

Executive Director's Column

July 2009

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

Happy Fourth!

This month we are highlighting services to seniors. For our Librarian Live episode, we have interviewed three of the NTLP board members, Barbara Chayer, Patricia Jefferson and Kenneth Haas about how libraries can better serve the older generation. Our guest columnist this month is Donna Marie Smith who is the System-wide Adult Programming Coordinator for the Palm Beach County Library System in West Palm Beach, FL, where they offer extensive services to the 65 plus crowd. Please take few minutes to look over these wonderful resources detailing how to assist the new senior generation.

Like most, I believe I have had the misconception that the generations that came before mine were mostly interested in the traditional library services (aka books) and did not have an interest in the newest technological services offered. I had always thought that they would not be interested in learning about the latest computer advances and gadgets. Boy, was I wrong. Both my father and father-in-law have set me straight on separate occasions. They want to learn about this stuff as much as my generation does.

With this in mind, I want to highlight three technologies that I believe would be a good fit for both tech savvy individuals and the novice users of this generation.

Wii – Video games have become more than just a recreational activity for children. One of the reasons the Wii is so popular is because of its simplicity of interacting with video games. My mother loves the bowling games because all you have to do is simulate the real thing. You hold the Wii remote down like you would a bowling ball and go through the mechanics of throwing the ball. She would never be able to bowl without the Wii so the Wii allows her to take on activities she would be unable to do otherwise. It also allows her to do activities with her four grandchildren, who also love video games.

Kindle – In the past, ebook readers have never made it to the mainstream because there were no distinct advantages to reading a book on a gadget versus reading the real thing. The Kindle has changed all of this. In my opinion, the Kindle makes the reading experience more convenient and enriching because of the ease of use and access to the printed word. My wife and I use the Kindle application for the Iphone for our leisure reading and it's wonderful. We always read the same material and have had our share of arguments about who gets to read the latest novel first. With the Kindle, we can both access the novel at the same time. To get a copy of the book, we clicked on a button in the application, performed a search and downloaded the item; all within a ten minute span. What about reading from a gadget screen versus a book? Does it have

the feel of a book? I was pleasantly surprised how much I enjoyed reading on the Iphone. With the latest advances in eprint technologies, reading from a screen is just as easy on the eyes as the traditional paper variety. Plus, with the Kindle, you can blow up the size of the text, a benefit both my wife and I secretly cherish.

Iphone – The Iphone is another technology that I believe will ultimately change our daily lives more than we realize. Here is my take on the popular smart phone. It has changed the dynamics of how people interact with information provided on the Internet. My brother-in-law is a perfect example of this. When I was discussing a certain website with him, he gently asked if there was an Iphone application for it. (An Iphone application is one you can download to the smartphone. There are wide variety of programs and uses for the applications.) When I gave him a negative response, he said he would wait until they developed one. It occurred to me at that point that the web must be old-fashioned to him. Why go to the trouble of having to type in a web address to interact with Internet when all he has to do is click one button on his Iphone to accomplish the same task? To him, it was just easier to wait for the application to come out. I believe it is this user friendly interface to the Internet that makes it a good fit for someone from any generation. The learning curve is much smaller for the Iphone than it is for a computer. If you already know technology, then you will find the streamlined approach to getting needed information a breath of fresh air.

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

July Workshops

Register for these workshops at <http://www.ntrls.org/ce/>.

- **Outreach For Your Library's Non-Users: Let's Get Them In!**, 7/7/2009, Grapevine Public Library
- **Outreach For Your Library's Non-Users: Let's Get Them In!**, 7/8/2009, NTRLS Office

Special Interest Groups & Conferences

- One reason the SIGs and related conferences were developed was that of bringing together library personnel from all four types of libraries. Another was to make personnel in the three non-public types of libraries aware of NTRLS and its services and increase their participation in our activities. We're seeing evidence that both goals are being met. At each conference, there's a sense of excitement which the Conference Coordinator believes

is being fed by library personnel meeting kindred-spirits from other types of libraries. In addition, the numbers of people from the other three library types who are attending our workshops, as opposed to conferences, is steadily increasing.

- **LibraryTechNetwork SIG**
There are 317 participants and 23 “mentors” participating in North Texas 23, an online Learning 2.0 experience designed specifically for all librarians in the 20-county area of North Texas Library Partners/TLA District 7. All four types are represented, both among the participants and among the mentors (a.k.a. Leadership Team). The project continues through September 1, 2009 and includes a *Lessons Learned* presentation at CYC 2009 by Project Coordinator Jeff Bond, designed to help anyone who is considering putting a similar project in place with their own faculty, staff, colleagues, etc. <http://northtexas23.blogspot.com/>
- **LibraryYouthServicesNetwork SIG**
Participants and exhibitors are signing up steadily for the 3rd annual Children and Youth Conference for North Texas Libraries. At the request of the CYC 2009 Conference Planning Committee, this year's conference offers more teen & 'tween-related sessions than previous conferences but still includes many sessions of interest to those who work with infants through elementary-aged children. One new concept will be featured at this event: Speed-Geeking. This will involve four or five 10-minute presentations which each provide a quick overview of a Web 2.0 application of particular use/interest to those who work with children and youth. During the session, participants will move from one presentation to the next, attending four different presentations during that one session.
- **Conference Listserv**
Our webmaster has created a listserv for use in sending out announcements to all who attended a particular conference. This makes it possible to send out bulk announcements to groups of people without exceeding the limits of our mail server while allowing the population of the group to change frequently, depending on the purpose of the bulk message.

