

Agreeing to Disagree: Two Friends Take on Technology Today

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We are friends from the same hometown and we currently live in the same apartment in Washington, DC. We are both enrolled in the School of Library and Information Science at The Catholic University of America, where we will receive our Master's degrees this summer. We are both concentrating in law librarianship and share similar career goals. For the most part, it is fair to say that we like a lot of the same stuff, right down to bad reality TV shows. We are your quintessential young professionals living, working, and studying in one of the best cities in the nation. But there is one thing we just cannot seem to ever agree on: technology.

The technology adoption curve helps illustrate this. Alicia fits nicely into the early adopter/early majority category, depending on the technology at hand. Conversely, Jeff falls into the late majority/laggard category. Alicia is always anxious for new technology and views each new development as an achievement for innovators and our society; Jeff finds these developments to be more distractions in an already frenetic world. Here are our takes on today's technology and its impact on our lives and libraries.

Alicia: I Just Can't Get Enough!

The concept of societies going through surges in progress in one aspect of development is hardly new, but when two or more phases of intense advancement cross over, the divide between enthusiasts and skeptics becomes more pronounced. Many inventions are created out

of a single person's idea of how to make one or more aspects of daily life more efficient. From there it turns into marketing the appeal of this new technology and how it can be applied to any user and his needs. Although I can see why some people may not jump on the bandwagon at first, I will never understand their reflexive aversion to progress! Everything is new at one point, but after a while it becomes a routine part of daily life, whether personal or professional, and it frustrates me that people choose to reject new developments instead of embracing them.

From a law librarian's point of view there are many things to consider when evaluating whether new technologies would be beneficial or not. Legal professionals have always valued ways to save time and money, and as a result, are usually at the forefront at picking up these new programs and services. The creation of databases like Westlaw and LexisNexis has radically changed the way information professionals do the majority of their legal research. Like with any new technology, it was not long before people caught on to how efficient it was to search user-friendly databases and retrieve comprehensive results. This is not to say that I think print resources will disappear entirely; as much as I love new gadgets, I still love being able to hold a book when reading and have not yet succumbed to the e-reader trend. There are still some research questions that require print, and for now that is fine by me.

continued on page 3

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FROM THE EDITOR

Using Technology

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Welcome to the spring issue of *Law Library Lights*. The theme of this issue is technology: keeping up with rapidly evolving technology, selecting the best technological tool for the task, and, of course, the impact of technology on the profession of librarianship.

I recently attended Computers in Libraries, where I saw a number of presentations on incredibly innovative things libraries are doing with technology. Some of them were so exciting that I wanted to rush out of the conference and learn how to do them right away. I am reasonably technologically savvy; as an electronic services librarian, keeping up with technology is part of my job description. But these conferences always leave me impressed, and sometimes a little overwhelmed, by some of the great things that technology allows you to do.

So welcome to the technology issue, where we share some of our favorite technological

continued on page 3



Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, contact **Ripple L. Weistling** at **rweistling@wcl.american.edu**. For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at **www.llsdc.org**.

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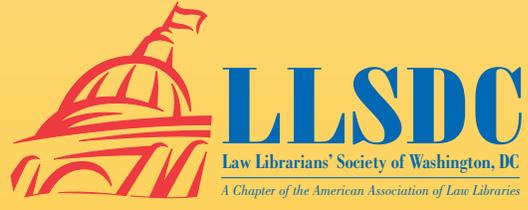
Table of Contents

FEATURES

- Agreeing to Disagree: Two Friends Take on Technology Today**
Jeffrey M. Nelson and Alicia M. Pappas 1
- A Law Library Blog That's Generating Public Interest**
Yasmin Morais 5
- Why Rare Book Cataloging?**
Robert O. Steele 7
- Librarian 2011: Using Basic Library Science Techniques to Manage Technology Requests**
Jill Smith 12
- 2011 LLSDC Election Candidates** 14
- Technology Tricks: DOJ Librarians' Favorites**
Janice Fridie 19
- A Law Librarian Learning and Teaching in Mozambique**
Tracy Woodard 21

COLUMNS

- Editor's Column**
Ripple Weistling 2
- AALL News** 6
- President's Column**
Christine Ciambella 11
- Book Review**
Dawn Bohls 25
- Tech Talk**
Roger V. Skalbeck 27



From the Editor *continued from page 2*

tools and how we use them to get the most out of our resources. Jeffrey Nelson and Alicia Pappas discuss contrasting attitudes toward new technology and find common ground between them. Yasmin Morais reports on creating a law library blog. Robert Steele writes about using detailed cataloging to alert readers to the sometimes remarkable histories of rare books; Jill Smith describes using reference interview techniques to manage patrons' technology requests. Janice Fridie interviews Department of

Justice librarians about how they use their favorite technological tools. And Tracy Woodard checks in from Mozambique, where she is teaching with the Peace Corps.

Roger Skalbeck writes Tech Talk on his iPad, testing it out as a tool for creating text-based content. Dawn Bohls reviews *Desk Set* and compares that 1950's vision of reference services with her experience as a 21st Century reference librarian.

As always, if you would like to be a part of *Lights*, please let me know. I welcome article ideas as well as offers to write an article. **LLL**

Agreeing to Disagree

continued from page 1

Social media usage has found its way into every corner of life and business through various outlets and I think it should not be ignored. I actually find myself more intrigued by Twitter and Facebook accounts run by organizations than those handled by celebrities, because as we as a society become more accustomed to constantly updated information, the more we expect organizations to keep us constantly updated on their current dealings and future plans. Besides, now that everyone uses these services, why remain behind the curve? We must assume that everyone else is getting up-to-the-minute information updates relating to their world at work and at home.

So is this all necessary? Did people not manage before with daily newspapers and using the U.S. Postal Service as opposed to email communication? Of course, but why reject progress when it allows us to offer the best possible services to clients? Businesses have always been competitive and are constantly looking for that upper hand, and for this to happen you must first level the playing field!

The only current technology trend I am not necessarily on the "pro" side for is the digitization of all information and resources. It is extremely costly and the compatibility of software is in flux. It would be unreasonable for small and large businesses alike to invest that type of time and capital into a project that would have to be redone so frequently. Until we find a way to have an interchangeable program that will withstand the test of time and future development, then digitization is a luxury and

not a convenience. On the other hand, without the current digitization projects, much of what we access online would not be available.

For me personally, it is hard not to get caught up in the potential for cool new gadgets or trends, and then when some creative individual finds a way to integrate them across disciplines and ways of life, I find them irresistible. However, I realize it is unrealistic to expect that everyone thinks and feels exactly like me.

Jeff: It's Just Too Much!

In spite of being a member of Generation Y, I consider myself to be a simple, private person. I am surrounded daily by peers who feel the need to be connected to anything and everything, but I find myself very much removed from so much of what drives our society today. And I am okay with that. To me, much of today's technology is intrusive and creates a clearer divide between the haves and have-nots. Sure, it may make life easier, but was anything ever that hard?

I am not referring to innovations and advancements in the health, energy, and transportation industries, among others. To be clichéd, developments in such industries make our world a better place. But there are other developments that do not offer much to better society. One cannot ignore Web 2.0's biggest contribution to our society: social media. I get the sense that many of my peers have this notion that our lives would come to a screeching halt if we did not have some of the cool gadgets and fun online tools we have today. It is this dependence that I find unnecessary and off-putting. I must

continued on page 4

admit that I am not completely anti-social media; I have a music blog that I have been posting on for about a year now. Nonetheless, I remain wary of the constant new developments of the internet.

Speaking as a law librarian, my conservative views towards technology and social media pose a great challenge to me. For starters, I prefer doing research with books. I like the feeling of a flipping through the law reporters and legislative history books, and as I work my way through the chapters and sections, I actually feel like I am accomplishing something. Online legal research, as easy and efficient as it is, is just no fun. In some cases, online research can even be daunting and overwhelming; information overload sets in and can get to even the best of legal researchers. Thank goodness for those research help lines!

The rate of the digitization of resources is exponentially increasing and is directly affecting our profession. And as librarians, we are expected to keep up with it all. There is no denying the most glaring advantage of digitization: so much more information is made available to us at one time. Social media technology connects us to valuable resources that either were previously deemed too costly for acquisition or were simply unknown. And, perhaps more valuable, it links us to other eager-to-help professionals via listservs and discussion boards.

While technology in our libraries frees up time to tackle other projects, it almost certainly brings about even more work. For example, my law firm recently launched an intranet. I am excited about the prospect of being part of its development and making sure members of the firm can use the library's page as a guide to conducting research and/or an access point to the firm's resources. However, the end product will entail careful planning and exhaustive collaboration with other departments. I have no doubt that this project will consume much of my time in the coming weeks.

We are taught that the library is an evolving organism, and technology is the perfect catalyst to challenge librarians. A librarian, no matter how savvy he or she may be with technology personally, can find ways to use the advancements for the benefit of the library and its patrons. Technology is an integral part to the development and advancement of a library, and

we must embrace that notion for the sake of our profession and the sake of our patrons.

In my opinion, it is okay to not be part of the hype surrounding the gadgets and new websites, but librarians must accept the world in which we live and recognize the technological advancements that our patrons use and need. After all, patrons rely on us to efficiently use and teach them about these technologies on a daily basis. It is easy to fall behind when it comes to new technology. If this happens to librarians, then the library and its patrons will fall behind too.

Finding the Middle Ground

We both realize that there is no right or wrong opinion when it comes to technology; it depends on the user's need. Technology can be exciting and helpful to some, but overwhelming and confusing to others. Nonetheless, when it comes to technology in the library, librarians must do their part in learning about new technologies—certainly to instruct others about them, but also to use them as a tool for the development of libraries. Social media and networking sites are great ways to promote the library and its services and collection. As for legal research, the industry will continue to thrust us toward a reliance on online materials and librarians will need to help evaluate products keeping the user or patron in mind. Technology in the legal profession—love it or hate it—is a reality for law librarians, and we must do our part to promote, use, and teach it.

In the end, perhaps we do not disagree that much after all. **LLL**

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A librarian, no matter how savvy he or she may be with technology personally, can find ways to use the advancements for the benefit of the library and its patrons.

A Law Library Blog That's Generating Public Interest

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Conceived as a means of enhancing communication with our students, faculty and staff, Public Interest, (<http://publicinterestlibrarynews.blogspot.com>), the Mason Law Library blog, made its debut on May 17, 2010. Library staff were excited about the idea, and to make the process a lot of fun, we embarked on a blog-naming competition. After many interesting suggestions, *Public Interest* emerged as the popular choice, and it is quite apt, given the public interest focus of the David A. Clarke School of Law.

