

Executive Director's Column: Notes from a Binge Thinker

By Adam Wright, Executive Director, North Texas Library Partners

December 2009

Happy Holidays!

This month, we are looking at whether a review is required to purchase an item for our collections. This idea came about because so many individuals are taking alternate methods to get their works published. Is this a sector of the publishing industry that we ignore because none of the established review publications are looking at these items? Does a review really need to be part of the selection process? We look at these questions closely with a podcast interviewing Carolyn Davidson Brewer about the topic and a guest column written by Kerry McGeath, director of the Southlake Public Library.

For my part, I want to devote my space this month to promote what I plan to do with my column in the calendar year 2010: a discussion of the public library's identity crisis.

After one of our regional meetings last month, I had a very interesting discussion with a library supporter from one of our more rural areas of the System. He was relatively new to the library scene and he wanted to know what to expect from his public library in the next ten years. He mentioned to me how much his public library had changed since he was a child from one of quiet reflection and study to one of an active bustling community gathering place. He asked me point blank, "What is the role of the public library in the next decade?"

This same question came up with a conversation I had at the Gates Foundation Online Opportunity Summit I attended in November. The library director and I had just heard a presentation about three different roles the public library has taken on in the last few years. He was adamant that his community was not interested in the public library taking on any of the roles outlined in the presentation. His community saw the public library as an entertainment and recreation location and he was positive his city and county would not want the library to do any more than this. He told me, "We can't take on all these roles."

I mentioned to both of these gentlemen that I thought the public library has been going through an "identity crisis" since I became a librarian in the 1990s. I think this identity crisis will continue into the next decade, but will come to a critical junction during the next ten years. The public library is slowly evolving away from the identity it has had over the last 150 years. We are going to have to ask ourselves some difficult questions about the library's role in society over the next ten years as our communities evolve with the rapidly advancing information landscape. Does it need to change? Are we selling ourselves short by giving into the demands of our community? Instead, do we need to do a better job of explaining our traditional roles and how much value they add to a community?

Starting with next month's column, I will look closely at the role of the public library in the upcoming decade. I will seek the wisdom of some of our leaders and strongest supporters. I will look at the traditional roles the public library has played when it comes to providing for the informational, educational and recreational services. In addition, I will look at some of the new roles libraries are adopting. I will not have answers by the end of the year, but I hope the columns will spark discussions between my colleagues and help them to focus on the long range role of the public library in our society today.

Next month, I will start by looking at the role of the book in the public library.

Now here are some things happening around the System this month.

December 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.

- **Just After Midnight: The Dark Side of Teen Fiction**, 12/2/2009, Decatur Public Library
- **Just After Midnight: The Dark Side of Teen Fiction**, 12/3/2009, Burleson Public Library
- **Adult Programming - Let's Chat**, 12/11/2009, Online - at your Desktop
- **True Colors**, 12/16/2009, NTRLS Office
- **Online Resources for Job Seekers - FULL!**, 12/31/2009, Online

Consulting

Here are some consulting activities that took place in November.

- **Programming** – ideas for attracting audiences, potential presenters for specific topics, appropriate audiences for specific presentations, ways library program presenters can network with librarians via NTRLS activities

Region 1

Vernon – Salary Report

Region 2

Jacksboro – Youth Services Area

Region 5

Arlington – Image Audits for 2 branches

Forest Hill – User Analysis for different library areas

Region 6

Fort Worth – Outreach

Region 7

Glen Rose – Texshare Databases

Misc Activities

- Attended Regional Meetings in Denton, Hurst
- Met with Literacy Council for NTLP
- Relocation Committee meeting
- Attended Webinar with College of DuPage on Hidden Google Books
- Met with Easter Seals for Resource Page
- Youth Services Committee Meeting
- Library Supporters Conference Meeting
- Services Planning Committee Meeting
- System Assembly Committee Meeting
- Ad-hoc Relocation Committee Meeting
- Met with Joint Reserve Base CE Planner for report and partnership
- Attended the Gates Foundation Online Opportunities Summit
- Met with the Abilene Library Consortium and the Texas State Library to discuss possible digitalization partnerships.
- Attended the annual Texas State Reading Association Conference
- Hosted the first monthly Online Literacy Lunch

Website and Internet Support for NTRLS Programs and Services

- Regular updates to NTRLS.org website.
- Website and other support for CYC, LP3 and Library Supporters conferences.

