

Executive Director's Column: Notes from a Binge Thinker

By Adam Wright, Executive Director, North Texas Library Partners

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Happy August!

Lifelong learning can be defined as all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. It contains various forms of education and training, formal, non-formal and informal, e.g. the traditional school system from primary to tertiary level, free adult education, informal search and training, individually, in a group setting or within the framework of social movements. (The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning Final report of the IFLA project under the Section for Public Libraries Edited by Britt Marie Häggström. <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Lifelong-LearningReport.pdf>)

For my identity crisis this month, I am exploring the role of the library in lifelong learning. The quote above was developed in the early part of the last decade as a way to assist libraries in defining their role as an educational institution. As we move into the new decade, I believe the definition still holds true.

In recognition of this role, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) began the project Museum, Libraries and 21st Century Skills.

The Institute's Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills initiative underscores the critical role our nation's museums and libraries play in helping citizens build such 21st century skills as information, communications and technology literacy, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, civic literacy, and global awareness. (<http://www.imls.gov/about/21stCSkills.shtm#about>)

As part of this website, IMLS has a self assessment tool for your library to see how it is prepared to be provider of 21st century skills. It does a comprehensive job asking for what percentage of your library is devoted to certain aspects of lifelong learning. In the end, you receive a grade on your library's ability to provide this service and recommendations on what next steps need to be taken. You can find the self-assessment tool at <http://imls21stcenturyskills.org/>.

In addition, a report on the subject can be found at <http://www.imls.gov/pdf/21stCenturySkills.pdf>. Within this report, the document compares the 20th century library to the 21st century library. Please take a close look at the table below as it outlines many of the topics I have highlighted in this identity crisis series.

20TH CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY	21ST CENTURY MUSEUM/LIBRARY
Focus on presentation and display	Combination of audience- and content-driven
Emphasis on enhancing knowledge	Combination of tangible and digital objects
Acts independently	Multi-directional (co-created experiences involving institution, audiences, and others)
Located in community (operates independently)	Focus on audience engagement and experiences
Learning outcomes assumed, implied (content knowledge and skills like critical thinking tend to be byproducts of programming)	Emphasis on enhancing knowledge and 21st century skills
Institution leads content development (content tightly edited and controlled)	Acts in highly collaborative partnerships
Primarily content-driven	Embedded in community (aligned with and acts as a leader on community needs/issues)
Mostly tangible objects (art, books)	Learning outcomes purposeful (content knowledge and 21st century skills like critical thinking are visible, intentional outcomes of audience experiences)
One-way information (institution presents information to audiences)	Content co-created among diverse partners and audiences; accessible in multiple ways

(Found on page 7 of the report)

The report uses the Miami – Dade County Library as an example of a library working in 21st Century mode. The library, with a community with over 30 ethnic groups, has found a way to promote information literacy, basic literacy, ICT library, civic involvement and communication and collaboration. The library leadership has made it a point to include lifelong learning into every facet of its operations. “The public library system has addressed this challenge by becoming a leader in the community through its transformative vision of the library as a place where people can congregate^(p.8).”

Here at NTLP, we feel very strongly about the role of lifelong learning and feel it is imperative that libraries move towards a strategy that involves all aspects of the learning experience. NTLP is working steadily in assisting our libraries with their lifelong learning initiatives.

Here are some of the programs we offer to our libraries.

Libraries for Literacy - Our Libraries for Literacy program works with libraries and their communities in establishing literacy programs in their communities. We have assisted over eight communities in the last two years to establish

sustainable literacy programs in their libraries. The program has acquired over \$150K in grant funds to provide this service. In our fiscal year, we will be working with libraries on building some information literacy courses for their patrons. For more information on this project, please go to <http://www.libraries4literacy.org>.

Texas Workskills Development in Libraries - This project endeavors to help libraries build workforce development courses into their service offerings. The website, located at twdl.org, is a good first step for libraries to understand what is available online for patrons looking for ways to develop their workforce skills. The program also includes classes on basic computer skills, job hunting and resume writing.