I was charged with managing the initial logistics of deciding on a blogging platform, creating the blog, establishing author permissions, and basic design. We decided to use the Blogger option, and after I created the blog, our in-house power photographers, Han Ouyang, Assistant Director for Technical Services, and Priscilla Pinkney, Staff Assistant for Acquisitions, collaborated on a permanent design. Our Director, Vicenç Feliú, and Associate Director for Public Services, Helen Frazer, were both keen on the roll out of the blog prior to the start of the new academic year, since they wanted to introduce it to the incoming students as a part of orientation. We were particularly excited about promoting it to the part-time students, since this was the second year of the law school's part-time program, and we wanted this group of students to be aware of the library's new blog. We therefore included flyers of the blog in our orientation package and highlighted it during our orientation sessions.

Currently, we have seven blog authors, including our Director, our Associate Director for Public Services, the Assistant Director for Technical Services, the Circulation Librarian, the Acquisitions Librarian, the Emerging Technologies Librarian, and me, the Cataloging Librarian. We have all tried to make the blog interesting to read by including posts which address not only the intellectual needs of our students, but also those which relate to social

activities within the library, the law school or the Washington, D.C. area. We have been pleasantly surprised at our statistics at this nine-month milestone for Public Interest. Figure 1 below provides statistics on our page views by country since the blog's creation, and it reflects the fairly wide geographic spread of our blog readers to date.

So what has the blogging experience been for some of our authors? I wanted to find out how useful my colleagues feel the blog has been in their respective roles and day-to-day duties. Han has found the blog to be an interesting way to inform students about activities taking place in the library and law school. As an avid photographer, she is also able to highlight these events for our blog readers through her photos. This is a great example of librarians incorporating talents and hobbies in their work day. Helen believes that the blog allows us to keep in touch with all students, and makes the library a more welcoming place. As the Circulation Librarian in our small but extremely

continued on page 6

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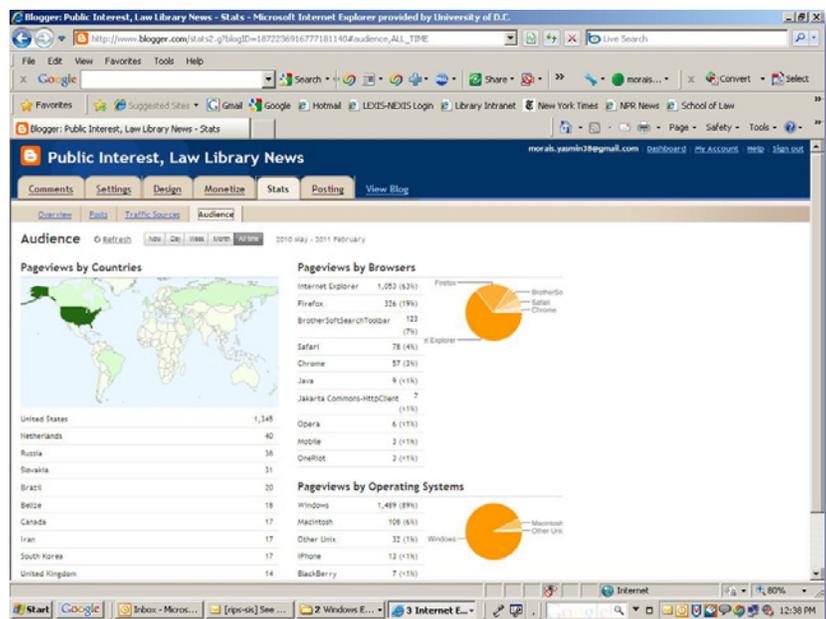


Figure 1: Pageviews by Countries (May 2010–February 2011)

Law Library Blog *continued from page 5*

busy law library, Gail Mathapo is pleased that the blog allows her to speedily post law library hours, or services affected by holidays and early closures. She is excited to be using this twenty-first century communication medium, and feels that the blog is a useful way to promote both the library and the law school.

My own blogging experience has been very positive. I was pleased to be involved in the creation of a new communication tool, and in the process, I enhanced my technological skills as I tried out new features and tools to make the blog more interesting. I am especially interested in analytical tools such as Sitemeter and Blogger's new Stats feature, both of which have provided me with in-depth data related to the

blog's readers and the pageviews that generate the most hits. The personal enjoyment that I derive as the author of a poetry blog motivated me, and I was able to bring some of that writing energy to the library's blog. One of the things I have enjoyed about being a co-blogger of *Public Interest* is the additional variety that it brings to my job. Each week, I look forward to searching for new resources or topics of interest to share with our readers.

As we approach the blog's one year mark, we are encouraged by our statistics and are already making plans for a more interactive blog which continues to meet the needs of its readers. Some ideas we have in mind are guest posts by faculty; giveaways; polls; and interviews with students, staff, and faculty, all with the aim of generating even further global public interest! **LLL**

AALL NEWS

Get a Free Year of AALL Membership with Nonmember Annual Meeting Registration

AALL is continuing to offer nonmembers a complimentary one-year membership when they register for the AALL Annual Meeting and Conference, held July 23 – 26 in Philadelphia. The membership includes:

- career resources, such as the online AALL Career Center and continuing education to help you learn new skills to advance in your career;
- access to specialized information created just for law librarians, such as the *AALL Biennial Salary Survey* and the AALL Price Index for Legal Publications;
- subscriptions to the monthly magazine, *AALL Spectrum*, and quarterly journal, *Law Library Journal*, to help you keep up on the latest trends in law librarianship;
- the opportunity to network and connect with other law librarians from across the country who share similar interests and are facing the same challenges; and
- discounted rates on all AALL products and services, such as publications, webinars, and online job postings.

Annual Meeting registration opened in mid-February. Watch the AALL Web site in January for an announcement. Be to take advantage of this special offer for nonmembers. **LLL**

Why Rare Book Cataloging?

Robert O. Steele, *Cataloging Librarian, Jacob Burns Law Library, George Washington University*,
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As Michael Gorman, former president of the American Library Association, pointed out in a recent issue of *American Libraries*, scholarly discoveries often depend on the groundwork of anonymous catalogers whose careful description of materials provides clues to their hidden significance (Gorman). Unfortunately, basic cataloging may not display all the important characteristics of older works. The more detailed records produced by rare book catalogers can alert users to little-known stories buried in overlooked books.

The Jacob Burns Law Library at the George Washington University Law School has a collection of legal materials back to the dawn of printing and beyond. This includes French materials from the nineteenth century: legal codes, accounts of famous or obscure trials, treatises, and legal history tomes. Some of these works are apparently unique: at least, no cataloging records for some of them have ever been entered into the OCLC international cataloging database. Other works may exist in a few copies, but the records are so incomplete that it is difficult to be certain whether the Burns Library copy is really the same. Cataloging at Burns Library is a process of discovery.

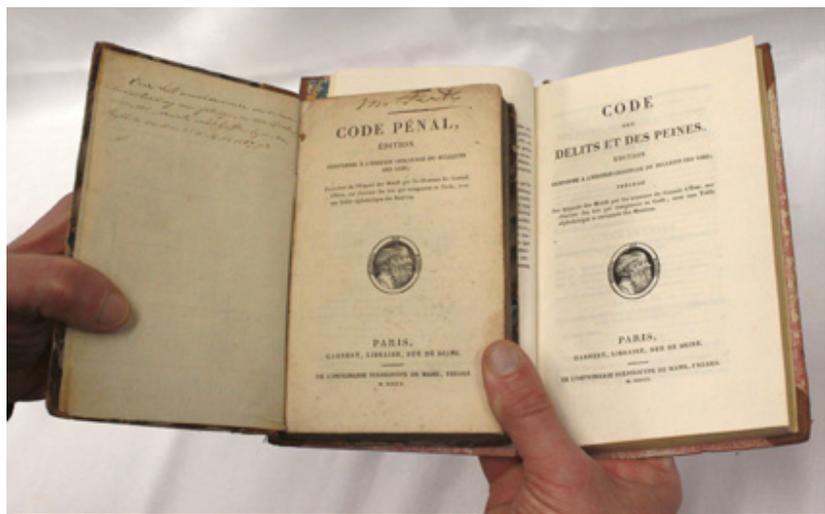
Nineteenth century books are not usually considered “rare;” that term is reserved for handmade books produced before 1800. The nineteenth century represents the triumph of mechanization, mass production, and large-scale advertising. Nineteenth century books are not like older books, but they are not like modern books, either. Forcing descriptions of nineteenth century books into the slots provided by standard cataloging may make it harder for users to distinguish between similar books, and it may obscure important information about legal history.

Napoleon’s new legal codes were printed in many editions in the early nineteenth century. Since the whole idea of codification was to produce a uniform legal system to replace the earlier patchwork of Roman and customary law, printers were at pains to proclaim that no accidental variations had crept into their editions.

One way to ensure uniformity was through the newly invented technique of stereotyping.

Expanding markets for printed matter created the need for technology that could mass produce books without overproduction. Movable type composed into pages could be stored so that copies of works could be printed as needed, but this “standing type” was bulky and expensive. A practical method for producing solid blocks of type that used less metal than standing type yet still allowed printing on demand was eventually discovered as a side effect of the French Revolutionary government campaign against counterfeit paper currency. The government project succeeded in mechanically reproducing series of identical copper engraving plates. Two researchers on the project developed competing applications that could be used to mass produce books, both called “stereotyping.” Firmin Didot’s process created a negative mold of composed type then cast an exact copy; this was the standard method used into the twentieth century. Louis Herhan’s solution was to create movable molds for each letter that could be composed into entire pages. Herhan’s process produced imprints of great clarity, but few printers opted for its greater expense and difficulty (Hodgson).

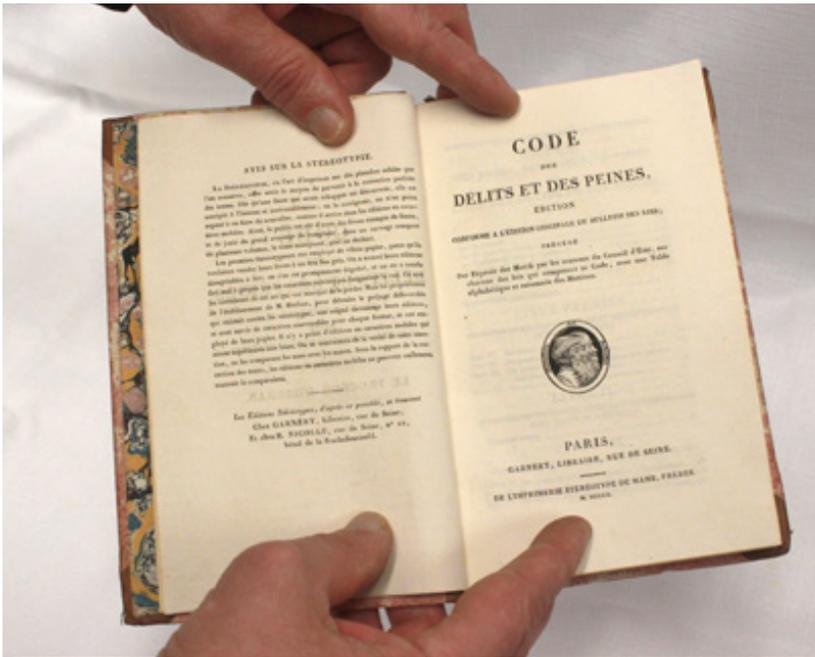
continued on page 8



Two stereotype editions of the French Penal Code from 1810.

