Public Relations

Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., Inc.

Law Library Lights

A Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries

VOLUME 51, #3 • SPRING 2008

Call Me Dr. Know, Because There's Nothing I Don't!

Encouraging a Perception of Omniscience as a Marketing Strategy

Andrew Martin, Law Librarian, Odin, Feldman & Pittleman, P.C.

In ten years as a reference librarian, I have been asked to find the number of sheep in Kyrgyzstan, discover who first said 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going,' and determine whether a corpse transported across state lines constitutes property for the purposes of interstate commerce. I use these examples when I do my orientation for new employees to illustrate that there is no question to which I cannot ferret out the answer.

This is, of course, a blatant and shameless lie.

It is a dirty little secret among Librarians that we do NOT, in fact, know everything. Sure, we know WHERE to find out how many fingers Ruprect the Mad had on his left hand or the eight ways to get on first base without getting a hit, but none of us actually have all this information floating around our recognizedly capacious cerebellums.

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One way I further this deception is by writing a column in our weekly firm newsletter entitled "From the Vat of Useless Knowledge." Each week I run a feature on a little known fact or tidbit of information that I think will entertain and inform. These seldom have any connection to legal issues or library resources. The very first VOUK feature was, "Why are manhole covers round?" Sometimes they are relevant to current events, such as when I clarified some issues around the final episode of *The Sopranos*. Similarly, in the last newsletter before Christmas I wrote up a feature on the origins of the modern image of Santa Claus, discussing the influences of Thomas Nast and the Coca Cola company.

At other times the "Vat of Useless Knowledge" regurgitates something that is merely of interest to me or readily at hand. Some examples include: "Why do we say "abracadabra," "hocus-pocus," and "presto" to indicate magic?," a write up of the Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919 and "Why do we say 'Read the Riot Act' to someone?"

I have a number of quick reference sources that can provide features if nothing topical leaps to mind in a given week. These include some sites that should be in heavy rotation in any Librarian's hit parade, such as:

- **Snopes**
  http://www.snopes.com
  The Urban Legend Reference Site is great for debunking notions that Barack Obama is funded by Hamas or that buying gas from Citgo supports Hugo Chavez.
- **The Straight Dope**
  http://www.thestraightdope.com
  The archives contain 30 years of answers to vitally important questions such as why pigeons bob their heads when they walk or whether the Great Wall of China is the only manmade object visible from space.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Spring Cleaning

Shannon O'Connell, Research Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly, LLP

Spring cleaning is a chance to dust things off and air things out, to put a new polish and shine on things. What a great time to revitalize the image of your library! Librarians work constantly to maintain a presence within their larger organization, whether that's a law firm, university or government agency. A vital image is essential for ensuring continued support (financial and otherwise) for the library. Focusing on public relations is one way to burnish the image of your library.

We all know that effective public relations is a vital tool for enhancing the user awareness of library services. What we sometimes overlook is the opportunity PR provides for improving or increasing those services. Public relations isn't just about advertising; it's about building relationships. Really getting to know our users

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Law Library Lights

Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, please contact **Shannon O'Connell** at **soconnell@wc.com**. For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at **www.llsdc.org**.

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Beginning with Vol. 50, #1 (Fall 2006), *Law Library Lights* is now published in PDF format on the LLSDC Web site: **www.llsdc.org**. Notification of availability of each new issue will be sent to the LLSDC listserv. If you would like to receive individual e-mail notification when new issues are published, please send an e-mail to **Shannon O'Connell** at **soconnell@wc.com**.

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and their needs allows us to respond to them more effectively. Not only can librarians tailor existing services, but we can discover service gaps and devise ways to fill them. PR is a chance to promote, refine and expand what the library has to offer.

