the field of developing electronic library resources for Spanish-speaking populations. They are: the Multnomah County Public Library, the Los Angeles Public Library, the Queens Borough Public Library, the San Antonio Public Library, and the San Francisco Public Library.

The Multnomah County Public Library

It is refreshing and even a bit surprising to conduct a Google search on “Multnomah County Library” and to be presented with the following:



“Multnomah County Library: Multnomah County Library’s Web site including information about its services, collections and locations. Español A department of ... www.multcolib.org/ - 11k - Nov. 9, 2002.”

That the word *Español* is, I assume quite intentionally, significant enough to merit inclusion in the first few words of this site’s Google description illustrates a rare and unwavering clarity about the importance of Spanish offerings to the site’s objectives and priorities. On the site’s home page, the word *Español* is unmistakably set as the uppermost word in the upper right hand corner where no one is likely to miss it. The page “en español” is similar to but not a direct translation of the English-language page. A talking-head-like, “speaking” librarian (highly innovative, though it unfortunately didn’t work on my equipment) is found on the Spanish version but not the English one. Other differences include a far more central and prevalent placement for “Clases de Computación” (computer and Internet classes) and work and employment options.

The Spanish site’s presentation is somewhat more iconic and outline-oriented and just a bit less colorful and “glitzy” than the English site. Access to the library’s catalog from off-site computers seems nearly impossible even after a lengthy, megabyte-intensive (4.9 MB) download. A command line interface for the catalog in English was available but seemed impenetrable to anyone not trained specifically in its functionality. The Spanish language home page also included a good collection of local and national Hispanic community resources and home-country information, English learning information, and many of the same general, library-specific offerings of the English-language page.

Also remarkable on the Multnomah County Public Library’s Spanish Web site are the subscription databases available bilingually or in Spanish: Informe, a Gale product, and Ebscohost en Español, which offers various databases including Ethnic

News Watch. Along with this section of “Bases de Datos en Español” (Spanish-language databases), multiple English-language databases are listed and annotated in Spanish. Most of these databases require a library card to gain access.

Multnomah’s Spanish home page seems a bit quirky, rough-hewn and somewhat less refined than its English-language partner. Yet it is an exceptional and illustrative beginning, treating the needs of Portland-area Spanish speakers with seriousness of purpose and displaying a commitment of resources to back it up. The purchase of several Spanish-language subscription databases is an acknowledgment of their importance and sends a clear and essential message to library vendors: libraries are willing to spend money on Spanish as well as English content.



Yet it is an exceptional and illustrative beginning, treating the needs of Portland-area Spanish-speakers with seriousness of purpose and displaying a commitment of resources to back it up.

The Los Angeles Public Library

The Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) also dedicates significant resources to its Spanish-language Web presence (<http://www.lapl.org/espanol/index.html>). Although not as immediately visible as the Multnomah County site, the switch from the LAPL’s English-language home page to the Spanish version is prominent and easy to find. A collection of additional links is unique to LAPL’s Spanish Web site. These links provide information about library



services like “Abuelos y Libros” (Grandparents and Books), funded by the Ahmanson Foundation, and other services offering readings to children by Spanish-speaking elder volunteers. The site offers a listing of “Materiales Nuevos” (New Titles) in Spanish and announces that the LAPL “will accept Identification Cards provided by the Mexican Consulate.”

A Spanish version of LAPL’s 24/7 online reference, “Bibliotecario a su alcance,” offers extraordinary Spanish-language reference support to local patrons and even users outside LAPL’s geographic area. Sunday afternoon Spanish queries from my clearly identified Madison, Wisconsin laptop brought an immediate and very thoughtful response from an actual LAPL librarian. E-mail correspondence with online reference librarian Bruce Jensen revealed that “calls have trickled in from every continent except Antarctica. A couple weeks ago a bunch of Nicaraguans were pummeling us with questions. Several have logged in from Mexico. Our largest user group by far, though, is library school students logging in using pseudonyms. Confirming once again that lib school profs are perennially hurtin’ for original ideas” (November 10, 2002). LAPL’s “Virtual Library” also offers card-holding patrons access to magazine content through Informe and newspapers through “Noticias” (a Newsbank product).