Photo © Corey A. Reid

The Jacob Burns Law Library at the George Washington University Law School has a collection of legal materials back to the dawn of printing and beyond. This includes French materials from the nineteenth century: legal codes, accounts of famous or obscure trials, treatises, and legal history tomes.



The printer's advertisement dwarfs the title page in this stereotype edition of the French Penal Code from 1810. Photo © Corey A. Reid

Rare Book Cataloging *cont. from page 7*

The Burns Law Library has several Herhan stereotypes, including two copies of the *French Penal Code* printed by the Mame Brothers in 1810. The fact that the books were printed using the Herhan process is proudly announced on the first page of each copy; the vignette on each title page, a profile of three early printers, is proudly sharp and clear, even after more than 200 years. An advertisement facing the title page of one copy makes a bold but reasonable claim: stereotyping, unlike printing with movable type, provides absolutely identical texts.

The two Burns copies were sold by the same bookstore, Garnery, often recorded as the publisher, but the similarity stops there. The two books have different titles, sizes, and pagination. A search in the OCLC database turns up several other variations: a third title, for instance, and numerous combinations of title, size and pagination. Careful examination of our copies reveals that the title page and half-title are on a separate folded sheet of paper; the title could easily have been changed from copy to copy. It is hard to find out whether other copies also have separable title pages, since the details of book structure are not included in standard cataloging. Many records list the Mame Brothers as printers, but many do not list a printer at all.

Listing the publisher is required in standard cataloging, while listing the manufacturer is optional. But is a nineteenth century bookstore or printer really the same as a modern publisher?

Listing the publisher is required in standard cataloging, while listing the manufacturer is optional. But is a nineteenth century bookstore or printer really the same as a modern publisher? Herhan's rival Didot is listed as the "publisher" of a two volume edition in one record, but a link in that record leads to an online e-book identical to one of our Mame/Garnery copies. Apparently, a number of variations exist, but it is difficult to be certain from cataloging records available in OCLC.

Like Napoleon's codifications, Herhan's process bills itself as standard and absolutely modern. Yet the promise of uniformity made by stereotyping seems to have been at least in part an advertising gimmick. How many variations of our "stereotyped" edition exist? Since standard cataloging does not require, and barely allows, the description of variations present in nineteenth century works, without fuller rare book cataloging it would take a research trip to libraries around the world to find out.

As the nineteenth century progressed, advertising expanded on the title pages of printed works until it almost covered the surface, much as advertising covered the surface of nineteenth century cities. Titles sprouted numerous subtitles proclaiming the unique features of an edition, each in a newly invented eye-catching typeface; authors listed numerous credentials and affiliations in minuscule type; booksellers cited predecessors and previously published works. Listed contents on title pages might stretch on for ten or more lines, although the promise might not exactly match what lay within. Standard cataloging rarely transcribes the entirety of such a title page; even rare book cataloging allows truncation. Following a title to the bitter end can lead to some strange revelations.

Raymond Troplong published a series of commentaries on the Napoleonic Code in the early part of the nineteenth century. They were very popular, so much so that pirated editions regularly appeared in Belgium. It turns out pirated Belgian editions were not exactly illegal but were in fact favored by the Belgian king as an aid to economic development. Piracy stopped, at least officially, when an agreement with France took effect in 1854 (Godfroid). The Burns Library has a number of these "contrefaçons belges," as they are known, for instance a pirated edition of Troplong's *De la prescription* published by prominent pirate Meline et Cans in 1843. The edition has a lengthy subtitle an-

nouncing that it has been augmented for Belgium by correlations with nineteen other authors and the addition of a synopsis. The correlations amount to a few footnotes scattered here and there, but the synopsis consists of five large folded charts that offer a hierarchical outline of part of the Code. The caption on each sheet advertises that the synopsis was authored by Brossard. This is a brazen move: Brossard's *Synopsie du Code civil* had just been published in 1841. This work consists of 100 large folded sheets, each 37 centimeters high, each with an outline of a section of the Code. A comparison of the pirated version with the Burns Library's copy of the original, one of the few in the United States, reveals that the outline has been reproduced from the original word for word. Did Meline et Cans use Brossard's name because they had licensed the synopsis, or were they boldly and nonchalantly advertising the piracy? Given the chaotic world of nineteenth century publishing, it is difficult to know for sure.

The Burns Library has another edition of Troplong's work, an Italian translation from 1852. It advertises itself as a "nouva edizione," but the lengthy subtitle after the edition statement continues on word for word exactly like the 1843 Belgian pirated edition ("augmented in Belgium..."), including all nineteen authors in the same order and the promise of a synopsis. An added subtitle claims that the edition is the "first Italian translation," with correlations to the law and jurisprudence of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The Italian edition has all the notes of the original, along with the Belgian

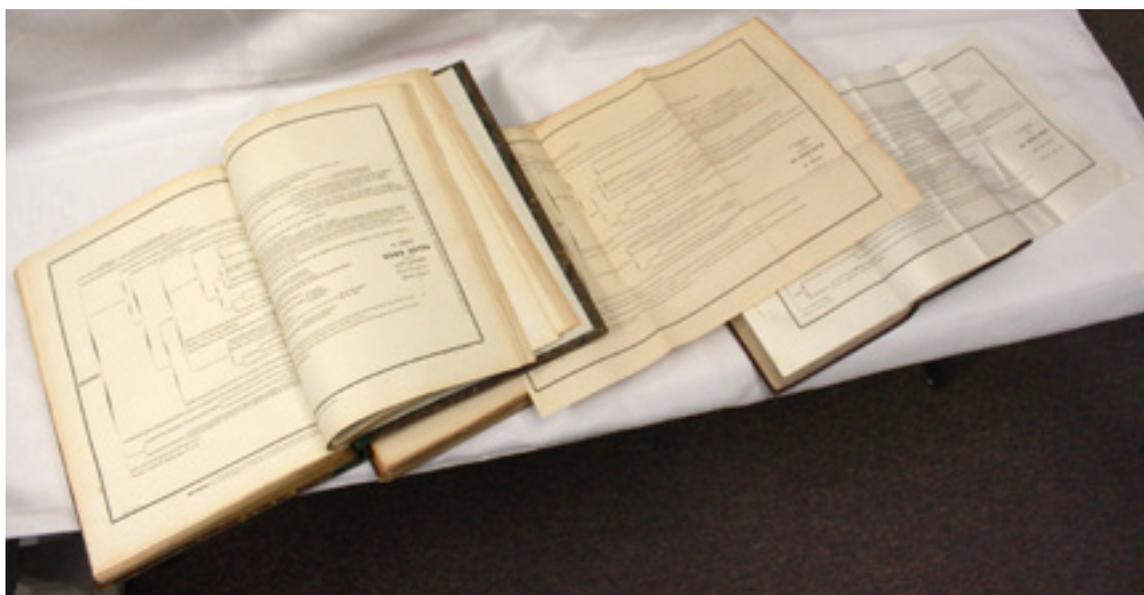
additions and a few of its own. The "Synopsis" is a word-for-word translation of the five folded charts pirated originally from Brossard and apparently pirated again here. It seems the Burns Library has one of the few surviving copies of an edition pirated from a pirate.

As the nineteenth century progressed, paper and printing methods became increasingly cheaper and literacy spread. Small, inexpensive works aimed at working class readers proliferated, and some of these humble editions may have historical and political significance far beyond what their unassuming appearance might suggest.

For example, Pierre de Béranger began writing patriotic and bawdy songs during the Revolution. Unfortunately, he attempted to continue his career after 1815 under the restored monarchy. In 1821, he published a collection of his poems, including bawdy songs about the pope and songs urging the people to take up the tricolor flag of the Revolution. He was prosecuted under the new press law of 1819, which prescribed imprisonment for inciting crimes even if they were not committed and imposed lengthier imprisonment for offenses against public morality or religion. He was convicted of offenses against religion and morality and sent to jail. All copies of the offending work were ordered destroyed (Boiteau).

Soon after his release, Béranger and his publisher Baudouin published the trial transcript, verbatim, including all the offending songs. This led to a second trial, but this time the two were acquitted; reprinting official government

continued on page 10



Brazen piracy: (l to r) Brossard's Synopsie du Code civil from 1841, Meline et Cans' Belgian piracy from 1843, Italian pirated translation from 1852. Photo © Corey A. Reid

The nineteenth century was a time of standardization and mechanization, but also of variation and inventiveness. Legal developments in codification, intellectual property and freedom of the press paralleled innovations in the production and marketing of books and in the expansion of literacy and the public sphere. Printed texts reflected all of this; cataloging should be detailed and flexible enough to reflect it, too.

Rare Book Cataloging

continued from page 9

records, it was decided, could not be illegal. Béranger and Badouin then published the transcript of the second trial, with this lengthy and sarcastic title: “Trial of Messers Béranger and Baudouin, accused, the one as publisher, the other as printer, for having published word-for-word and in its entirety the decision of the criminal investigation of 27 November 1821 sending M. Béranger before the criminal court as author of the songs related in the decision.” This second work, it seems, is very rare, and the Burns Library has one of the few copies in existence.

The two transcripts owned by the Burns Library are bound together in a nondescript binding. Apparently the purchaser, while interested in their scandalous and rebellious content, did not want or could not afford to give them a lavish setting. In any event, they were printed in an inconspicuous format: sixteen centimeters tall, bound in alternating groups of twelve and six small sheets, suggesting that their intended readership was the people, not the elite.