So what does the library offer? The articles in this issue all stress that a library is less about books on a shelf and more about facilitating access to knowledge. Ensuring effective and efficient information flow is a primary concern for all librarians. This issue's authors provide a variety of dynamic strategies for developing the relationship between library staff and users. Establishing responsive relationships with users enables librarians to provide the highest level of service possible. Good service is rooted in strong relationships, making public relations an essential part of any librarian's work. I hope this issue of Lights inspires you to reach out to your library's users, both as a means of promotion and exchange. **LLL**

Call Me Dr. Know *continued from page 1*

- **The Word Detective**
  http://www.word-detective.com/
  If I am really hurting for something interesting, I can always throw in a nice etymology. It also helps to disabuse people the notion that the word 'posh' comes from the acronym "Port Out, Starboard Home."

A "Did You Know?" feature will put evidence of your vast and all-encompassing knowledge in front of everyone in the firm, including those who are not habitual users of the Library. You are building the Library brand as omniscient and all-seeing. At our firm, this strategy of "push omniscience" has led to many attorneys who previously never used the Library or the Librarian for reference services coming to us with questions.

If you are not writing the company newsletter yourself, contact whomever is in charge of putting it together. Usually these poor, harried individuals are desperate for material and will break down sobbing with gratitude if you offer them a regular feature.

If your firm does not already have a newsletter of some sort, suggest one to your office manager. If done properly, they are an invaluable medium for dissemination of valuable information.

There are downsides to encouraging this reputation of all-encompassing knowledge, of course. For one thing, you will have to put your money where your mouth is. But I trust that your reference kung fu is strong enough to back up your braggadocio.

The other drawback is that everyone will insist on being on your team when you play Trivial Pursuit. But if you have read this far without losing interest, there is a strong chance that this is already the case.

For illustrative purposes, I have included an example of my feature:

From the Vat of Useless Knowledge—Why do we drop a ball at midnight to mark the New Year?

Sailors have been able to determine their latitude, or north-south location, since ancient times using simple observations of the sun or north star. But they were unable to calculate their longitude, or east-west location, and kept getting lost at sea and suffering unfortunate experiences such as dying of scurvy. In the 16th century the great powers of Europe raced to find a reliable way to calculate longitude at sea, which would open up navigation routes to the riches of Asia and the newly discovered Americas. The Crown of England offered a prize of 20,000 pounds to anyone who could solve this problem.

The eventual fix was a simple one experienced by everyone who has adjusted their watch when moving from Eastern to Central time. If you know the exact time at a fixed location, such as the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, and watch to see precisely when the sun rises or is directly overhead, you can figure out exactly how far east or west you are of that point. The trick was figuring out a way to know the exact time at that fixed point. The best clocks of the day used pendulums, which on a rocking boat became increasingly inaccurate. Every second you were off could mean errors of hundreds of miles in the calculation of your location. Many loony ideas were tried. If you're bored, swing by at some point and I'll tell you the story of the "Powder of Sympathy."

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Abigail Ross

Welcome, Spring!

Abigail Ross, Library Manager, Keller and Heckman LLP

Finally, warm weather and cherry blossoms! (Not necessarily in that order…)

With Spring comes a renewed energy in libraries. We celebrate our patrons and ourselves with National Library Week, launching new promotional campaigns and finding creative ways to market our services. Our theme this issue is public relations—we share tips and strategies for staying connected and current, and for promoting use of your library, your staff, and all the services and resources you offer. This is a subject near and dear to my heart. I love my profession so much that I am eager to share it with others (sometimes a little too eager). Good PR starts with the individual—being helpful and courteous goes a long way to showing what your library can do. But it's not enough—and our articles this issue will give you some suggestions on where to go next.

Administrative Matters

By the time you read this our Joint LLSDC/SEAALL Conference will be over and done and—I have no doubt it was a great success! A special thank you to Billie Jo Kaufman, Rhea Ballard-Thrower, and Mike Petit for organizing all the little details. Thanks also for all the hard work of the LLSDC/SEAALL Joint Conference Hospitality Committee: Matt Braun; Ari Grebstein; Robert Bratton.

We are very excited to announce that our annual Sandy Peterson Lecture speaker will be Jeffrey Rosen, author of *The Supreme Court: The Personalities and Rivalries that Defined America.* Mr. Rosen will be speaking on the evening of Thursday, May 1, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Location TBA—watch the LLSDC listserv for details.