- Administration for NTRLS-supported listservs.
- Corrected website and email problems caused by unexpected DNS changes at NTRLS web host.

Plinkit

- Support for Plinkit projects at 8 libraries, plus the North Texas Library Consortium Plinkit site.
- Kept 21 libraries informed about TSLAC's migrating their existing sites to Plinkit 2.0
- Hosted Plinkit Content Management workshop for 7 people from 5 NTRLS and NETLS libraries.
- Trained 5 people in Plinkit content management on-site in Chico and Mineral Wells

Overdrive Consortium

- Regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries.
- Assisted Saginaw with transition to new 14-digit barcodes.

North Texas Library Consortium (Evergreen)

- Technical and administrative support for North Texas Library Consortium project.
- Handled 15 support issues as liaison to vendor

General

- Support for Librarian Live project.
- Attended NTRLS regional meetings, Services Planning Committee meeting, and LP3 conference.

Libraries Served by the Technology Consultant

| <i>City</i> | <i>Region</i> | <i>Project</i> | <i>City</i> | <i>Region</i> | <i>Project</i> |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Aledo | 6 | Plinkit | Krum | 3 | NTLC, Plinkit |
| Alvarado | 7 | NTLC | Lake Cities | 3 | NTLC, Plinkit |
| Aubrey | 3 | NTLC | Mansfield | 5 | NTLC |
| Benbrook | 6 | Overdrive | Mineral Wells | 6 | NTLC, Plinkit |
| Bowie | 2 | Plinkit | Pilot Point | 3 | Plinkit |
| Bridgeport | 2 | NTLC | Ponder | 3 | NTLC |
| Burkburnet | 1 | Plinkit | Roanoke | 3 | NTLC |
| Burleson | 7 | Overdrive | Saginaw | 4 | Overdrive, NTLC |
| Chico | 2 | Plinkit | Sanger | 3 | NTLC, Plinkit |
| Crowley | 5 | NTLC | Seymour | 1 | Plinkit |
| Decatur | 2 | NTLC | Springtown | 6 | Plinkit |

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|-------------|---|---------------|---------------|---|--------------------|
| Dublin | 7 | Plinkit | The Colony | 3 | Overdrive, Plinkit |
| Electra | 1 | Plinkit | Venus | 7 | Plinkit |
| Forest Hill | 5 | Plinkit | Wichita Falls | 1 | Overdrive |
| Jacksboro | 2 | Plinkit | | | |
| Justin | 3 | NTLC, Plinkit | | | |
| Kennedale | 5 | NTLC, Plinkit | | | |
| Keller | 4 | Overdrive | | | |

Special Interest Groups & Conferences

- LibraryPresentationsNetwork SIG <http://librarypresentationsnetwork.com>
What's Age Got to Do with It? *the 2nd annual Conference for Library Program Planners & Presenters, a.k.a. LP3 2009*, attracted 118 library personnel members and 48 exhibitors this year. When asked what she thought of the conference, a participant who had driven two hours to get to the event said, "I gained so much info from the sessions I attended....[It was] worth the long drive!"
- LibrarySupportersNetwork SIG <http://www.librarysupportersnetwork.com>
The Future of Libraries, *the 2nd Annual North Texas Conference for Library Supporters*, set for Sat. Feb. 13, 2010 at the Lockheed Martin Recreation Area, will be preceded by kick-off event Fri. Feb. 12 at the Courtyard by Marriott on Bryant Irvin Rd. That dinner/guest speaker event will feature Anita Duckor, President of Duckor & Associates, Inc., presenting *Your Library's Guide to Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century*. Ms. Duckor will also present several sessions at the conference. Anyone wishing to register must do so separately for each event – and should do so soon since seating is very limited for both events.