Accessibility Project – Our Accessibility project works with libraries on assisting the special needs sector. The programs have included encouraging libraries hosting special needs fairs and building a pilot program to show how accessibility tools can assist those in need. These tools can then be utilized by the libraries to assist in lifelong learning for the special needs sector.

In this identity crisis series, I have written about many roles that the library will have to consider in the next decade. In my opinion, lifelong learning, as outlined by IMLS, has to be the crucial role the library adopts into its strategic and tactical planning for the future. Lifelong learning touches every aspect of our operations from the books we check out to the computers we provide. It is a vital role a library can play in the community and we should be taking steps to embrace it fully.

Please make sure to check out our website this month as we are highlighting the Future of Libraries. Mike Baldwin, Director of the Benbrook Public Library, wrote a feature article on the topic while I was honored to be interviewed for the podcast.

Next month, I will be tackling the question, “How do the different library types play nicely with each other? Creating partnerships that matter in the next decade.”

Now, here are some things going on around the System.

August Workshops

- Register for these workshops at <http://www.ntrls.org/ce/>. If the course is full, let us know if you want to be put on a waiting list.
- 2010 Children and Youth Conference for North Texas Libraries, 8/5/2010, Lockheed Martin Recreation Area, Fort Worth
 - Full: Spanish for Librarians - Two Day Workshop, 8/19/2010, Southlake

Public Library

Consulting

Here are some consulting activities that recently took place in the System.

Reg 1

Met with Carnegie City County Library (Vernon) Library Board with strategic planning for large financial gift and expansion of the library.

Reg 2

- Went to City Council Meeting in Alvord to explain MOE and library systems
- Attended Advisory meeting in Austin to defend Chico's appeal for membership
- Alvord - completed ROI and collection analysis for August City Council meeting

Reg 3

Lewisville - Presented True Colors for Teen Summer Reading Club

Roanoke - working food drive and summer reading program

Reg 4

Blue Mound - work with director in re-applying for membership

Reg 5

Arlington - Collection Analysis - 2 branches

Reg 6

- Fort Worth - Met with Advocacy Committee to discuss strategic planning
- Benbrook - working with food drive and summer reading program

Reg 7

Alvarado - working food drive and summer reading program

Texas Workskills Development in Libraries (TWDL)

- 5 TWDL workshops to the public (Burleson, White Settlement and Newark) and 4 TWDL Train the Trainer classes in NTRLS and HALS and 2 Spanish TWDL classes in Arlington.
- TWDL Webinar in partnership with TSLAC.
- Delivered the Self Directed Workforce Literacy Materials received in June.

Website and Internet Support for NTLP Programs and Services

- Regular updates to NTRLS.org website.
- Website support for Library Supporters, CYC and LP3 Conferences.
- Administration for NTRLS-supported listservs.
- Continued work on Drupal and Linux in order to transfer NTRLS website to new technology platform.
- Support for Librarian Live project.

Plinkit

- Assistance to existing Plinkit projects at 7 libraries.
- Trained a librarian at Forest Hill in Plinkit content management.
- Answered questions about Plinkit from Aubrey.

North Texas Library Consortium (Evergreen)

- Technical and administrative support for North Texas Library Consortium project, including their participation in the ILL Pilot.
- Exported Justin Library's holdings data from Evergreen system and sent it to OCLC for ILL Pilot.
- Handled renewal of SSL certificate for NTLC.
- Provided 7 custom Evergreen report templates in response to requests from NTLC librarians.
- Handled and/or tracked 26 support issues, including Evergreen administration tasks, technical questions, reporting questions, content management for NTLC website, and vendor support requests.

Overdrive

- Set up new domain name for Overdrive consortium.
- Updated graphics on the Overdrive login pages on the EZProxy server. Made a custom change to the Overdrive login page for Wichita Falls.
- Assisted with gathering technical details for authentication for new Overdrive members Crowley, Azle, and Graham.
- Assisted with converting Overdrive authentication from EZProxy to SIP interface for Saginaw, to eliminate overhead required for updating the EZProxy server manually.
- Regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries using EZProxy.