The Closing Banquet will be held Monday, June 2, at R.F.D. Washington, in Chinatown. Please join us for tasty food, drinks, and the official "Passing of the Gavel."

Call Me Dr. Know *continued from page 3*

Eventually a man named John Harrison created a marine chronometer that could keep incredibly accurate time at sea. He spent his life perfecting it, and it took decades for him to collect the prize. It wasn't until Captain Cook returned from his first voyage and reported that the chronometer had functioned faithfully that he was finally recognized.

The Royal Observatory at Greenwich is on a hill on the south bank of the Thames across from London. They installed a tall mast atop the hill, with a large sphere at the top. Every day precisely at noon they would drop the ball down the mast, and the moment it hit the bottom every ship in the Thames would reset their clock to noon exactly, ensuring that they had the correct time and would be able to navigate successfully. This is also why we measure standard time as "Greenwich Mean Time." **LLL**

EYE ON SERIALS

Susan Chinoransky, Head of Serials & Processing, The George Washington University, Jacob Burns Law Library

New Periodical Titles

Charleston Law Review, 2006–
Three no. a year, Charleston School of Law

Journal of Business & Securities Law, 2005–
Annual, Journal of Business and Securities Law

South Carolina Journal of International Law and Business, 2006–
Annual, University of South Carolina School of Law

UC Davis Business Law Journal, 2006–
Semiannual, University of California, Davis

Title Changes

Asian American Law Journal, 2006–
Annual, Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley
Continues: *Asian Law Journal*

University of Louisville Law Review, 2007–
Quarterly, Louis D. Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville
Continues: *Brandeis Law Journal*

University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law, 2007–
Quarterly, University of Pennsylvania Law School
Continues: *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Economic Law* **LLL**

You Mean You Still Have a Library?

Scott Wales, Librarian, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP

In a world of shrinking spaces for print collections, and no work space for attorneys to spread out one might ask, "Can a library exist if people don't know it exists?" The law firm library as a place filled with reporters, form books, and legal encyclopedias is a thing of the past. Today, what we are really marketing is the people who make up the library.

Attorneys already know about Lexis and Westlaw. They know about the resources for legal information. What they may not know is that the library can provide background information on individuals and businesses. The library can provide materials that are scientific or technical. The library can provide historical documents that pre-date what is available online.

There are two types of advertising a library can use to let people know that it not only exists, but can be a vital, cost-saving resource for the firm's attorneys. One type is passive advertising. At Sheppard Mullin there are links from our firm's Intranet to several research guides put together by the library. There is also biographical information stating the years of experience and expertise the library staff has. Both are examples of passive advertising.

Active advertising is the other option for promoting the library. No one will know what you can do unless you tell them. The best time engage in such active advertising is when new people arrive and have their orientations. Learning the practice needs of laterals before they arrive and tailoring your orientation to them is a great promotion. Right before a CLE or Lexis presentation is a great time to highlight related resources and services. How about an occasional email to the different practice groups? Or even stopping to say hello and doing a "by the way" mention?

How many people at your firm have to write a self-evaluation? That is also an opportune time to let people know what it is that you can do. Do you go over your Lexis or Westlaw bills and notice someone who seems to be spending money unproductively? How about a gentle nudging along the lines of "I notice you've been searching a lot lately, is there anything I can help?"

We all monitor a variety of sources, I'm sure. Court websites, news services and business filing web pages are among the many sources I scan during "down" time. Learn your firm and tailor-make news dissemination. The effort could prove invaluable. **LLL**

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Amy Taylor, Reference Librarian, Georgetown University Law Library

Congratulations

Eileen McCarrier is now the Library Manager for the Northern Virginia office of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. She was formerly the Reference Librarian and replaces Patsy Haley Stann, who retired from the firm at the end of 2007.

Jennie Meade, Curator of Special Collections at the Jacob Burns Law Library of The George Washington University, presented a paper on February 21, 2008, at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences annual meeting in Washington, D.C., entitled *"Strangulatus Pro Republica: How the Assassination of President James Garfield Resulted in Innovations in Medicine, Technology and Law."* **LLL**

A Tune-up for Your Library's Learning Plan

June Stafford, Library Research Specialist, McDermott Will & Emery

Most law library professional development is made of four parts: educational programs offered by vendors, attendance at professional association programs, networking with other professionals, in-house programs as needed, and web based training.