Expanding Accessibility Program

- Our first volunteer, Trisha Clark, comes in weekly to maintain and expand our spreadsheet listing local Accessibility Service Providers and Product Vendors. The spreadsheet is intended for use by library personnel not only as a reference resource but also as a resource for finding potential exhibitors when planning an Accessibility Fair. It currently includes over 400 entries.
- Planning for this year's Universal Access workshops is underway, and arrangements for one-on-one consultations with a UA expert regarding web presence are being made.
- Upcoming Accessibility Fairs at other Pilot Project libraries include:

* Sat. Jan. 23; 2010; 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Fort Worth Library's *Accessibility Tech Fair*

* 2010 date TBD at the Colleyville Public Library's *Accessibility Fair*

TSLAC News

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission decided not to offer the System Competitive Grant program in FY2011. This grant program was reserved for Systems and NTLP received the grant in FY2008 for the Libraries for Literacy Program. The reasons given for this decision were:

1. Not enough Systems were applying.
2. The Federal Government is questioning the program.
3. We have the SYNG funds now.
4. There were several duplications between the System Competitive Grant program and the other two programs: Collaborative and Special Projects.

The funds used for the System Competitive Grant program was instead divided between the other two grant programs: Collaborative and Special Projects. NTLP will be applying for both of these programs.

Texas Opportunity Online Broadband Summit

I attended the two-day Texas Opportunity Online Broadband Summit conference in San Antonio on November 18th and 19th. This conference was held by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and is the kick-off meeting for the Opportunity Online broadband grant program, where libraries can apply to receive assistance with funding broadband programs. The meeting brought librarians together with key local stakeholders to discuss the important role libraries with broadband can play in a community. I was on the steering committee for the grant program.

Interlibrary Loan

TSLAC released the following statement to the library community in November concerning Interlibrary Loan.

To Texas Librarians -

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is pleased to announce the selection of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Texas Group Catalog and WorldCat Navigator solution as the future platform for statewide interlibrary loan in Texas public libraries. "The Texas Group Catalog and WorldCat Navigator platform offers a customized, comprehensive solution that will be easy to implement in all sizes of libraries," says Director and Librarian Peggy Rudd. "We look forward to working with OCLC and the library community to improve library services to Texans."

Key features of the Texas Group Catalog and WorldCat Navigator system include:

- Seamless discover-to-delivery solution for Texas library patrons · Single, easy-to-use patron interface managing interlibrary loan requests · Local materials appear at the top of searches so patrons find the materials closest to them more easily · Access to the world's resources at the fingertips of every Texas citizen, enabling them to identify and secure resources unavailable locally · A statewide solution to resource sharing that simultaneously provides choice at the local library level.
- A cost-effective solution that is easy to implement in all sizes of libraries TSLAC will fully support public library borrowing and lending activities in the new system. Funding and training support will be provided to small and medium-sized public libraries to add and maintain their records easily in the WorldCat union database. Also, as part of the agreement with OCLC, TSLAC will offer a discounted pricing schedule to public and academic libraries that want to upgrade to the WorldCat Local service.

The WorldCat/Navigator solution was selected through a competitive purchasing process that engaged members of the ILL Task Force. According to ILL Task Force Chair, Adam Wright, Executive Director of the North Texas Library Partners and ILL Task Force chairman, "The OCLC solution was attractive to the task force because the OCLC solutions would be easier for Texas library staff and users to learn and easier to implement in the Texas environment. OCLC is well positioned in the global community to provide patrons with a wonderful resource discovery mechanism. For example, OCLC is closely tied to Google to allow for patrons to more easily request items directly from an Internet search."

TSLAC initiated a study of statewide interlibrary loan services in 2007. The Bibliographic Center for Research was awarded a contract to conduct the study, including extensive research on ILL best practices, an evaluation of Texas' TexNet Center system, surveys of library patrons and library staff, and an analysis of Texas interlibrary loan statistics. This study provided a solid framework of data as well as conclusions and recommendations to inform the work of ILL Task Force as it engaged in an eighteen-month-long review process. ILL Task Force members were chosen to represent the library community in Texas from small and large public libraries and academic libraries throughout the state.

We will begin pilot implementation of the Navigator solution in January, 2010 and to run for twenty months. Libraries interested in participating in the pilot implementation should contact Sue Bennett at susan.bennett@tsl.state.tx.us. Implementation of the new system and statewide training will begin in September, 2011 and will take approximately five-to-seven years to complete.

See the Texas Group Catalog and WorldCat Navigator Quick Facts

http://www.texshare.edu/newsletter/resourcesharingprojects/?page_id=243 for more information.

For more information on the process of selecting this new statewide interlibrary loan solution, please visit our website at <http://www.texshare.edu/newsletter/resourcesharingprojects/>. For more information, contact Sue Bennett at susan.bennett@tsl.state.tx.us.