The Queens Borough Public Library

The Queens Borough, New York, Public Library, for years a recognized leader in services to non-English speaking patrons, has created both a Spanish-language and Russian-language Web presence. Its Google description, like Multnomah’s, mentioned its Spanish-language offerings, although in English:

“Queens Borough Public Library: ... <http://www.queenslibrary.org...> Description: Event calendar, information about member libraries, and online catalog. Also available in Spanish.”



Of the libraries surveyed,
Queens seems to offer by far
the best and most user-friendly
Spanish-language catalog
interface, “InfoLinQ” by Data
Research Associates.

Scanning the site on November 10, 2002 revealed a large amount of space unfortunately dedicated to their October events calendar listing. Links to Informe, Ethnic News Watch, and Noticias en Español (News in Spanish) all require library cards for access. Access to NOAH (the New York City Health Department’s Web site in Spanish) does not.

Of the libraries surveyed, Queens seems to offer by far the best and most user-friendly Spanish-language catalog interface, “InfoLinQ” by Data Research Associates. InfoLinQ (in combination with “WorldLinQ”) is described as “an innovative multilingual Web-based information system.” Users use InfoLinQ to search the library’s Spanish-language and English-Spanish bilingual holdings from seemingly any networked computer without specific password access. Users can narrow their searches by branch library location, publication year, language (Spanish, English, German, French, Italian, or all), or numerous media. Author, title, keyword, and ISBN searching and browsing as well as searches of other library catalogs (New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, New York State Library, etc.) are also available. Of those online interfaces reviewed, InfoLinQ offers Spanish-language users the easiest means to navigate and the most complete accessibility to the library’s catalog.

The San Antonio Public Library

Like the three previous libraries, the San



Antonio Public Library (SAPL) offers a very visible “en Español” link on their library homepage. Users have five options:

- **Catalog:** After navigating through a few seemingly unnecessary clicks, users can access the SAPL catalog and select a (CARL) Spanish interface. The SAPL catalog offers multiple means of browsing. Searches can be limited by keyword, author, title, subject, ISBN, ISSN, or LCCN numbers, or specific library branch.
- **Latin Collection in Spanish:** This link describes SAPL’s Spanish collection of approximately 5,000 volumes, offering details about the types of materials offered (fiction, non-fiction, reference and periodicals), subjects of major interest, lending policies, a donations request and a “box” for suggestions or comments.
- **A policies and acceptable usage page** offers information about filters, links to non-library sites, and rules of conduct.
- **General library behavior.**
- **A children’s use and adult accompaniment policy statement.**

The San Francisco Public Library

The San Francisco Public Library’s home page readily links to a Spanish language version with a host of options. Like the Queens Borough Public Library, San Francisco Public Library users are treated to an online catalog in Spanish developed by Data Research Associates. It offers similar means for limiting searches and will archive previous searches. An online help option offers Spanish-language assistance.

San Francisco Public Library’s Spanish home page also connects users to annotated links of numerous Spanish-friendly search engines. A classified subject listing links to selected non-library Web sites. The site provides access to San Francisco Bay area

social services, other local organizations (some only available in English), and access to electronic magazines and newspapers for library cardholders. Users can review new titles in Spanish (an option under construction at this writing). They can reserve computer time at the main library (and soon at other branches); access library classes, exhibitions, and programs; view usage policies and information; and even review questions from a U.S. citizenship exam. An “Ask Us a Question” (info@sfpl.org) link allows users to pose short, precise questions to librarians in Spanish via e-mail.



It is somewhat surprising that the home pages of many very large library systems serving extensive Latino populations do not have an immediately visible option available for Spanish-language access.

Other Libraries with Significant Spanish Speaking Populations

It is somewhat surprising that the home pages of many very large library systems serving extensive Latino populations do not have an immediately visible option available for Spanish-language access. Some include the New York Public Library, the Miami-Dade Public Library, the Chicago Public Library, and the Los Angeles County Public Library. Although their home pages do not offer this option, these library systems do dedicate significant resources to their Spanish-speaking patrons in other ways. The Dallas Public Library’s home page offered one of the most disappointing Spanish-language offerings. A link in “en Español” takes users away from the library system’s



Web site and connects them directly to the city's Web site (dallascityhall.com) which has a Spanish-language version.