It's a given that law libraries face constant changes in technology and electronic sources. Keeping up with the changes and enhancements can be difficult for a busy library. A good way to address this problem is to have a learning plan for both the library and individual staff members. The notion of training is not new to law librarians but it helps us to reflect on all professional development opportunities by building a learning plan.

Laying the Groundwork

The library must have a culture of learning that is planted in the library's policies and procedures, performance evaluation process, and organizational goals. For example, the Library's collection policy statement and the Library's mission statement could contain language indicating that learning is an ongoing activity. Agreement by management and library staff to a plan of on-going learning and participation in professional development activities sets the path for learning.

Most law firms have a performance appraisal system in place. The law librarian can then pique the interest of staff in continuing professional development. Studies have shown that supervisors play a significant role in an employee's interest in continuing education. In collaboration, the library manager and staff can devise individual learning goals that help earn recognition and create evaluation tools used in determining staff promotions and raises.

Building the Learning Plan

Most law library professional development is made up of four parts: educational programs offered by vendors, attendance at professional association programs, networking with other professionals, in-house programs as needed, and web based training. Various programs and classes offered by outside vendors are usually too expensive for the law library. The practical goal is to enable and encourage staff to keep abreast of new products, sources, standards, and changes in the profession. The learning plan helps to focus on the doable.

Assessment and evaluation are important to identify the library's and staff training needs. By understanding the needs of library users, the law library manager can evaluate staff training needs in relation to meeting the needs of the user. We all know that in the law library setting, users want information very fast. Law library users are described as "highly educated, intelligent… Their expectations and demands are high; these are not people who will be satisfied with partial or incorrect answers." (Panella, Deborah S. *Basics of Law Librarianship.* New York: The Haworth Press, 1991, p. 10) Thus, law library staff must be conversant in sources and be able to find things quickly. Training is needed for the acquisitions function as well as the reference staff. Because of product changes, the acquisitions librarian must address many licensing and pricing issues.

The competition between online source providers such as Lexis and Westlaw is fierce. Each company is constantly changing requiring diligence in keeping up with the new changes and the consequences and impact of those changes. The training provided by library rela-tions representatives is a boon to libraries in that it is in-house training at no cost. Content and delivery is excellent since the library representatives have a job responsibility to keep up with changes.

Attendance at professional associations is an important way to learn new skills and changes in technology and standards. Participation in LLSDC is a great way to learn and network with other librarians. By signing up for the ListServ, librarians stay on top of events and happenings. The Special Interest Sections (SIS) provide valuable lunch-time training on pertinent topics. The American Association of Law Libraries and the Special Libraries Association sponsor annual meetings with seminars, lectures, and workshops. An important part of these conferences is the exhibit hall. Vendors

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If the law library staff is able to adjust to change in technology and standards, then they can provide proactive service for library patrons. Continuing education is the key. Build your library's learning plan today.

A Tune-up for Your Library's Learning Plan *continued from page 7*

and librarians have the opportunity to interact while librarians can see new products and changes to existing products. Often this is the place for a law librarian to comparison shop by viewing similar products in the same setting.

In-house programs developed specifically for a need of the law library can be very beneficial in building skills and improving knowledge base. For example, outside presenters could focus on a single topic that addresses a need indicated by patrons. Another way of learning is exchanging information in a peer-to-peer format while discussing interesting questions, new sources, or different ways of searching.

There are many vendors that provide internet-based training programs that could be used. For example, both Lexis and Westlaw offer webinars. Professional associations such as the American Association of Law Libraries offer online programs. With a little research, other sources of web programs can be located at university library science programs. A good example is the Le@d web programs offered by the School of Library Science at the University of North Texas. These are cheap ($20) self-paced programs for libraries. An example of an interesting topic is Info-Age Etiquette.