In 1828, Béranger brought out a new edition of his songs. This new edition is even smaller, twelve centimeters, and printed in tiny type. The Burns copy is bound cheaply but durably in nondescript leather. None of the details about format or binding would be recorded in standard cataloging as they routinely are in rare book cataloging, yet these details are central to the meaning of the work. In fact, the first poem is about format: “Do you dare, says the poet to his verses, to appear in octavo (a sheet folded three times, which results in a normal-sized book)? Such audaciousness will result in new attacks from judges and doctors of the Church. Better to appear in 32mo (folded five times, which produces a tiny book): nearsighted people will have to read it with a microscope, but the humble format will please its intended audience, and the indigent will be able to hide it in his pocket.” This small, inconspicuous book, bound in the Burns Library’s copy with what seems to be the only surviving copy of a misspelled “Supplément,” was again to land its author in jail, this time with a hefty fine. On the eve of the 1830 Revolution, however, Béranger became a hero, and his fine was paid by public subscription.

The nineteenth century was a time of standardization and mechanization, but also of variation and inventiveness. Legal developments in codification, intellectual property and freedom of the press paralleled innovations in the production and marketing of books and in the expansion of literacy and the public sphere. Printed texts reflected all of this; cataloging should be detailed and flexible enough to reflect it, too.

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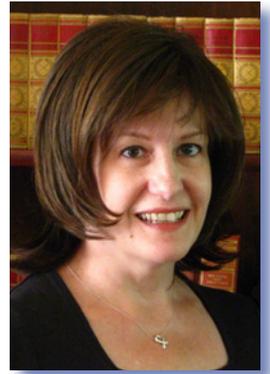
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- *Chansons inédites de P.-J. de Béranger, suivies des procès*. Paris: Baudouin, 1828. Print.
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- *Comentario sulla prescrizione*, ed. Domenico Capasso. Napoli: Antologia legale, 1852. Print. **LLL**

Staying Connected

Christine Ciambella, Adjunct Reference Librarian, American University, Washington College of Law,
Christine.ciambella@gmail.com

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”—Arthur C. Clarke



Despite my enthusiasm for pithy quotes, I have committed very few to memory. While searching for one that best expresses my attitude about technology, I found that, when it comes to technology, most of them express a love-hate attitude, or simply a hate attitude. And, to my surprise, we have been complaining about technology since way before the ubiquitousness of the Internet.

I got my first job as a librarian in 1995, right on the cusp of the Internet boom. I still marvel at the magic that delivers a mind-boggling array of information right to my desk. While I would never give up technology, I miss the face-to-face interaction that took place with patrons and colleagues.

Since I joined LLSDC 16 years ago, we have moved to the Internet and e-mail listserv as the primary means of communication among members. Attendance at meetings, both social and educational, is less than it once was. Maybe we're all just busier. Regardless, let's try to make more of the magic that happens when colleagues meet in person. Watch the calendar for coming events, and consider volunteering for a committee or SIS. As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions. **LLL**

MEMBER NEWS

Shannon O'Connell, Reference/Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly LLP,
soconnell@wc.com

Amy Taylor has joined the Pence Law Library at American University as the Special Projects Librarian. **LLL**

Librarian 2011: Using Basic Library Science Techniques to Manage Technology Requests

Jill Smith, Research and Instructional Technology Librarian, University of Maryland School of Law, Thurgood Marshall Law Library, jasmith@law.umaryland.edu

It is a truth almost reduced to a cliché that library patrons often come to the reference desk convinced they know the correct information to find a resource only to find out that they are completely wrong in almost every particular. One classic article on the subject contains the story of a student who comes to the reference desk of a university library seeking a volume called *Oranges and Peaches* which cannot be found in the catalog. A careful query by the librarian unearths the fact that the material in question is a seminal work on evolution and she correctly deduces that the student really needs *On the Origin of Species*.

Technological requests are subject to the same sort of confusion and misinformation. A request for a webinar or collaboration tool (to use only two examples) can mean many different things to many different people. In addition, since the terminology to describe technology is evolving alongside the technology itself, authoritative statements that begin with “I need a...” are often followed by similarly authoritative labels that don’t necessarily accurately describe the underlying need any more than a patron request such as, “I need *Prosser and Keeton on Contracts*,” would automatically yield a meaningful result.

Take webinars as an example: in practical effect, a request for a webinar can actually mean anything from a bridged conference call with slides distributed by e-mail to a web-based videoconference between two people to a multi-point communication with presenter-controlled slides, multiple methods of asking the presenter a question, and archiving of the presentation for later viewing. Determining the real need and the best technological tool to achieve the desired result can be a complicated calculation based on factors such as expectations, budget, and even the technological acumen of the person making the request.

As librarians, we are used to using the reference interview as a tool to peel back layers of poor recollection, unintelligible notes, and outright misinformation. By dialing a query back to the point of finding out what is required and differentiating that from what is asked for, we can find the real answers our patrons seek. Thus, the same tool that turns “I need a book called *Oranges and Peaches*” into “Here is *On the Origin of Species*” can also turn “I need a webinar” into “Let me get you a Skype account and show you how to use it.”

Conducting a technological reference interview has all of the hallmarks of a more traditional reference interview: the patron may insist that you “just get me the thing I asked for,” they may be embarrassed by their own lack of a clear idea of what they want, or they may have tried other avenues before seeking your help and are already frustrated and confused. The keys to solving these problems are the same in the tech suite as they are at the reference desk: patience, good humor, and basic questions. Instead of saying, “What sort of webinar would you like?” it is wiser to start with something like, “I’d love to help you. How many people are involved? Do you want people to be able to ask questions? How many presenters are there? Do you have a budget for this?” If you get a lot of these sorts of requests, developing a questionnaire to ease and organize planning is essential.

Further complications can be introduced by other players outside your organization. In the case of technology used to collaborate or communicate, you may need to assess not only your own resources but those of someone outside your institution. For instance, if Skype looks like it will meet your user’s needs, you have to make sure that the other party involved has access to a computer with a camera and microphone that has enough memory to run Skype.

As librarians, we are used to using the reference interview as a tool to peel back layers of poor recollection, unintelligible notes, and outright misinformation. By dialing a query back to the point of finding out what is required and differentiating that from what is asked for, we can find the real answers our patrons seek.

Having conducted your reference interview, you also need to know what resources are available to match to the user's request, what the level of expertise required to use them is, and how much they cost. For this, another basic library technique comes into play: environmental scanning. Blogs can be used as powerful discovery tool for new technological resources; for instance, Profhacker at the Chron-

icle of Higher Education has been especially effective at introducing new resources that are relevant to my user base. Free software and web services are also increasingly common and effective. You may want to keep a running list or spreadsheet of resources that you uncover and where they can be found to facilitate future requests. [LLL](#)

Here are just a few of my favorite free tools:

Audacity

Audacity is an audio recording and editing suite that offers users an impressive array of effects and tools. Audacity can export files to a number of different formats, including MP3, WAV, and AAC. This application is perfect for making up lost class time by creating podcasts.



Dropbox

Dropbox creates a synchronized, password-protected folder that is available from multiple computers. When a computer is offline, the documents are still available as local copies saved to the hard drive. When the computer comes online again, it automatically syncs any changes from the hard drive to the Dropbox server and then those changes sync to other computers when they come online in turn. You can share specific sub-folders without endangering the security of the rest of your account. Dropbox even lets you undelete a file for 30 days. Dropbox is ideal for enabling someone to work on a project from multiple locations without e-mailing files or keeping track of flash drives or for collaborators on a single project.



Jing

Jing is a fully-featured screen capture application that not only enables you to snap and annotate still images, but also does full-motion screen capture with automatic output into Flash. You can then embed the Flash movies into a presentation or share them at a free Screencast.com account. Jing helps me provide clear, effective technical support and assistance from my desktop.



Prezi

Prezi provides a web-based suite of tools to create presentations that look nothing like Powerpoint. Utilizing a zoom-and-pan approach rather than a slide-by-slide approach, Prezi can make distinctive, dynamic presentations and only requires a very short learning curve to master.



LLSDC 2011 Election News

The 2011 LLSDC election will take place April 15 through May 9. Voting information will be available on LLSDC's 2011 Election page, <http://www.llsdc.org/2011-election/>.

Candidate Biographies

Louis Abramovitz

*Candidate for LLSDC
Vice-President/President Elect*

Employment

Librarian (DC and Denver), Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP, June 2005 – Present

Previous Work Experience

Managed a contract research program for a national trade association. Prepared reports for state and regional tourism agencies. Presenter, 2002 Virginia Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism. (DC, 2000 – 2005)

Conducted business research for two prominent regional economic development entities. Created a variety of informational materials, drafted press releases and periodically gave radio and television interviews. (NC and VA, 1990 – 2000)

Prepared federal regulatory compliance manuals as a staff planner for a local planning agency. Conducted transit ridership surveys. Worked on Census TIGER files. (NC, 1988 – 1990)

Education

MSLS, The Catholic University of America
MBA, Wake Forest University (Marketing)
MA, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
(Location Analysis)
BA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Professional Activities

LLSDC: Member, 2005 – present; PR Committee Chair, 2009 – 2010; Nominations Chair, 2008 – 2009

AALL: Member, 2005 – present; Member, PLLSIS

SLA (Legal Division): Member, 2005 – present; Presenter (final approval pending), 2012 SLA Conference

Selected Publications

Louis Abramovitz, et al., Law Librarians: An Untapped Resource for BI, *THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL*, July 5, 2010, available at <http://tinyurl.com/2ue7p59>

Information Wants to Be Free (Well, Sort of...), *STRATEGIES: THE JOURNAL OF LEGAL MARKETING*, July 2009, at 18-19, available at <http://tinyurl.com/2fts3p2>

(Credited research contributor) Russell P. Hanser, The Politics of Competition, 60 *Fed. Comm. L. J.* 627 (June 2008), available at <http://law.indiana.edu/fclj/pubs/v60no3.html>

Thinking About Pursuing an MLS?, *LAW LIBRARY LIGHTS*, Fall 2007, at 15-16, available at http://www.lawlibrarycareers.org/careers_would.html

Candidate Statement

I am extremely honored to have been nominated for the position of Vice-President/President Elect.

I never cease to be amazed by my fellow LLSDC members—not only by the depth and breadth of their knowledge, but also the unmatched spirit of collegiality found in our community. I would therefore welcome the opportunity to apply my experience as a law librarian, researcher and marketer to serve the Society through this important leadership role.

If elected, I would build upon the initiatives I led as the 2009–2010 LLSDC Public Relations Committee Chair. The PR Committee's efforts resulted in the well-received launch of LLSDC's presence on social networks, including Twitter and Facebook. In fact, more law librarian-related lists currently follow LLSDC on Twitter than any comparable Twitter site. My priorities would also include implementing processes to systematically identify and promote the unique talents that reside within the membership ranks in ways that will tangibly benefit LLSDC's members—most of whom are faced with the harsh reality of greater workloads and static or declining staff and other resources.