Guidelines for Creating Public Library Web Sites with Spanish Language Information

Following up on the work of Hal Bright of the New Haven Free Public Library, Wanda Reinford, reference librarian at the San Antonio Public Library, compiled a list of Spanish-language public library sites from around the country. These are posted at the REFORMANET Web site along with Reinford's observations on building a Spanish Web presence:


- If you're providing Spanish-language information on your library Web site, don't expect your Spanish-speaking patron to dig deeply to find it; a link directly from your home page is ideal.
- If you provide a variety of Spanish-language resources on your Web site (catalog, library card application, recommended Web links, etc.) please provide one page where all resources are linked together. To me, sites that offered a variety of such resources scattered throughout their site, but did not provide "one-stop" access to those resources, were very frustrating.
- Try not to use the terms "Spanish" and "Hispanic/Latino" interchangeably in categorizing your recommended Web links. And if you are providing annotated Spanish-language Web links for Spanish-speaking patrons, provide either bilingual or Spanish annotations if at all possible ... I found libraries in 40 of the 50 states with Spanish-language online information. Not surprisingly, states with a high percentage of persons of Hispanic origin such as California, Texas, and New York also have numerous libraries providing online information in Spanish. Some-

what more surprising to me was the fact that some libraries in places such as Alabama, Indiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee, in counties with relatively small Hispanic populations, provided Spanish-language information online, yet I didn't find Spanish-language information online from many libraries along the Texas-Mexico border or in Florida or in cities such as San Diego, Sacramento, Albuquerque, and Denver with relatively large Hispanic populations (<http://www.reforma.org/spanishWebsites.htm#IN>).

REFORMA's Information Technology Agenda

Perhaps the best outline detailing the myriad challenges and opportunities of Latino and Spanish-language digital collections in public libraries is offered by REFORMA's "Information Technology Agenda." This extensive document, prepared by REFORMA's Information Technology Committee in June 2000, discusses demographics and the "digital divide" as they relate to the Latino population. It discusses the impact of new technologies, awareness and instruction, digital preservation and access, and potential partnerships while presenting recommendations for each of these subheadings. Although more than two years old, the document's bibliography is an excellent collection of resources on the subject.

Summation

This review of electronic Spanish-language resources at five public libraries reveals a broad array of services, functions and applications that public libraries might make available to Spanish-speaking library users. Clearly, no single library offers all of the possibilities, but by detailing what some libraries have accomplished and exploring some of the guidelines, I hope that public libraries can gain a better understanding of developing virtual Spanish-language content. 



Deep Change—Diversity at Its Simplest

by Sandra Rios Balderrama
Phoenix, Arizona

At its simplest “diversity” is about people. People who want to make a change from that which appears static or homogenous. People who want to create change in and around themselves. In my view, diversity is about people who want to deal with reality as it is, as it has been, as it will be.

But my reality may not be yours. Most of the time we say the word *diversity* using different assumptions and definitions. Some call it a concept, an ideology, a trend, an issue. Some call it a “movement.” Call it what you want. Stretch it far and wide. Focus on the center of the peach kernel. For some, diversity is a choice of how one wants to work, of how one wants to live, of how one wants to relate to other people within this country, within the world. It is about holding up an earth flag along with your national flag, gay pride flag, POW/MIA flag, if you wish. That is my definition. Create your own. But make sure that it is meaningful to you. And not your window dressing. We can cover up for anyone but ourselves.

I suggest this approach and encourage personal reflection because although organizational “diversity” statements are worthy and important, an individual working the reference desk, or making a collection development decision, or a hiring decision can sabotage the best of vision statements. There is power “on the desk.” There is power behind closed doors. Everyday leadership and “small” acts of intertwined personal and professional accountability go a long way to create an environment conducive to mutual respect, reciprocation, and learning. This is an environment where I want to work.

“Diversity” has not been a choice for Americans. It was “imposed” upon those of us who live on this land currently identified as the United States. As long as we choose to live, work, plant or study here, we are accountable for the herstory/history that brought us to this present moment, this

present day. Call it the frustrating debris. The remnants. The “fall out.” Call it a blessing bathed in trauma, victory, integrity, courage, and destiny. Call it a mystery of forever wondering why it occurred. Call it living in the past and not moving on to the future. Call it honored memory. Regardless, here we are—truly a multicultural population with diverse lifestyles, sexual orientations, learning styles, etc. “... my etcetera country, my wounded country, my child, my tears, my obsession” (Alegria, Claribel).

