

Executive Director's Column

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

Happy March!

This month's theme is Using Assistive Technology to Expand Services in the Library's Community. Our featured column is written by NTLP's Special Services Consultant, dona weisman, on how to host an accessibility fair in your community. Our Librarian Live podcast is with Richard Manuel, Assistive Technology Navigator, Easter Seals North Texas, a consultant working with special needs equipment, on how to best utilize technology to assist individuals with special needs.

In fact, Richard did a tutorial for the NTLP staff in late February on our Universal Accessibility workstation. For those who do not know, NTLP purchased the station at the end of last fiscal year to give librarians a chance to access the accessibility tools before purchasing. It is available for anyone to explore and use. Please contact the System office for more information.

Richard showed us the tools available for people with special needs. It was an eye opener for me to see the tools in action. It is a sad commentary on our society that individuals with special needs are often neglected and placed at the bottom when it comes to priorities. As this sector of our society grows in numbers, there will be more people asking for services like our workstation. Special needs is wide ranging and these tools help individuals who face severe difficulties to those who are only slightly hindered by low vision, poor hearing or motor skill issues.

In other words, librarians need to stand up and take notice. This issue is not going away, so we need to educate ourselves, and find community partners with the right expertise to help. We also need to adjust our thinking to accommodate this sector of our community.

NTLP, as a regional organization, is here to help. Some of the services we are providing to libraries to help with this very important issue are:

- A consultant on staff, dona weisman, who specializes in this area and is ready to support libraries in their efforts to reach universal accessibility.
- A grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission received last year to help underwrite seven accessibility fairs to help libraries better understand their special needs sector and build the required bridges to other organizations. For more information on these fairs, please go to <http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=305>.

- A total of four workshops geared towards serving special needs sector will be hosted by NTLP. Two of these workshops will go over the toolkit we created to assist libraries with their community fairs. The toolkit will be on the NTLP website very soon. For further information about the workshops, please go to our CE portal for more information: <http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=159>.
We need people to attend these workshops. Please come if you can.

Now for some things that we are doing this month at NTLP.

March Workshops

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

- **Business Reference on the Web (FULL)**, 3/1/2009, online
- **From the Law to Library Accessibility Does Your Library Have What It Takes?**, 3/6/2009, Flower Mound Public Library
- **Providing An Accessibility Fair in Your Community**, 3/18/2009, Bedford Public Library
- **Providing An Accessibility Fair in Your Community**, 3/20/2009, Wichita Falls Public Library

Consulting

Here is who we visited last month.

Region 2

Jacksboro – Two visits for weeding and collection analysis

Newark – New director's orientation

Region 6

Fort Worth – Discussion on CE opportunities for librarians at the Fort Worth Library

Meetings/Events

- Attended the grand opening of the St. Jo Public Library
- Met with Priddy Trust
- Online consult with Command Spanish
- Met with Texas Workforce Solutions for CE/Partnership Opportunities
- Met with Amigos concerning partnership opportunities

- Provided a presentation at the Kiwanis club in Burleson about the “Speed of Information”

Special Interest Groups & Conferences

LibraryTechnologyNetwork SIG

The 2009 TechNet Conference Planning Committee met online February 16 and moved forward on planning the 2009 conference. The keynote speaker will be Suzanne Sears, head of the Government Documents Department at the University of North Texas's Willis Library. The keynote address will focus on using technology to help libraries and Texas residents meet the challenges brought on by a failing economy. A common theme for most sessions will be e-government, Universal Accessibility and how technology is changing not only the way libraries serve patrons and but also the reasons that patrons turn to libraries.

Expanding Accessibility Program

- The LSTA Grant application for Phase 2: Removing Barriers has been submitted to TSLAC. In this second phase of the program, NTRLs will continue to offer assistance with implementing Phase 1: Identifying Needs while additionally 1) helping libraries move from digitally discriminating to universally accessible websites and online services, 2) providing workshops on ways to remove barriers to serve the special needs sector and move toward Universal Accessibility, 3) facilitating for libraries the trial of assistive hardware and software before purchase, and 4) negotiating with assistive technology providers to reduce pricing of products for public use at member libraries.
- The ToolKit for Libraries Planning Accessibility Fairs will be made available on the NTLp website in early March. Carolyn Davidson Brewer will lead two workshops in March which will provide training on Fair development using the ToolKit. NTRLs is offering two other Accessibility-related workshops this year as well. They are: *From the Law to Library Accessibility-Does Your Library Have What It Takes?* to be held at the Flower Mound Public Library Friday March 6 and *Special Needs, Special Programs* to be held at the NTRLs Office Thursday April 16.
- NTRLs staff, with assistance from members of the Accessibility Advisory Council, has developed an online spreadsheet containing contact information for product and service providers for Texas residents with special needs. We continue to add to and update the document.

O2U

Region 1

None

Region 2

Jacksboro 1 request

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	4 requests
Frisco Public Library	2 requests
Justin Community Library	2 requests
Krum Public Library	3 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 2 request

Region 5

Birdville ISD	1 request
Haltom City	2 requests
Mansfield	6 requests

Region 6

Fort Worth 3 requests

Region 7

15 Requests completed.
5,983 Materials distributed

Website and Internet Support for NTRLS Programs and Services

- Made regular updates to NTRLS.org website to support CE, Consulting and Targeted Services projects.
- Developed Online Payment page for CE that is now generated automatically from the database.

- Improved cross-linking between CE registration, CE Portal, CE Archive, and Online Payment pages.
- Developed new page for subscribing to NTLP-ANNOUNCE listserv.
- Posted updated ILL policy for Denton.
- Created "friendly links" for frequently cited pages.
- Updated NTRLS.org to support Expanded Accessibility project.
- Provided website support for the Library Supporters conference.
- Provided website support for TechNet conference.
- Performed administrative activities for NTRLS-supported listservs.
- Set up new hosting facility for Librarian Live, transferred 2009 episodes to new host, and prepared usage instructions to share with the other partners.

Plinkit

- Set up new Plinkit site for North Texas Library Consortium.
- Assisted 9 libraries plus the North Texas Library Consortium with Plinkit sites and other website-related issues.

General

- Attended and presented session for Library Supporters conference.
- Provided regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries.
- Updated EZProxy administrative tool to allow use by Burleson.
- Provided miscellaneous technical assistance for 3 libraries and the Funding Information Center.
- Provided technical and other assistance to North Texas Library Consortium.

Specific Libraries & Regions Served

<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>
Aledo	6	Plinkit, other
Alvarado	2	NTLC
Aubrey	3	NTLC
Bridgeport	2	NTLC
Benbrook	6	Overdrive, Plinkit
Bowie	2	Plinkit, other
Burleson	7	Overdrive
Crowley	5	NTLC
Decatur	2	NTLC
Denton	3	other
Kennedale	5	NTLC
Krum	3	Plinkit, NTLC
Lake Cities	3	NTLC, other
Mineral Wells	6	Plinkit, NTLC
Newark	2	other
Ponder	3	NTLC

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

TSLAC Update

State agencies were asked to submit proposals on how they would cut 2.5% out of the current year's budget. If these cuts are implemented, the Systems program will be touched as TSLAC submitted a proposal to cut its Library Development division by \$167,082. The Systems program falls underneath the Library Development division of the agency. As I find out more, I will write about it here in my column.