Additionally, I would emphasize the education of academic, government and law firm administrators and others on the value which law librarians bring to their respective organizations. At the same time, I would also like to cultivate an ongoing dialogue between these legal professionals and LLSDC members, to help these organizations not only survive, but excel, in the current economic environment.

Rick Ramponi

*Candidate for Vice President /
President Elect*

Candidate Biography

I am currently the Library Supervisor of the Washington D.C. office of Latham & Watkins LLP. I have held this position for 5 years, having previously served as the legislative librarian for approximately 6 years. I served as President of the LLSDC Legislative Interest Section for one year. Prior to joining Latham, I was a reference librarian at the U.S. Senate Library for 9 years. Earlier in my career, I worked at a public library, a police training academy library, and for two other Washington law firms. I am a graduate of Fordham University with a BA in English and Medieval Studies. I have an MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I also attended law school for one year. I have lived in the District for over 20 years.

Candidate Statement

I wish to serve as Vice President-President Elect in order to learn more about my fellow law librarians and to assist LLSDC in providing more educational, training and networking opportunities.

Roger Skalbeck

*Candidate for LLSDC
Vice President/President-Elect*

Current Title and Contact

Roger Skalbeck, Associate Law Librarian for Electronic Resources & Services
Georgetown Law Library, Washington, D.C.
rvs5@law.georgetown.edu
Work: 202-662-9158
JD, George Mason School of Law (2005)
MSLIS, Dominican University (1996)

Candidate Statement

On my first day in a law library, I checked in the first advanced sheet for volume one of West's *Federal Reporter*, Third Series. There are now over 600 volumes in this series, and a lot has changed in law libraries since then. Gone are the days of dedicated research terminals, optimism about CD-ROMs, and debates about cancelling Shepard's (remember when it was on Westlaw?). Now we've got WestlawNext, Bloomberg, vendor consolidation, smart phones, and the Law.Gov movement. Through all of this, LLSDC has thrived, adapted and evolved.

If I'm elected as LLSDC's Vice-President / President-Elect, I will use my knowledge and experience in law libraries to help guide our active association. Washington has a wealth of law librarians, and LLSDC is well-known as an active organization involving hundreds of law firm, academic, government and corporate information professionals. I'd like to spend time helping LLSDC remain relevant and engaged, both inside and outside the beltway.

Biography and Background (Selective), Work Experience

Georgetown Law Library (DC)

Associate Law Librarian (2006–Present)

George Mason School of Law (DC)

Technology Services Librarian (2000–2006)

Howrey LLP (DC)

Electronic Initiatives Librarian
(1999–2000)

Williams & Connolly (DC)

Systems Librarian (1997–1999)

Schwegman, Lundberg, Woessner
& Kluth (MN)

Knowledge Analyst (1996–1997)

Popham, Haik, Schnobrich & Kaufman (MN)

Librarian and Library Assistant
(1993–1996)

Professional Involvement

AALL Copyright Committee (2009–2011)

Chair, 2010–2011

Board Member, LLSDC (2007– 009)

Co-Host, Law Librarian Conversations podcast
with Rich Leiter (2009–Present)

Columnist: Tech Talk, LLSDC *Law Library
Lights*, 2003–Present

continued on page 16

Roger Skalbeck *continued*

Presentations

AALL: 2000,2001,2002,2006,2008,2010

CALI: 2009; Computers in Libraries: 2008

Other

Webmaster for LLSDC (1999) & MALL (1997)D

Carrie Ansell

Candidate for LLSDC Treasurer

Employment

Research Librarian (Legislative), Covington & Burling LLP, August 2008 - Present.

Legislative Librarian, Wiley Rein LLP, August 2005 – August 2008.

Education

M.L.S., University of Maryland, College Park, 2006.

B.A., German Studies, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 2000.

Professional Activities

AALL: Member, 2005 – Present.

LLSDC: Member, 2005 Present. President-Elect of the Legislative SIS, 2007–2009.

Candidate Statement

I have benefitted greatly from the activities of LLSDC since I began working in law libraries in 2005. I feel that LLSDC offers so much to the local law librarian community, in terms of both learning and networking opportunities, and I would like to help keep the association strong. I would be pleased to serve the association as Treasurer and to offer my organizational skills in assistance of LLSDC's continued smooth operation.

John Smith

LLSDC Candidate for Treasurer

Full-Time Library Employment

Access Services Librarian, Pence Law Library, Washington College of Law, American University; November 2006–present

Serials/Technical Systems Coordinator, Pence Law Library, Washington College of Law, American University; September 2002–October 2006

Serials Acquisitions Assistant, MIT Libraries; November 2001–June 2002

University Library Assistant II — Acquisitions/Serials, University of Connecticut Law Library; April 2000 – November 2001

Program Coordinator I — Circulation, Clayton College and State University Library; July 1998 – April 2000

Education

M.S.L.S. (2006), The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

B.A. (1993), English Literature, St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT

Professional Memberships

AALL — member since 2005

LLSDC — member since 2003

Mid-Atlantic Innovative User's Group (MAI-UG) — member since 2002, Treasurer 2003-2006.

Candidate Statement

I am excited to be a candidate for Treasurer of the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, DC (LLSDC). My membership in LLSDC has provided me with many opportunities, and as Treasurer of LLSDC, I look forward to working with the other members of the LLSDC Board to ensure that all LLSDC members have future opportunities to grow professionally.

I became a member of LLSDC in 2003, and in 2005, I received an LLSDC scholarship in supporting my pursuit of a Master's Degree in Library Science from the Catholic University of America. In 2006 I received an AALL/LLSDC scholarship to attend the 2006

AALL Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri. In March of 2008 in coordination with the LLSDC Academic SIS, I had the opportunity to present a session on current and next-generation OPACs titled “Whither the Catalog” where the future of searching was discussed. Also in 2008, I was fortunate to have an article discussing the evolution of the Pence Law Library published in *Law Library Lights*. Perhaps the greatest resource available through LLSDC (and the one I use most frequently) is that the wealth of experience of other members is only a phone call or email away.

I have previous experience as Treasurer of the Mid-Atlantic Innovative Users’ Group from 2003–2006, and look forward to being able to apply this experience to LLSDC. Most importantly, I look forward to returning something to an organization that has helped me to develop as a law librarian. I welcome your support of my candidacy and look forward to working with you.

Todd Venie

*Candidate for LLSDC
Corresponding Secretary*

Candidate Biography

Todd Venie is a Reference Librarian at the Georgetown Law Library. He came to Georgetown in 2008, after earning a master’s degree in library science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he also worked as the Graduate Assistant in the law library. Todd also has a bachelor’s degree from Indiana University, with a major in history and political science, as well as a J.D. from The Ohio State University. Before becoming a librarian, Todd worked as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in Fairfield County, Ohio, where he prosecuted adult felony cases and advised the county offices on civil matters.

Candidate Statement

For the last two years, I have served as the Chair of the LLSDC Education Committee. During that time, I have gained experience working with librarians from different environments to plan educational programs for law librarians, support staff, and law students. In doing so I have learned a great deal about the roles law librarians play, and the challenges they face. I look

forward to using this knowledge and experience to make sure LLSDC continues to provide valuable services to its membership.

Margaret Bartlett

Candidate for LLSDC Board Member

Candidate Biography

I attended Baylor University, receiving a Bachelor’s degree in English. Afterwards, I received my MLIS from Rutgers University. After moving to D.C. in 2003, I spent 6 ½ years in the law library of Pepper Hamilton, LLP as Assistant Librarian and then Librarian before accepting a position last fall as Law Librarian at the Government Accountability Office. For the past several years, I have been actively involved in LLSDC. Currently, I am the President of the Private Law Libraries (PLL) section, and previously was Vice-President and Treasurer. I also served as co-chair of the Joint Spring Workshop last year. As part of my tenure in PLL, I have enjoyed being able to plan events for the membership such as roundtable discussions, vendor demonstrations, educational programs, and library tours.

Candidate Statement

One of my greatest joys in being a law librarian is helping to educate others about how to find the resources that they need. In my work with a private law firm, and now for the GAO, I have emphasized outreach to my patrons by conducting training sessions, organizing events such as Library Week, and meeting one-on-one with patrons to help them learn to perform their research more efficiently. I believe strongly in the LLSDC’s mission of fostering a “spirit of ethical cooperation among members of the profession” and in helping law librarians continue their own educations. I have enjoyed the fellowship with other law librarians that comes with being part of LLSDC and hope to be able to assist in furthering that mission by helping to increase participation in LLSDC programs and expanding membership.

continued on page 18

Emily Phillips

Candidate for LLSDC Board Member

Employment

Information and Resources Librarian,
WilmerHale, January 2010–present
Acquisitions Librarian, WilmerHale,
May 2007–December 2010
Acquisitions Specialist, WilmerHale,
2001–2007

Education

MLS (Archives Concentration), University
of Maryland, May 2007
BA, Marymount University, May 2001

Professional Activities

LLSDC Member since 2003
LLSDC Treasurer 2010–2011
LLSDC Assistant Treasurer 2009/2010
Membership Committee 2008/09
AALL Member since 2003

Candidate Statement

In 2001, I began my librarian career at WilmerHale as the library's billing coordinator. My primary job function was to process all of the library's invoices for payment. During the following two years, my interest in the field of librarianship has grown with the encouragement of my coworkers. I joined LLSDC and AALL and attended a number of functions. Determined to continue on a career path of a law librarian, I enrolled in University of Maryland's MLS program. My LLSDC membership provided me with a strong law librarian network, which allowed me to gain different perspectives while completing my school assignments.

After obtaining my master's degree, I continued to work for Wilmer Hale and was promoted to Information and Resources Librarian. I am currently serving on the LLSDC board as Treasurer. I would like to continue my involvement in LLSDC by serving as a board member. **LLL**

Technology Tricks: DOJ Librarians' Favorites

Janice Fridie, Librarian, U.S. Department of Justice, janice.fridie@usdoj.gov

Call me irrational: I like books. For some time now, I have preferred pages of weight and texture, immovable spines, and print that can burn, torched by the censor or scorched into my consciousness.

Publishers have moved on to e-books and other e-content—the e-wave of the future. My colleagues here at the Main Library ride that wave with aplomb. I will let them tell you why.

Google Reader

Amanda

Google Reader is a “news aggregator.” While this sounds like something that ought to wash its mouth out with soap, Amanda assures me that it’s quite sanitary. Amanda prefers the Reader because she does not have to choose between volume and mental clarity.