Some of us were brought by force. Some of us had our homes taken by force. Some of us “ran” here by choice—we ran, boated, trained, walked, and crawled for our lives. How could we forget this? Why do we forget? That nothing here was “discovered” for the first time. And that those who survived did not survive as an empty slate. Language may have been beaten out of people. Long black hair was cut. When I recently viewed *The Laramie Project*, it seemed just yesterday that Matthew Shepherd* was left hanging. Make no mistake. There is a memory. Memory prevailed. And there are strategies for retaining that which speaks to us from the past in an honest and authentic way. Even an assimilated, U.S. educated, English-speaking woman of 2003 still “feels” the sound of her grandmother clapping dough between her hands. She “feels” the smell of the tortilla toasting on the hotplate as she awakens, on Saturday morning, before church, in Los Angeles. This gives her memory of “the fallout” but it is also restorative.

Libraries, today’s libraries, accessible libraries help us remember the history and herstory. We are dangerous.

In October or November 1989, I was part of a Transition into Management Program sponsored by UCLA and the California State Library. Henry Der, then Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, told ten of us that the library needed to be the place where new immigrants learned about civil rights and where Americans of every background learned about global situations that catalyzed



migration to the U.S. In Der's mind, libraries were the place to exchange and reciprocate information and history/herstory and thus, begin building a shared future. Somewhere along the way, between U.S. citizenship classes and U.S. education for Americans, there was a disconnect that in Der's mind, librarians as educators, bridge builders, information navigators could quite naturally and powerfully address.

When I think about libraries and about the future I usually think of a 24/7 "mercado," a huge open market that you might find in Italy, France, Mexico, maybe even Portland—many places in the world that I have never been. Perhaps it is the color and noise of exchange and bartering that I find pleasing. The mercado is a multisensory environment that keeps me alert, challenged, frustrated, as well as pleased. In the library work environment I picture the richest of diverse appearances, ideas, and perspectives at the table where something is decided, designed, discussed and, yes, maybe even bartered.

There is inevitably tension. There is tension because each of us loves our favorite ideas, epiphanies, stories. There is tension because one of us has an untold story that cannot tolerate hearing another's so freely told. There is tension because one of us resents the silence of another—the peace with which another chooses to listen and reflect before talking. There is tension because we don't know how to listen more, talk less or talk up more, listen less.

But in my "picture" usually there is food somewhere at the beginning or the end. Food is exchanged. Or a story, laugh, song, or poem. Foods for the soul. And when I remember this meeting of decision making, design or information exchange, I remember the "face" that passed me the blueberry muffin covered by the Guatemalan textile cloth and lying in the Kenyan basket. Effective communication amongst diverse peoples that no longer rely on a mainstream of standards requires stamina,

patience, willingness to listen deeply and to look "again," and the courage to relax the ego in order to develop new ways of communicating on behalf of a shared goal—service to library users.

We know with our gut, values, ethics, mother wit, our rationale, left and/or right minds, our quantitative and qualitative analyses that diversity is about human beings striving to "become" more whole as individuals and more "real" as a global village. This global village is beyond e-mailing a pen pal in Honduras or reading a blog from Iraq. The electronic and digital global villages have had an important role in forcing us to deal with one another (beyond a box of crayons, a mixed salad, a beautiful quilt, a rainbow of handheld hands), but being behind the computer screen is different than the face-to-face contact we "face" in everyday life. In library work, we share "face" time with colleagues, co-workers, patrons, students, advocates, trustees, and stakeholders. At the degree or level of "face" is where we attempt to interact on behalf of delivering excellent service and/or on behalf of having a work environment that is more than tolerable—that is generative and conducive to creativity, evaluation, and renewal. Throw a little acknowledgment and respect in and we are more than happy. Our standards of appraisal rise from "It's better than a kick in the butt" or "No news is good news" to "My administrators are not afraid to tell me I've done a good job" or "Our library not only looks at people's experience but at their potential."

Dipping into actions that result from "soft skills" is referred to as "touchy-feely." Dipping into actions that result from "hard skills" is referred to as "good business." I happen to believe that soft skills are more difficult to hone and to practice. In reality interpersonal skills may never carry the same weight as technological skills and most standards of operation and performance are scientifically and quantitatively bound. Whether you weep at the sight of



Private First Class Lori Piestewa's* family delivering big pots of food or trays covered by crinkled foil upstairs to the family's porch, or whether you rely on the up-to-the-minute demographic or scientific data, when you are implementing meaningful diversity work you must know that you will be going against the grain. Tears can be ridiculed. Data can be manipulated. Diversity is typically repelled and resisted. But with time, diligence, persistence, integrity and, I believe, ethics, the salmon makes it back home to the root, the kernel, the base, the heartbeat—the global drumbeat—that is at the base of diversity.