Expanding Accessibility Program

- It's working!!! Library personnel are grasping the concept behind hosting an Accessibility Fair in the library's community, and the project is quickly gathering momentum as we approach the deadline to apply for funding assistance for such fairs. The variety of approaches to library Fairs is impressive. Some are focusing on Universal Accessibility in general, promoting services to all ages and all accessibility needs, while others are focusing on fairs for specific groups, such as seniors, city staff, people with low/no vision, etc. Easter Seals has been a very accommodating partner in this project, for NTLP as well as for many of the libraries planning fairs.

- CYC 2009 will include a session on the topic of easy and/or inexpensive ways to include/serve youth with disabilities in library services and programs. In addition, accessibility service providers and product vendors are being invited to exhibit at the conference.
- In an effort to increase the circulating collection of Assistive Technology devices and to get better prices for libraries adding AT to their services, discussions with a low/no vision product vendor are underway and looking promising.

Website and Internet Support for NTRLS Programs and Services

- Regular updates to NTRLS.org website.
- Website and other technology support for CYC, Technet, LP3 and Supporters' conferences.
- Administration for NTRLS-supported listservs.
- Implemented new website features for Librarians' Marketplace, Presenters' Directory, and Continuing Education payment process.
- Worked on web application to receive applications for volunteer program.

Plinkit

- Support for 6 existing Plinkit projects.
- Maintained backups for 17 existing Plinkit projects.
- Provided information about Plinkit to Nocona and Chico.

General

- Technical and administrative support for North Texas Library Consortium project.
- Administrative support for North Texas 23 project.
- Regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries.
- Assisted with preparation of Technology Plan document for e-Rate.
- Responded to technology questions from Lake Cities and Haslet.

Libraries Served by the Technology Consultant

<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>
Aledo	6	Plinkit
Alvarado	7	NTLC
Aubrey	3	NTLC
Bridgeport	2	NTLC
Benbrook	6	Plinkit
Bowie	2	Plinkit
Burkburne	1	Plinkit

<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>
Krum	3	Plinkit, NTLC
Lake Cities	3	Plinkit, NTLC, other
Mineral Wells	6	Plinkit, NTLC
Nocona	2	Plinkit
Pilot Point	3	Plinkit
Ponder	3	NTLC
Roanoke	3	NTLC

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Burleson	7	Overdrive
Crowley	5	NTLC
Decatur	2	NTLC
Dublin	7	Plinkit
Electra	1	Plinkit
Haslet	4	Other
Justin	3	Plinkit
Kennedale	5	Plinkit, NTLC
Keller	4	Overdrive

Saginaw	4	Overdrive, NTLC
Sanger	3	Plinkit, NTLC
Seymour	1	Plinkit
Springtown	6	Plinkit
The Colony	3	Plinkit, Overdrive
Wichita Falls	1	Overdrive
Venus	7	Plinkit

O2U REPORT			
Region 2	Jacksboro	8 requests	Banners, SRP material
Region 3	Aubrey Area Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Carrollton Pub. Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	William T. Cozby Public Library, Coppel	1 request	Bookmarks
	Denton Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Flower Mound Public Library	3 requests	Bookmarks, Posters
	Frisco Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Justin Community Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Krum Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks

	Lake Cities Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Lewisville Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Little Elm Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Pilot Point Community Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Plano Public Library System	1 request	Bookmarks
	Betty Foster Public Library, Ponder	1 request	Bookmarks
	Roanoke Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	Sanger Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
	The Colony Public Library	1 request	Bookmarks
Region 5	Haltom City	2 requests	Flyer, Brochure
Region 6	Fort Worth	12 requests	SRP Bookmarks, Flyers, Posters, Banner
	24 Requests completed. 10,627 Materials Distributed.		

IMLS/TSLAC Update

- The Legislative Session ended on June 1st with the System program receiving an additional \$1.5 million over the biennial in State General Revenue Funds. There was a rider placed on the bill. TSL staff explained in a memo to the commission that the legislature directed the Texas State Library (TSL) to hire an additional grant administrator to track the stimulus funds awarded to public libraries and that the funds for this position should come from the \$1.5 million. TSL anticipates needing \$87,500 for this position.
- TSL received \$489,000 in additional funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the LSTA state program. Most of these funds will be used in other areas of the TSL budget, but the TANG program will see an increase of \$100k in FY 2010.
- The new rules for other types of libraries to become system members have been presented to the Texas State Library and Archives

Commission. If approved in August, the rules outline how academic, school and special libraries can become System members. The minimum rules are simple and base membership on whether the library has been accredited by their accrediting agency. For example, if a school library has been accredited by the Texas Education Agency then it can formally join the System.