

Executive Director's Column

By Adam Wright, Executive Director, North Texas Library Partners.
April 2009

Happy Fools Day!

This month our theme is Rethinking Reference Collections. Our guest columnist is Tony New, Adult Services Supervisor at the Bedford Public Library. Tony writes about reference collections. For our Librarian Live episode this month, we have our own Carolyn Davidson Brewer speaking about the topic.

Reference collections have been a mainstream service for libraries for a long time. When I was contemplating this month's column, I began to visualize a future for libraries without a reference service. In my mind, I saw a library as place for the community to gather and to take advantage of services to assist patrons with their educational, recreational and entertainment needs. You notice I did not mention informational needs. Libraries are facing, and have been for years, competition as information providers. In our minds, the library is still the best place to find information due to the fact that we offer authoritative, credible sources. However, how many of you have heard the phrase, "You can find anything on the Internet today." As false as this belief might be, it seems to be taking root in society today more than ever.

In my visualization exercise, I see librarians absorbing their informational role into their educational one. Information is readily available on the Internet today, but we all know there are sources out there on the web that are filled with bad factual errors. We also know that there is a share of very good sources on the Internet. We all remember the study Nature did four years ago (in case you missed it, <http://alturl.com/4pj>) that showed that Wikipedia was just as accurate as the Britannica. We know all of this, but does the average patron? From my many conversations with information seekers, I would venture a guess that they do not.

We need to take an active role in educating our patrons on how to research and evaluate informational sources. I know many of you are already providing this service, but I think it is important for us to move up our list of priorities. NTLP's Libraries for Literacy Advisory council has an informal plan to include information literacy as one of the forms of literacy it supports. I encourage everyone to go to their regional, state and national organizations and ask them to begin programs to support libraries in their efforts to educate patrons on this topic.

Libraries have always amazed me on their ability to transform with the changing times. If a certain library role begins to lose its value in the minds of our patrons, we step forward to assist them in a different fashion than we have traditionally. I think Reference is a service that will slowly begin to find its way out of our libraries. This does not mean we have to abandon helping our patrons with their

informational needs. It just means we teach them to fish versus giving them a fish.

April Workshops

Please register for these workshops at <http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=160>.

- **Special Needs, Special Programs?**, 4/16/2009, System Office
- **Reader's Advisory, Part II**, 4/17/2009, Denton Public Library – North
- **Workforce Solutions and Libraries: Partners in Online Job Searches** 4/28/2009, Haltom City Public Library

Consulting

Here is who we visited last month.

Region 2

Decatur – IT support

Jacksboro – Consulted on new Teen area

Newark – Collection Analysis

Region 6

Azle – IT support

Region 7

NTRLS@ Your Library – Dublin to rearrange the genealogy and children's rooms

O2U Projects Requested

These are the requests filled through our Outreach to the Underserved program.

For more information on this program, please visit our website at

<http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=245>.

Region 1

None

Region 2

Jacksboro

7 requests

Region 3

Aubrey Area Library	2 requests
Carrollton Pub. Library	2 requests
William T. Cozby Public Library, Coppell	2 requests
Denton Public Library	2 requests
Flower Mound Public Library	9 requests
Frisco Public Library	2 requests
Justin Community Library	2 requests
Krum Public Library	4 requests
Lake Cities Library	2 requests
Lewisville Public Library	2 requests
Little Elm Public Library	2 requests
Pilot Point Community Library	2 requests
Plano Public Library System	2 requests
Betty Foster Public Library, Ponder	2 requests
Roanoke Public Library	2 requests
Sanger Public Library	2 requests
The Colony Public Library	2 requests

Region 4

Saginaw	1 requests
---------	------------

Region 5

Birdville ISD	15 requests
Haltom City	2 requests
Mansfield	1 requests

Region 6

Fort Worth	3 requests
------------	------------

Region 7

26 Requests completed.
648 Materials distributed

Special Interest Groups & Conferences

- LibraryTechNetwork SIG
 - The 2009 TechNet Planning Committee met online March 9 and adapted plans made at the January meeting.
 - This year's theme will be *Yes, E-Can! Using Technology to Help Libraries – and Patrons – Meet Today's Challenges*. Focus will be on technology relative to Libraries Serving E-Government, Changing How

Libraries Serve the Public and Providing Equal Access for Everyone in the Library's Community.