Each new request is an opportunity for learning. When a patron asks for information, the library staff person researches and then provides the answer. Many times these questions are in reality the library staff learning from the patron. In learning by doing, the library staff person learns a new way of researching or a new source.

In her article entitled, *Libraries, Leadership, and the Future, Phyllis Spies* made this comment about the importance of people and training: (Spies, Phyllis B., "Libraries, leadership, and the future," *Library Management,* 21(3), April 2000, 123-127).

"The library of the future needs a vision, technology, services, but most of all it needs the creativity of people. And people working in libraries should be given opportunities to learn. And I do not mean that people must be "trained." Training in the traditional sense is worthless. People must be afforded opportunities to learn new skills they can use at work or after hours to benefit their careers or their lives."

Ms. Spies point is significant because money and time spent on continuing professional development must help library staff gain something. If the law library staff is able to adjust to change in technology and standards, then they can provide proactive service for library patrons. Continuing education is the key. Build your library's learning plan today.

The Law Library Learning Plan

1. Ensure that policy statements include support for learning.

2. Include professional development activities in performance evaluation criteria.

3. Hold quarterly in-house lunchtime sessions sponsored by vendors.

4. Encourage staff to attend professional organization events. Coordinate with firm for budgeting and travel time.

5. Coordinate a session with the firm's computer department.

6. Hold peer-review sessions, perhaps during staff meetings, to exchange methods, new discoveries, or other interesting facets.

7. Monitor professional association periodicals for updates on technology issues and changes in standards. **LLL**

How to be the Headline in Your Firm: Developing a Current Awareness Tool to Market the Library

Charlotte Osborn-Bensaada, Legislative Services Librarian, Thompson Coburn LLP

Skim the industry press about law libraries and you don't come across the article asking "What do I do with all the extra space they just gave me?" Instead more articles are reflecting the winter 2008 issue of *Law Library Lights* which described how librarians are loosing physical space and utilizing more virtual resources. The loss of physical space is accompanied by decreased traffic and lower utilization of physical research tools such as books. These changing patterns are a new opportunity to reach out to all our patrons through new virtual processes. The loss of physical space does not need to be a loss of prestige within your firm; instead it is an opportunity to claim virtual space on the desktop and Blackberry.

The Thompson Coburn Library staff developed industry- and company-specific current awareness headlines as a proactive opportunity for daily contact with our attorneys. Headlines connect the Library to important stake-holders including members of our management committee, targeted practice groups, and top-level administrators. Headlines bring the Library into contact with attorneys who would never have walked into the Library.

Presently, the Thompson Coburn Library staff of ten people survey over 50 sources to provide approximately 40 headlines covering industries such as transportation, government contracts and companies that are significant firm clients. Each person spends an average of an hour a day reviewing resources and publishing their categories. A headline for our firm is a current awareness summary that may be sent via email, daily, weekly, or on an ad hoc basis. The email contains current awareness from news, industry and government sources and is formatted with a specific protocol developed by the Library. Each headline contains a label marketing it as a service from the Library.

Evolving from a request by a group of attorneys in a branch office to a firm-wide email service required a commitment of time, multiple brainstorming sessions, trial and error, and collaboration with other departments in the firm including our Information Systems and Client Relations departments. We consulted with our Client Relations department about design and for advice on prioritizing the headlines to the firm's goals. We worked with our Information Systems department to develop a database to enhance our publishing capacity and how to engage emerging technologies such as RSS feeds. We spoke with our firm's Intellectual Property practice to ensure we were meeting appropriate standards of copyright law. Moreover, as a Library team we had to teach each other our specialized knowledge and continually collaborate on the dynamic needs of the headlines.

The Beginnings

The headlines at Thompson Coburn resulted from attorneys seeking a method for sharing news, industry events, and government actions with their colleagues in an easily digestible format. In 2004, several attorneys in the Washington, D.C. office requested that the library identify a service for press clippings on industry and company topics of interest to the practice group. We examined several possibilities including outsourcing the process and the value of producing the service in house. There were multiple models available at that time including automated services offered by West & Lexis, free sources such as Google alerts, and email alerts that other law firm librarians were developing. To determine which route to follow we contacted other librarians producing similar services, tested commercial services, and evaluated how much library time should be directed towards this endeavor. Ultimately, we concluded that the Library could produce the most tailored product at the lowest cost.