At the first level of diversity, typically our most successful, is programming and collections. No matter what our background we are capable as librarians of displaying, programming, and building collections with multiculturalism and intellectual diversity in mind. We know about Gay Pride month. We know about Spanish-language materials. We know we must include small press publications. This is an important level. A good level.

At the second level of diversity, we focus on staffing. This is who we work with, work for, work above in the organic or mechanical structures of our library organizations. We provide great programming but we look around and at “face value” we see mirrors of ourselves but not of the people we serve or want to serve. It is possible that we as a homogenous group think differently and work differently, but when we come together at the library meeting table we don't see whom we do laundry next to, who owns the restaurants down the block, who lives next door, who travels on their skateboard, or who walks with Ethiopian fabrics billowing in slight breezes. We know we are capable of learning a different language or of “brushing up” on another culture but we know deeply that there is only so far we can go. We will always be an outsider.

It's OK. We don't have to impose ourselves or become awkward “culture

vultures.” We don't have to pretend. Instead we recruit for diversity in an honest, authentic manner. We actively and purposely look for people who will be different from us. We look for qualifications and the rest is a surprise package. Perhaps. Perhaps not. Perhaps we obtain the visual diversity of the current Bush administration. This is good. I like to see different colors and genders of people. Perhaps, in addition to visible diversity, we get intellectual diversity and fresh bravery.

These last qualities may or may not set the system(s) of comfort on edge. Regardless, we focus and we go beyond a good faith effort, implement diverse strategies, re-articulate our job descriptions and recruitment brochures, connect with new or mainstream library groups or with those representing the GLBT, multicultural, and people with disability communities, and stretch timeframes if we need to in order to reach a diverse audience of qualified applicants. We do things differently because we are serious about a diverse workforce. Whew! Lots of work, lots of energy, and serious resources are required at this important level of inclusion and opportunity. It is a good level.

At the third level of diversity we are colorful at the table, reference desk, and on staff development day. We implement a shared library vision. We are able to finally say that we have visible diversity throughout the ranks. We may be able to include true and natural photos of visible diversity in our recruitment brochures. But there remains an element of cookie-cutterism, an expectation of “conformity” as to what organizational behavior, meeting protocol, and standards and appraisals of performance look like. Circles try to be squares. Squares try to be circles. Elephants try to lose weight to fit in the giraffe's house (Thomas, Roosevelt).

President's Bush's administration or the diverse composition of our armed forces are other examples. Most often, in the case of libraries, are the unspoken standards, measurements and gauges that are potentially



detrimental to the contributions of employees from any affinity group who don't "measure up" to those particular standards. This is an important level, however, because it reduces visible homogeneity. It creates a workforce that will probably be more attractive to potential library users. This level illustrates a choice to participate and to be included in the common recognitions and rewards of being "American." Many paved a path with a machete to obtain and implement this right—to become part of the President's cabinet or the Supreme Court, to use the elevators at ALA conferences (like A.P. Marshall*), or to be part of the armed services. Yet I would like to see us push further to another level—deeper or higher—depending on your metaphors.

At the fourth level of diversity is a rainbow coalition. It devotes time to creating new and reviewing traditional operating principles, values, and communication methods. Perhaps the methods of "rounds" (going around the room to hear everyone and allowing for introverts to think and speak without interruption), true brainstorming (getting the ideas out in a non-judgmental, non-interrupted, non-edited manner), "interest-based" negotiations (focus on the interest and the issue not the person or the "problem"), incorporation of multisensory data (for visual people like me), or a dozen other methods may be explored or designed. The rainbow coalition figures out "how" it will work together. It will create a shared agreement for how to work together and how to gather and incorporate "multiplex" perspectives.