“I like to keep up on the news. I look at a lot of sources and I like to scan only the latest headlines of my choosing.” With multiple streams coming in each day, juggling each as a separate e-mail would be difficult. But when she consolidates all her RSS feeds into one place, Amanda can review the entire set, focus on the relevant items, save her favorites, and delete the rest.

With Google Reader Amanda says she gets precise results, and lots of them, while eliminating clutter.

The Bearable Lightness of G-Drives

Diane and Tina

“My favorites—G Drives and Cloud technology.” That statement comes from two librarians who need 24/7 access from multiple devices. These are important considerations. Diane has a long commute and sometimes works from home. Tina likes “not being tied down.” She also likes the flexibility and being able to customize. “I can edit favorites wherever I am.”

While all DOJ librarians are restricted to using secure government equipment, Blackberries and laptops are portable. Diane can enliven

Monday mornings on the Metro by calling up her favorites courtesy of Delicious.com.

Tina uses a smart phone to find her way: “It is like a GPS in a tidy little box. It can be compulsive, though. Once we were looking for a Starbucks. I believe there is one on every block. My husband actually dialed in our address!” Tina finds that her most extensive use is for retrieving blocks of print for the book she has written and is now revising. “It’s not saving time, exactly, but I’m able to make better use of my time.” That shift to deriving better quality from her time is what Tina most values.

For Diane, the ProQuest database of congressional documents (formerly LexisNexis Congressional) tops the charts. As the co-trainer of DOJ’s Legislative History classes, Diane relies on the comprehensive material in ProQuest for examples. Of course, being known as an expert on the subject also means she fields even more research requests. “I access that site multiple times a day.” Delicious makes it that much more palatable.

Greater Expectations

Kera

“People still visit the library, but now they do it in a different way.” And with this declaration Kera points to the “virtual library.”

Many elements must be pulled together to construct that resource, driven by the realization that users want convenience. With tools that concentrate information onto a single site but allow access from multiple locations, the system has passed one hurdle. When searching can be done across diverse sources, the user does not have to learn the quirks of each separate database, eliminating the second barrier to access. When material that has been retrieved can be disseminated in the desired format and sent directly to the user anywhere, anytime, the circle is complete. Kera thinks that efficient virtual libraries have the advantage of adapting to meet changing needs.

“The virtual library has to be organized appropriately,” Kera adds. “With e-mail, users’ expectations are so different. They are used to instant gratification. They expect instant results. It makes life busier.”

Wikied

Jan

Jan appreciates professionalism. She likes working with communities of people who share common interests. E-mail puts her in touch with people who possess both qualities.

“They may not be new, but listservs are great. Librarians can reach out for obscure publications or for information that is otherwise in places we don’t know about. And because you’re working with a community of professionals, the providers are trusted. You feel that the sources are authoritative.”

Wikis are another favorite. “They’re the best place to collaborate. It’s a strong, central location. When you submit a draft, everyone has a chance to review it. You can track changes, in case you want to go back or trace the thought sequences. And when the document is complete, it provides a shared knowledge base.”

The Site with the Flag Tatoo

Mimi

The new FdSys database is Mimi’s current favorite. As the Legislative Resources Librarian and co-trainer of our Legislative History Classes, Mimi spends most of her days among congressional documents. The variety and volume are staggering. Mimi sees major improvements with the new site. It pulls together material from Hearings, Treaties, Committee Reports, the Congressional Record, and from Executive and Administrative Sources.

“It’s accessible, comprehensive, and easy to use.” Mimi points out. For one-stop shopping, one could not do better.

Clear and Present Changes

Robin

“I like Twitter. But I don’t use it.” This may sound like a contradiction, but Robin sticks to her guns. “Many other people use it—it changes the way people interact.”

She describes a social media continuum: “First you had instant messaging, then MySpace

and FaceBook. One person could connect with another person or small groups of people in immediate and in-depth ways.” Robin attributes this easy camaraderie to one factor: “It’s simple.”

Twitter makes a quantum leap. Instead of an exchange among a small group of friends, an individual or organization can communicate with lots of people. That changes the dynamic. Businesses can push out their messages and collect reactions from the broadest spectrum of people (aka customer feedback). “Say ‘there’s a 20% sale at the Mall!’ and lots of people show up.”

A single voice can be amplified, for example. “Heather Armstrong wrote that she and her husband bought a new washing machine. They had barely installed it when it broke. Heather is a Mommy Blogger with a huge following —thousands of people. In no time one of the company executives called. ‘We are sending out technicians now. We are fixing that machine.’”

Robin sees this more casual relationship as the fundamental change. No one had to file a law suit or a formal complaint. We are moving away from formal structures like courts and grievance procedures to “no-label” relationships, just people talking to people.

My fellow librarians have described advances that make our work easier. Still, I return again and again to the discrete charm of an open book.

Thanks to my colleagues at the Department of Justice Main Library: Amanda Abramowitz; Robin Foltz; Kera Manion; Jan Oberla, Director of the Main Library; Diane Smith; Tina Smith; and Mimi Vollstedt. LLL

A Law Librarian Learning and Teaching in Mozambique

Tracy Woodard, Peace Corps Volunteer and Former Reference Librarian, Howard University Law Library, pesttea@msn.com

Introduction

I worked in academic law libraries for ten years, and I taught legal research at Howard University Law Library. Working in academic law libraries was tough work. I did a lot of learning and teaching on my feet. I learned that it is best to be knowledgeable, flexible, and to have a positive attitude. I have brought these lessons, my education, and my professional work experience to South East Africa. I am a Peace Corps volunteer in Mozambique, and I come across daily opportunities to learn and teach something new. It is fantastic.

But, Why Did I Join the Peace Corps?

After Hurricane Katrina, I began to want to do something more tangible. I wanted a way to put my stamp on life and to help the global community. But Hurricane Katrina had happened over five years ago, and the most I had done was donate \$30 to the Red Cross. Then, I was inspired by President Barack Obama and Michele Obama with a renewed energy to think globally and be a part of global change. I was ready for something new, and the Peace Corps in Africa was definitely a change. But honestly, borrowing the words of a good friend, I decided that “I wasn’t getting any younger or prettier” and so it was a good time to go for it and join Peace Corps, like I always wanted to do. Wow, what a change indeed. I am faced with new and recurring challenges every day.

A Law Librarian One Year Before the Peace Corps

I did the research, talked to family, friends, and colleagues, and thought about the Peace Corps for a long time. I asked myself if I was too old to join, whether I should leave my job considering the economy, if I was strong enough and whether I had the guts, if I could deal with the heat and the insects, and even how I would do my hair in Africa. I joined Bikram Yoga in Dupont Circle to help build strength and get acclimated to heat. I did not use my

air conditioning in the hot Washington, D.C. summer, but I would turn it on when friends visited. Then I began the application process. I took about a year to think about it. It was intense.

African American Means What?

Next, I decided that since I am African American I should find out what kind of African I am before I went to Africa. I had talked to family members before about our heritage. I heard tall tales about an Irish man, a Chinese man, and one of the aunts who says she grew up on a reservation. There were plenty of myths, family lore, wild stories, and I even remember a lullaby my family used to sing to me when I was a child. The lullaby revealed that my real name is Consuelo and how the nice woman down the street placed me at my parent’s door. But I wanted to know the truth, so I contacted the historical society and got busy researching my family tree.

Barbados or Bust

A lot of the old folks in my family have died, though some remain. Before my grandmother passed away I remembered when she talked to me about her mother. She said: “My mother married the first man that got off the boat.” And that was that. So I decided that my great grandfather must have emigrated from somewhere, but I didn’t know where. I remembered that one of my great aunts had told me that my great grandfather came from the Caribbean. My great uncle had told me that my great grandfather came from Jamaica and the family still owned a liquor store there. I used the historical society database to access census records going back over a hundred years, and according the census, my great grandfather and both of his parents were from Barbados. Barbados it is then. Hurrah, one small piece of our family heritage puzzle was filled in for my father’s side of the family.

continued on page 22

I was inspired by President Barack Obama and Michele Obama with a renewed energy to think globally and be a part of global change. I was ready for something new, and the Peace Corps in Africa was definitely a change.

I decided that if the DNA testing approach was good enough for Oprah, Colbert, and Parker, then it was good enough for me. So I took two tests. I was delighted to learn that on my mother's side going back 500 years we were from the Mende people of the area now called Sierra Leone.

DNA Testing

Then I saw a PBS special hosted by Henry Louis Gates Jr. The show used DNA testing to determine which African and European countries Oprah Winfrey, Stephen Colbert, and Sarah Jessica Parker came from. I decided that if the DNA testing approach was good enough for Oprah, Colbert, and Parker, then it was good enough for me. So I took two tests. I was delighted to learn that on my mother's side going back 500 years we were from the Mende people of the area now called Sierra Leone. Hurrah, another victory, another piece of the puzzle was put together.

Foxwoods Casino

I also got the results back from the second test. It gives the breakdown of what percentage Africa, Indigenous, Asian, and European you are. I figured that the results would reveal that I was African and Indigenous, based on some of the family lore about living on a reservation. I was ready to know the name of my Indigenous tribe, and hope that it was the Pequots so I could greet my new Indigenous family that owns Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut. That dream didn't happen. The results read 0% Indigenous, 0% Asian, 33% European, and 67% African. Hurrah, now I was equipped with the knowledge of who I am biologically, and armed with a good sense of self, and combined with years of professional work experience, I was ready to go to Africa with the Peace Corps.

I Resigned from the Law Library

I resigned from Howard University Law Library six months in advance of leaving. My coworkers were outstanding. They were very supportive, and they bought Rosetta Stone to help me learn Portuguese. Then one morning it was time to go. I was alone that morning; I was stoic, happy and sad. I left a very nice job, a cozy apartment, good friends and a comfortable life behind. I put my two huge bags in a cab on a rainy morning in Washington, D.C. and I was off to Peace Corps, off to Africa, off to Mozambique to teach English, to live among the community and make an international exchange of knowledge and culture.

My First Breath of Air in Africa

The first thing I did when I arrived in Africa was take a breath. I was in a very posh airport in

South Africa with a group of other Peace Corps volunteers. We had a comfortable fifteen hour flight from JFK to South Africa. Then we took an hour flight to Mozambique. In South Africa we all walked outside to get on our plane. When we got outside, I just breathed. I was in Africa for the first time. It was exhilarating.

Feeling Uncomfortable and Smiling Through It

Alternatively, the flight from South Africa to Mozambique was stressful. The plane climbed high, flew fast, and landed. We arrived in Mozambique. We were happy. Some of us took pictures of each other smiling in the seats of the plane. I just wanted to get up and off the plane. I felt like I had been at sea on a whale watch in New England, on choppy cold waters, on a cold day, and a whale pops up to spray that stuff right onto you, uncomfortable. I smiled and posed for pictures along with everyone else.