- Suzanne Sears, Head of the Government Documents Department of UNT's Libraries, will deliver the keynote address.
- Each presentation, including the keynote address, will last 45 minutes. There will be 6 topics presented during each session time, making a total of 18 presentations plus the keynote. The conference will end at 3:30 p.m.
- LibrarySupportersNetwork SIG
 - 2010 Conference Planning Committee met March 9 and decided that, since the January 31, 2009 conference attendance almost reached maximum capacity for the LMRA, attendance for the 2010 conference will be limited to those who submit the first 200 paid registrations.
 - The group decided that the theme of next year's conference will be *The Future of Libraries* and that the keynote speakers will be NTLF Executive Director Adam Wright and Benbrook Library District Director Mike Baldwin.
- LibraryPresentersNetwork SIG
 - The following message was sent to the Discussion List by a participant: "We applied to Humanities Texas for a matching grant through our Friends organization. We were able to be approved for money to rent the exhibit, pay honoraria for our speakers, and buy some paid advertising in the local newspapers. Using the advice from Jeff Crilley at the NTRLS conference on programming, where we found out about the availability of Humanities Texas exhibits, we are also getting a large amount of 'free' publicity through talking with the newspapers who are doing several feature articles with pictures on the exhibit and 'Tut on Tuesday' events. Through the city we have ads on the cable channel, utility bills, flyers to the Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary, and Lions Clubs as well as the library website. We also have radio announcements through the local radio station's community happenings spots. It takes a little time and effort, but Jeff's ideas really do work."

Expanding Accessibility Program

- The application for *Phase 2: Removing Barriers* has been submitted to

TSLAC.

- The NTRLS web page theme for March 2009 was Universal Accessibility and Assistive Technology. That page, which included articles and a podcast, promoted not only the upcoming UA-related workshops but also the link to the NTRLS Expanding Accessibility program page.
<http://www.ntrls.org/accessibility/>
- An all-day NTRLS workshop entitled [*From the Law to Library Accessibility: Does Your Library Have What It Takes?*](#) was presented by Accessibility Advisory Council Member Mary Jo Venetis March 6 in Flower Mound. Every participant who returned an evaluation form rated the workshop highly. One participant commented that he/she “left the workshop on an ‘informational high’ and was eager to bring that information back to my library.”
- NTRLS staff, with assistance from members of the NTRLS Enhancing Accessibility Advisory Council, has developed a *ToolKit for Libraries Planning Accessibility Fairs*. This ToolKit is designed as a living document and will be updated quarterly as of March 2009.
<http://www.ntrls.org/accessibility/toolkit/>
- An all-day NTRLS workshop entitled [*Providing an Accessibility Fair in Your Community*](#) was presented by Carolyn Davidson Brewer March 18 in Bedford and again March 20 in Wichita Falls. The workshop explained the meaning of Universal Accessibility, provided information about the NTRLS Expanding Accessibility program, discussed ways that Accessibility Fairs can help library personnel work toward Universal Accessibility, described ways that Accessibility Fairs might be developed and provided an overview of the ToolKit and its contents. Participants were encouraged to discuss their Accessibility Fair plans and received input from NTRLS staff and other participants to help with the planning. Based on information shared at the workshops, at least seven Fairs are being developed and three others are being considered. Coordinators for all of those are planning to apply for funding assistance.

Website and Internet Support for NTRLS Programs and Services

- Regular updates to NTRLS.org website to support CE, Consulting and Targeted Services projects.
- Incorporated Google Custom Search for NTRLS.org website search.

- Website support for Expanded Accessibility and Libraries for Literacy projects.
- Website support for the Library Supporters special interest group.
- Website support for TechNet special interest group and conference.
- Administrative activities for NTRLS-supported listservs.

Plinkit

- Began setup of Plinkit site for Burkburnett.
- Discussed tentative plans for future Plinkit sites at 6 libraries.
- Provided support for Plinkit projects at 6 libraries.

General

- Regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries.
- Participated in NTRLS @ Your Library in Dublin.
- Provided support for North Texas Library Consortium project.

Libraries Served by the Technology Consultant

<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>
Alvarado	2	NTLC
Archer City	1	Plinkit
Aubrey	3	NTLC
Bridgeport	2	NTLC
Benbrook	6	Overdrive
Bowie	2	Plinkit
Burkburnett	1	Plinkit
Burleson	7	Overdrive
Crowell	1	Plinkit
Crowley	5	NTLC
Decatur	2	NTLC
Dublin	7	Plinkit, other
Electra	1	Plinkit
Kennedale	5	Plinkit, NTLC
Keller	4	Overdrive
Krum	3	Plinkit, NTLC
Lake Cities	3	NTLC
Mineral Wells	6	Plinkit, NTLC
Newark	2	Plinkit, other
Ponder	3	NTLC
Roanoke	3	NTLC
Saginaw	4	Overdrive, NTLC
Sanger	3	NTLC
The Colony	3	Overdrive
Wichita Falls	1	Plinkit, Overdrive, NTLC
Venus	7	Plinkit

Vernon	1	Plinkit
--------	---	---------

News from our Federal and State Agencies

- Federal government passed a budget early in March that increased the amount for LSTA by \$10 million which would increase Texas' share by \$400,000. If this stands, TSLAC will most likely allocate some of the funds to the Systems Program.
- The Texas State Library and Archives Commission requested an additional \$2 million for the Systems program in the next biennial. The house decided to put the \$2 million in Article XI of the state's budget, which is a "wish list" where items are only funded if the budget allows. On the Senate side, the two million was reduced to \$1 million but kept in the budget. We should know by June.
- All state agencies have been given a directive to propose how they will cut their current FY budgets by 2.5%. This would affect the Systems program heavily this year if the cuts are implemented. NTRLS would have to find ways to cut its current year's budget.