The group has decided that mainstream standards no longer serve the contemporary workforce and thus start to create new guidelines and agreements in order to obtain the richest fruit, bartering, and sounds of the "mercado." At this level the group may be able to tackle and effectively honor the intellectual diversity of each person, each person in part forever subject to appearance or attached to some affinity group, but at the same

time contributing individual thoughts, perspectives, ideas, plans, strategies not so much because these might be Latina thoughts but because like my Grandma used to say with gusto, "Sandra!! God gave us a mind!" And at this level the group will begin to understand that gravitation to any affinity group can happen at the same time as one's own individuality is expressed. For example, while in charge of the Spectrum Scholarship Initiative at ALA I often had to explain: "No, the Spectrum Scholars are not all straight. They are gay, bisexual, lesbian. Some have disabilities that are visible or not visible to you. Some are also Jewish. Some are Asian and American Indian at the same time. Some are straight. Some were born in this country. Others only reside here. Some are over 55; others are in their 20s. They are every one of us and they are not any one of us." At this fourth level we begin to live more comfortably with simplicity and complexity. We begin to understand we know little but we understand what is the right thing to do.

At the fifth level of diversity are mutual reciprocity, respect, and exchange. Skill for skill. Lesson for lesson. Coins for a kilo of tangelos. Heart for heart. At this level I am recruited to a library; I get the job; I learn about the new "operating principles" and the overall expectations of a shared vision. I am interested and am willing to learn and to practice them. But if there is "true" diversity, then I expect the employer and organization to be interested in learning from me and to consider incorporating my added value into the organization's values. It is not really about "me." It is really about consistent growth, generation, incorporation and evaluation of both a work environment and the service/product provided. As with my employer, I have mutual respect for the user and my colleagues. I am not attempting to "better" or "empower" someone that I am superior to. I share my skill. I learn from others' questions and interests. I



simply “walk” in the manner of the leaders I admire. I act even though I won’t be written up in the *American Libraries*. I speak softly. I speak enthusiastically in my native language without punishment. I not only applaud or throw tomatoes from the sidelines but I participate in the moment. If there is a hate crime against a gay human being then I see it as a Latina/Jewish/Arabic/feminist/paraplegic problem. We share the problem, hurt, issue, pain, feeling, data gathering for another human whose “becoming” was cut down.

Ms. Alberta Tenorio, library assistant at the Oakland Public Library, advised the 1999 ALA Spectrum Scholars during the “Spirit of Service Leadership” curriculum: “Don’t do it for ‘them,’ do it for you.” Henry Gardner, past city manager for Oakland, CA, advised California library workers at a 1995 or 1996 California Library Association conference: “If you can’t be enlightened regarding diversity then be selfish. Do it for yourself and the future of this country, the future of libraries.” At the 1998 Colorado Library Association, Susan Kotarba, librarian with the Denver Public Library, said, “I have met the future librarians that I want to work with. They are the teenagers that work in my library.” The teenagers are nothing less than a future librarian. (Gasp.) Someone else had told me that the young group of teenagers on one of the original Spectrum posters looked like “gang bangers.” Ah. Pumping heart. The teenagers are our librarians.

PFC Piestewa’s family and friends cook in big pots like my family does. Matthew Shepherd was my Uncle Joe. Alberta is my grandmother. Claribel Alegria’s “etc.” country of El Salvador is my own. Mr. A.P Marshall is Cesar Chavez. Elevators. Vineyards. There is both power and need in the least obvious places. The heartbeat. The shared drumbeat that is our global mother. Perhaps this fifth level might be the last level, the deepest level, the peach kernel. Frankly, I am not sure.

May your levels, your steps, your actions, your reflections, your attempts all

be acknowledged. May they all be “true.” May you remember the face of the person who passed you the bread. May discomforts around diversity eventually enlighten. May you demonstrate courage to try something new. May you give one another the benefit of the doubt. May you bark and growl, bring out the statistics, draw pictures and circles—in a meeting where there are shared agreements of time and communication. May your exchanges at your local mercado be fruitful. May your worktables produce splinters. May your famous evergreens reciprocate oxygen for your carbon dioxide.

This article is dedicated to Faye Chadwell and my friends at Multnomah County Library: Sara Ryan, Patricia Welch, Ruth Metz, and the Latino Outreach staff.

*Notes

21-year old Matthew Shepherd died on October 12, 1998, the victim of an anti-gay hate crime perpetrated in Laramie, Wyoming.

Private First Class Lori Piestewa, age 23, was the first Native American woman in the U.S. armed forces to die as a result of combat. Piestewa was part of the Army’s 507th Maintenance Company stationed in Iraq during March 2003.

Librarian, author and scholar, A. P. (Albert Prince) Marshall contributed much to African American librarianship. The father of ALA OLOS Director Satia Orange, Marshall died in 2000.

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