Everything Looked Foreign and Forgotten

After arriving in Mozambique, I had a window seat on the bus ride to our hotel in Maputo. We stayed in a hotel for a few days before moving to Namaacha for ten weeks of language and culture training. I looked out of the bus window the entire way to the hotel. I saw poverty: real poverty, terrible heart sinking poverty, and garbage seemingly everywhere, hugely broken roads, dilapidated high-rise buildings with tenants' clothes hanging outside on string. I thought there couldn't possibly be building codes here; the slums, shacks, the heat, and everything looked foreign and forgotten.

Poverty

This was my first time seeing real poverty. It broke my heart. After we checked into our hotel, I closed the door to my room, and the dust in the dim room choked me. I sat down in the old hard chair that was still sturdy, and I cried. I cried because of the poverty, the garbage, the buildings, the forgotten-ness of the situation, I cried for the people. I was literally heartbroken and I cried for Mozambique. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in Africa. Although the country is really improving the initial shock of seeing things was a heavy load. I wished that there was more help for Mozambique.

I Cried for Myself

After our ten weeks of training, we traveled to the sites where we would live and work for two years. When I first arrived at my site, in a very pleasant village, I sat down and cried again. I cried on and off for three days. I cried for selfish reasons. In the words of one of my former colleagues at Howard who was born and raised in Ethiopia, “there are no luxuries in Africa.” I had no luxuries either, like clean running water or garbage pickup. I cried for myself. I cried taking water out of the well. I cried boiling water to prepare it for drinking. I cried washing my clothes outside. I cried after returning from the market with rice, okra, and tomatoes. I cried cooking dinner and making lemon tea. I sat on the porch looking at three beautiful mountains and a gorgeous horizon and I cried. Then I saw approximately nine black spiders on the walls in my bedroom, and I stopped crying. I pulled everything out of that room and washed the whole thing down. I got to work making it feel like home. The shock of life in Mozambique had sunk in and my initial response was to cry about it, but now it was time to adapt. Part of adapting to change is our ability to accept difference and feel at home. It frees us up to work hard and be helpful.

The Rainy Season

It is the rainy season now. This is good because the wells that have dried up and need to get replenished. That means that people don't have to walk to get to water from wells far away and lug big jugs of water back to their homes over long distances in the hot sun. The rain is needed here, but, it rained sideways last weekend. The lightning slid across the sky long and perfectly horizontally. Then the rain poured under our doors and flooded our houses. The wind kicked up and rattled the bejeezus out of our tin roof. When the rain pounds, the wind howls and the tin roof slaps, it makes for a combined noise that I am sure I cannot explain except for simply saying it is loud and fierce. We took action and swept the water out of the house, and soaked the excess up with old cloths. I quickly learned that flexibility and thinking on your feet not only make a good law librarian, but also a very good Peace Corps volunteer.

“Welcome to Mozambique”

“Welcome to Mozambique.” That is what one of my colleagues at the secondary school told me on the night of a farewell party for a friend. The wind blew very strongly that night and knocked out the electricity in the village; this is common. I was walking a bucket of beans over to the party when we lost power. One of the boys in the neighborhood walked me there safely; I was grateful. When I arrived it was completely black outside, dark inside, and only one candle lit a possibly endless table in the hall. I peeked inside the dark hall and wondered how I would enter when I couldn't see my own feet. That's when my colleague said “Welcome to Mozambique.” The electricity eventually came back up, and the farewell party was fun. It was my first full day and night in our village.

He Called Out to Me, “Teacher Tracy”

It is so beautiful here. I go outside every chance I can get, and it is mostly too hot to stay in the house during the day anyway. I usually read outside under the mango tree where I can catch the shade and a nice breeze. I am currently reading “What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achack Deng.” One of the secondary school students walked over to me while I was reading outside. In Portuguese he asked, “What are you reading?” I explained in Portuguese, and he looked intrigued. He asked for the book and began reading slowly in English. He is twenty-two and has a sister named Fatima. He reads very well and asked questions about words that he didn't understand. I was impressed. With me using my English-Portuguese dictionary for some words, and acting out concepts, he read my book out loud in English for about an hour. The next time I saw him he was riding his bike on the paved road before the path crumbles into sand. He called out to me, “Teacher Tracy.” And it was nice to hear.

Mozambique Is a Beautiful Country

Mozambique is a beautiful country but it sure is worlds away in the southern hemisphere. It is truly different and difficult to live here. It is very hot and very humid: the sweat, the flies, the warrior bugs. It takes two hours to make coffee, from gathering the water to starting the coal stove with stick matches and a wish, but that cup never tasted so good when it's done because it was made by your own hands and your hard

continued on page 24

I am really excited about being a Peace Corps volunteer and being in Africa. It is a dream that I am in the process of living, a challenge that I am meeting, and a noble way to contribute to the global community.

Learning and Teaching in Mozambique

continued from page 23

work. Here there is always time to talk to your neighbors and enjoy the natural luxuries of life, like the cool shade under the mango tree, sleeping outside at night to catch the breeze, the vivid mountains, the enormous sunrise, the grandiose night sky, and the sounds of people beginning their day. On some mornings we can even hear the Muslim call to worship, which until now I had only heard in movies. The people here are resilient, tough, and generous on a level I have not seen before.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned So Far

I want to say that change is good. But presently, change only feels like change. Volunteering with the Peace Corps and living in Africa is challenging but rewarding. You quickly learn

to be grateful for small luxuries like friendship, clean water, a cool night. You also learn quickly to be flexible and think on your feet, two skills that I am confident translate well in any work environment. I am really excited about being a Peace Corps volunteer and being in Africa. It is a dream that I am in the process of living, a challenge that I am meeting, and a noble way to contribute to the global community.

Blog

I invite you to continue this journey with me. Please check out my blog posts about the adventures of a law librarian teaching English with Peace Corps in Mozambique. I officially begin teaching English at the secondary school in my village at the end of January, but I've already learned and taught a lot. I hope to see you online, that is when the power is on and when I can find a stable internet connection: <http://twoodard.weebly.com/>. Obrigada. **LLL**

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Marchant, William. **The Desk Set**. London: Samuel French, 1956.

Desk Set. DVD. Directed by Walter Lang. 1957. Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox, 2004.

When I try to summarize my job as a reference librarian in a single sentence, the best description I can think of is, “It’s like *The Desk Set*, except with computers.” (Somehow I forget that the major plot point of the entire movie is the coming of a computer and its effect on a TV network’s research department, but in my defense, we don’t really see the computer do much more than beep and attempt to answer a few questions!). With the benefit of hindsight, it really is amazing to consider both how much and how little our jobs have changed in half a century of incredible technological innovation. In this technology-focused issue of *Law Library Lights*, I would like to use my column to compare the world of *The Desk Set* with my life as a 21st-century reference librarian.

The Desk Set was originally a 1955 play written by William Marchant. Marchant died in obscurity in 1995 at the age of 72, his body unclaimed for over a month in a New Jersey hospital morgue.¹ *The Desk Set* was his best-known play by far, largely because it was adapted into a 1957 Katherine Hepburn/Spencer Tracy vehicle by the same name. The movie develops the romance between Bunny Watson (Hepburn) and Richard Sumner (Tracy) in a way that the play never does, but the movie is otherwise largely true to the play. Since I have a copy of the play at hand, my quotes will come from the play rather than the movie screenplay.

Education

“Bunny” (short for Bonita) Watson is the head of the Reference Department for a national television broad-casting company; she is in charge of a crackerjack team of three researchers. Richard Sumner is the efficiency expert in charge of installing and implementing an “electronic brain” in the Department. In interviewing Bunny to get a better idea of her job and her skills, Richard asks her about her

training for the work she does. Bunny responds, “Just a library course at Columbia University” (p. 30). I am always more than a bit annoyed at the use of the word “just,” which minimizes the fact that Bunny went through one of the most respected programs in the country! Later, as her friend Peg removes Bunny’s diploma from her office wall, Bunny refers to “good old Columbia” (p. 67)—a much fonder recollection of the education that had underpinned her successful career.

It is not made clear whether any of the researchers in the Reference Department also had specialized library science training, but the Reference Department was definitely viewed as a prize career option to be held onto by the three women who hold the positions. As Bunny notes at one point, “Peg has been here forever—and Sadel waited a year and a half just to get in here”² (p. 28). The newest researcher, Ruthie, volunteers for overtime telling Bunny, “Well, it was hard enough getting this job, and I want to keep it.” Regardless of whether these three women had library-specific coursework, they clearly have had sufficiently impressive backgrounds to get hired for their fast-paced, intellectually challenging jobs. Once hired, they have the additional task of learning the resources available to them in their Department’s collection, and how to get information from outside sources. Ruthie is told to continue learning the reference collection (p. 16), while at the beginning of the play, Peg is taking advantage of an outside resource by calling the Society for the Preservation of Eskimo Culture to try and “find out the truth about the Eskimo habit of rubbing noses” (p. 8).



continued on page 26

Today it is equally true that our previous experiences and education (generally including an MLS) are key factors in getting us hired. After that, our ability to learn on the job how to best take advantage of available resources is essential for us to be able to do our work successfully and keep our patrons happy.

The Work

In comparing the work of today's reference librarian with that of the 1950s Reference Department of *The Desk Set*, the main differences that strike me are not so much in the type of work as the format of the resources we use to get the questions and find the answers. In other words, this is where the technological changes really stand out. Just a few minutes ago, I was asked for a citation from a 2008 Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) report. Instead of getting up to check the shelf where we keep random legislative prints, I sat down at my computer, entered the URL for the JCT website, located the report in question, and printed out the pages the attorney needed. This took about two minutes. A little earlier today, I had to retrieve current servicer ratings for various mortgage servicers, and again, I was able to do the entire assignment without leaving my computer (although that project took a good deal longer than two minutes!). If someone does need to check out an actual book from our library, she does not fill out a card in a pocket in the back of the book; she scans a barcode into our ILS database.

Although I do not typically get asked the same questions as Bunny and her research team (e.g., the names of Santa's reindeer, the type of car driven by the king of the Watusis, background information about Corfu, verification of literary quotations), I would say the questions I get are the law firm equivalent (the firm's PACER password, status of Congressional bills, background information about potential expert witnesses, verification of court case quotations). But unlike Bunny and her team who rely on books and phone calls, nearly all of the questions I get are answered with the aid of a computer. Our print collection is the best option maybe 5-10% of the time, and I definitely use it, but the range and searchability of the information I can get off the

computer is truly astounding. At the end of *The Desk Set*, Bunny has a sudden appreciation for the power of the computer when a patron needs to know the weight of the earth. The 1950s computer "Emmarac" puts Google to shame in its querying capability. Bunny types in her question and the brainy computer shoots back its own question: "With or without the people?" (p. 76). Who knew computers were so proficient back then?