General

- General technology assistance to NTLP office, including preparations for technology changes connected with office reconfiguration.
- Trained NTLP staff on Google Apps and GMail and prepared for email transition to Google.

Libraries Served by the Technology Consultant

City	Region	Project	City	Region	Project
Alvarado	7	NTLC	Keller	4	Overdrive
Aubrey	3	NTLC, Plinkit	Krum	3	NTLC, Plinkit
Azle	6	Overdrive	Lake Cities	3	NTLC, Plinkit
Bridgeport	2	NTLC	Mineral Wells	6	NTLC, Plinkit
Burleson	7	Overdrive	Ponder	3	NTLC
Crowley	5	NTLC, Overdrive	Roanoke	3	NTLC
Decatur	2	NTLC	Saginaw	4	Overdrive, NTLC
Electra	1	Plinkit	Sanger	3	NTLC
Forest Hill	5	Plinkit	Stephenville	7	Plinkit
Graham	2	Overdrive	The Colony	3	Plinkit
Justin	3	NTLC	Venus	7	Plinkit
Kennedale	5	NTLC	Wichita Falls	1	Overdrive

Special Interest Groups & Conferences

- LibrarySupportersNetwork SIG <http://www.librarysupportersnetwork.com>
The 2nd Annual North Texas Conference for Library Supporters & Friday Night Kick-Off Dinner Presentation (Your Library's Guide to Surviving & Thriving in the 21st Century - featuring Anita Duckor, President of Duckor & Associates, Inc.) ★ July 23-24 ★ **The Future of Libraries** ★ ALL at Decatur Civic Center. The schedule has been tweaked as needed to accommodate the change of facility, and adjustments have been made for session leaders who can't participate on the new date. A reminder/announcement has been sent out via email, and new registrations have been coming in daily. A link from the SIG website has been added, connecting those interested with a website which Hampton Inn provided specifically for folks coming to our event and wanting to stay overnight at a discounted rate, provided they reserve rooms by July 2.
- LibraryYouthServicesNetworkKSIG
<http://www.libraryyouthservicesnetwork.com>
CYC 2010 ★ *the 4th annual North Texas Children & Youth Conference for Library Personnel* ★ Thursday August 5 ★ **Winning Combinations** ★ LMRA
Keynote speaker Mark Moran, Founder and CEO of Dulcinea Media, will speak about Combining Literacy, Technology, Curiosity & Adventure and offer break-out sessions on steps to better web research and on using the web to supplement children's engagement with books, authors and other readers. Participant and exhibitor registrations build daily.
- LibraryPresentationsNetwork SIG <http://librarypresentationsnetwork.com>

LP3 2010 ★ *the 3^d annual North Texas Conference for Library Program Planners and Presenters* ★ Thursday November 18 ★ LMRA

Participant registration will open in July; exhibitor registration is open and building quickly. At LP3 2009 we realized – both figuratively and literally – the maximum number of exhibits which we can accommodate at a conference in the LMRA building; it is anticipated that we will be turning away exhibitors long before LP3 2010 takes place.

Accessibility

- Designing Websites for Accessibility, a 5-hour hands-on workshop presented by Roanoke Public Library Director Jesse Ephraim twice in June. This seems to have been a timely topic since regulations requiring that businesses' websites be ADA-accessible are in the works and could be finalized as soon as September, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Amigos Consultant Christine Peterson has provided NTLP with brief overviews of her meetings with the eight libraries receiving consultations regarding universal accessibility of their websites.
- Accessibility tools for Alvarado and Denton PLs, being purchased using funding assistance under NTLP's Special Projects grant from TSLAC, are on order.

Libraries for Literacy

- Three students are in the online classes. The classes will end August 14 for CE purposes and reopen in September. The content is being revised in response to student feedback. We currently have no way to require participation from our grant recipients, so most of them decline. Future grant recipients will be required to participate in the classes as a condition of receipt.
- Worked extensively with Watauga this month to help them extend their ESL program to include GED preparation.
- Coordinating with The Learning Center to ensure appropriate training will be available to our library programs in the next fiscal year.