Office Environment

As far as the office environment of the 1950s research department versus mine today, two main features come to mind: the noise factor and the problems that arise when management fails to effectively communicate impending changes. First, there is the noise. Bunny has an office of her own, but her three researchers sit in close quarters in the network's reference library. Each has a desk and, even more importantly, a phone. The phones ring on a regular basis as patrons call in their research requests, and there is a constant stream of chatter between the phone calls, general socializing, and greeting visitors. Clearly these women had some kind of superhuman mental focus to be able to do actual work with all of the hubbub going on about them! My work environment is much quieter. I have my own office and the phone rarely rings. Most of my requests come in by e-mail, although once or twice a day someone will stop by in person. As I write this I have my earphones plugged in to my computer to follow the Senate vote on the most recent continuing resolution to fund the government. Besides C-SPAN the only sounds I hear are my own typing and someone making coffee around the corner.

Something that has not changed so much in half a century is the problems that can arise when management does not understand the importance of communicating change to staff. When the methods engineer/efficiency expert Richard Sumner invades the research department, no one tells the research department why he is there. Bunny is clever enough to figure that he is probably there to determine how to use a computer in the reference department, but whether the "electronic brain" is going to supplement or supplant the human brains is anyone's guess. Morale and productivity inevitably fall, and when pink

slips are accidentally generated for everyone in the building, no one assumes there has been an error. I think we have all been in the position of fearing (or at least not looking forward to) change and feeling that upper management is somehow keeping us in the dark. This universal resistance to the unknown makes *The Desk Set* still relevant to us today. Especially after the turmoil of the past few years in the legal world, we can identify with Bunny and her crew as they worry about losing their jobs in an uncertain economy.

I hope you will watch (or re-watch) *The Desk Set* and enjoy comparing and contrasting your own job with those of Bunny and her gang. I think it is still a great marketing tool for

recruiting reference librarians, illustrating both the fun and the challenge of being a researcher, while also showing some of the realities of the corporate work world. My feelings about life as a reference librarian can be expressed in Bunny's own words: "I realize that no one is indispensable, it's true, but they'd have to pry me loose from my job with a crowbar" (p. 30). **LLL**

¹ Obituary of William Marchant, *New York Times*, December 20, 1995.

² Sadel is renamed Sylvia in the movie version.

TECH TALK

Content Creation on the iPad

Roger V. Skalbeck, Associate Law Librarian for Electronic Resources & Services, Georgetown Law Library, rvs5@law.georgetown.edu

WWith the iPad, here is a conundrum you may have heard: it is good for content *consumption*, but not content *creation*. There's no physical keyboard and no general-purpose data port to load files (e.g. USB). Clearly, an iPad is not a laptop. To Steve Jobs, these are probably meaningless comments. As he noted in the iPad 2 event, we are living in a "post PC" world. All that is fine and good, but if you have or want an iPad, it is a fair question to ask: "Can I use it to create content?"

As information professionals, text dominates the content we create. Therefore, I am devoting this Tech Talk column to TEXT creation on an iPad. I look at any apps, opportunities, and frustrations that fit into 1,000 words or so. To fully appreciate the text creation process, I am writing the entire column on the iPad.

Presumably these comments are relevant to the iPad 2, which has few enhancements relevant to text creation (other than lighter weight). Also, the ideas may be relevant for other tablet users. I just don't have a Motorola Xoom, BlackBerry PlayBook or HP TouchPad. With the last two, I suspect you don't either.

Keyboard: Wireless vs. On-Screen

Writing even this short document on the iPad would be intolerable without a physical keyboard. In landscape mode, the iPad's on-screen keyboard works for decent "hunt and peck" entry. As an avid touch typist, drafting even a short email can be painful with the on-screen keyboard.

The only solution for efficient typing is to get a wireless keyboard. A good option is Apple's \$69 Bluetooth keyboard (which they redundantly describe as a "completely cable-free" wireless keyboard). It is reliable and works with just about any devices (including desktop PCs) that "speak" Bluetooth.

I have yet to see apps that provide keyboard shortcuts for common application tasks. When writing, you'll still have to touch the screen to "Send" an email, apply bold to text or increase display size. Though the iPad sort of lets you run two apps at once, do not even dream of a keyboard command like ALT-TAB to switch between a web page and a document.

continued on page 28

Document Creation

Let's look next at tools available for creating text-based documents, including built-in tools and purchased apps.

Browser and Built-In Apps

Native email and web-based mail on the iPad are reliable, but do not support rich text (e.g. bold, italics). For quick note taking, there is the Notes app (identical to the iPhone version), which is an attractive equivalent to Windows Notepad.

Someday you may not need apps to edit documents, if browser based tools get good enough. Google has made improvements to their Docs platform within the iPad's Safari browser, making it possible to edit documents and spreadsheets right in the browser. However, the experience is a bit buggy, with frequent delays between keystrokes and on-screen display. It works for making minor edits, but I won't yet write a 3-page memo this way.

Purchased Apps

There are many apps available for creating documents on the iPad, with three highlighted below. In considering an app for working with documents, consider three questions: 1) Do you want to create, edit or just view documents? 2) Are there specific features you must have? (e.g. Word output, document headings, structured lists) and perhaps most importantly: 3) Where will you store your files?

An app like Good Reader (<http://www.goodreader.net>) is perfect if you just want to browse documents and annotate PDF files. Apple's Pages and Documents to Go are pretty good for creating documents from scratch, and the latter especially is great for quickly editing documents in their native formats.

With file storage, it comes down to two choices: use Apple OR something else. In Apple's Pages, the main options are: iWork, iTunes and iDisk. It feels a bit like calling Country and Western different music genres. The other dominant option is to use a cloud-based service where apps let you store files with Google Docs or a service like DropBox (<http://www.ddropbox.com>). Apple's programs do not work with either of these storage solutions.

Apple's Pages

Pages (\$10) for the iPad is a simplified version of the same word processing program available in the Mac iWork suite.

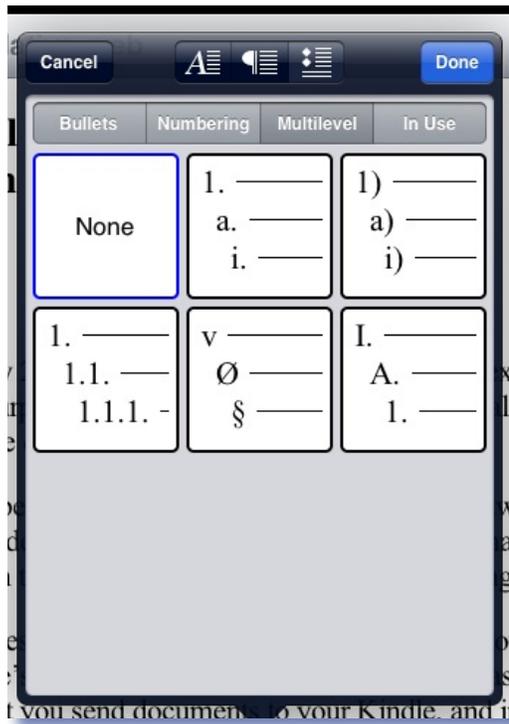
Apple built Pages to integrate with photo storage on the iPad, so you can insert pictures into documents directly from local photo albums. Also, they have nice charts, tables and simple illustrations. Built-in templates are good for good for recipes, flyers and party invitations.

Drawbacks include the lack of non-Apple file storage options and a limit on document formatting features. For example, you cannot create a bulleted list or documents with more than 2 levels of headers.



Apple's Pages program





Documents to Go program

Documents to Go

Documents to Go (\$10 basic; \$17 premium) has been available on a variety of mobile platforms for more than a decade. Now owned by BlackBerry's parent company, this is the leading tool for opening and editing native documents, especially Microsoft Office documents.

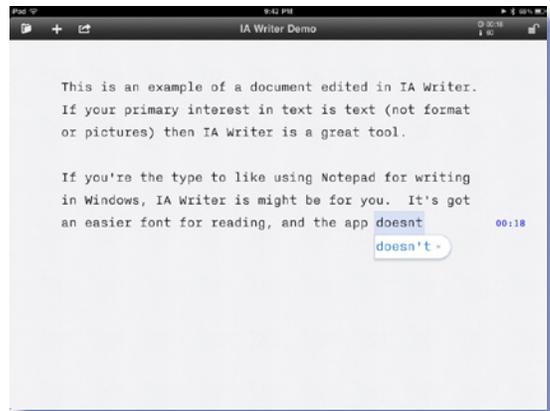
Documents to Go is much more suitable to professional documents you are likely to use in a law firm or library. You cannot insert pictures, and you cannot use named heading levels. However, it has many types of bulleted lists and outline types. In addition, it works well to edit documents in Word or Excel without breaking formats created elsewhere.

Documents to Go can synchronize documents with DropBox, Google Docs, Box.Net, iDisk and SugarSync.

IA Writer

IA Writer (<http://informationarchitects.jp/en/writer-for-ipad/>) is a completely different writing program than the others reviewed here. It is a highly simplified writing tool with nearly no text formatting features. It is perfect for people who write long text (novels, essays, diaries). This helps you avoid distractions and concentrate on your content.

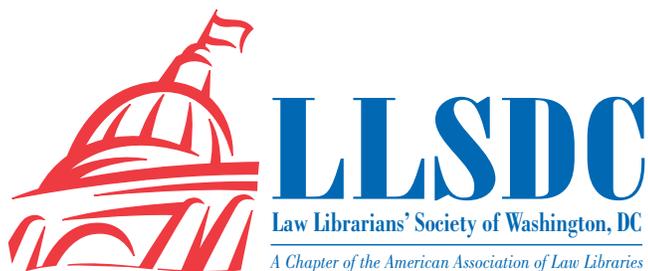
IA Writer synchronizes pure TXT files with DropBox, and lets you email and copy text.



IA Writer program

Closing Thoughts

At least on the iPad, we have a way to go before creating documents will be as simple and efficient as it is on a laptop. For users needing sophisticated editing control, apps have to add features. For those of us creating text documents, we need to adapt to new approaches to creation and collaboration. Integration of flexible online storage frees you from having access to a document only on your desktop computer. Learning how to think differently about tablet-based content creation lets you approach information problems in new ways. **LLL**



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