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A headline for our firm is a current awareness summary that may be sent via email, daily, weekly, or on an ad hoc basis. The email contains current awareness from news, industry and government sources and is formatted with a sepcific protocol developed by the Library.

Headlines can take a lot of time, and a relationship with the attorneys and Client Relations staff is crucial for ensuring the continued value of a particular headline. Given the time and staff commitment that headlines require, establishing evaluation procedures is essential.

How to be the Headline in Your Firm

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The Audience

The first headline was targeted towards the attorneys who had requested the service. To better understand their needs we did a brief interview and survey to discuss their practice and clients. The survey included both partners and associates. In subsequent surveys, we discovered that our associates in particular utilized the headlines. It gave them background when they were pulled into new projects and allowed them to proactively address emerging issues of interest to our clients directly with the partners. Other headlines emerged from client development research performed by the Library. Rather than performing certain types of prospecting episodically we were able to use the headlines to identify potential clients and build contact information on a continuing basis. The Library, in conjunction with Client Relations, targeted companies of interest for the firm. Partnering with the Client Relations team enabled the Library to support the firm's business goals and provided an opportunity for a Library product to be delivered to firm rainmakers and emerging leaders.

Headlines also provide an opportunity for servicing smaller branch offices and cross practice teams. Numerous electronic services now allow one to track news and court cases. Smaller branch offices, especially those that are not serviced directly by a full time librarian, benefit by receiving content suitable to their needs on a regular basis. This reflects the Library's commitment to serving the whole firm. Large clients represent another focus opportunity. They have multiple needs across practice areas. Headlines that reflect a cross practice orientation enable the Library to leverage the information they collect to enhance attorney cross-selling opportunities.

Headlines can take a lot of time, and a relationship with the attorneys and Client Relations staff is crucial for ensuring the continued value of a particular headline. Given the time and staff commitment that headlines require, establishing evaluation procedures is essential. Methods of appraising a headline include periodically sending a questionnaire to the attorney simply asking question like "Do you still want this headline?"; embedding an option to unsubscribe within the email; using turning points such as settlements or new matters to evaluate the continued value of the headline; and using the read feature on email in Outlook to confirm that it is even being read. Beyond just asking if they want to continue receiving the headline, it is important to ask recipients to tell you when and how they use the information. Knowing how attorneys use the headlines not only shapes their content, but enables the Library to have a tangible narrative about the value of the service. Developing a strategy for evaluation will save library resources and make your product more useful.

Content

A key decision when providing content, is where to get it? Westlaw and Lexis both provide simple news tracking devices and more complex systems for current news that will be sent directly to subscribers. These include Lexis Publisher and Westlaw Watch. The challenges of these systems is that they are beholden to their licensing agreements which can affect the timeliness and completeness of material. They are also mostly self-contained services, limiting additional content from free but important sources such as government Web sites. Similarly, despite many developments in smart searching and indexing, neither of these services at the time we tested them were able to eliminate a substantial number of mis-hits. For example, they could not distinguish between ship as a verb and ship as a noun. These sources were most successful for a limited number of sources and a specific issue such as a company name or major lawsuit.

Likewise, other vendors are trying to cash into industry news and content. Companies such as Knowledge Mosaic are trying to provide content for the securities, energy and communications industry by providing daily SEC regulations and news, and emerging sources such as blogs. This technology is constantly evolving and requires re-evaluation every year. Conference exhibit halls such as those at SLA and AALL are excellent sources of current information on these products.

The proliferation of digital news sources has been one of the great boons for librarians. Of particular value are newspaper and government Web sites, and industry aggregators. One no longer has to wait for the newspaper to come in the mail; now even small locales have a digital presence. The question is how to harness all this content.

The emerging push technologies of Web 2.0 enable the Library to exploit a wide range of material. While many sites, in particular government Web sites provide email alerts, the rapid growth of RSS feeds has enhanced the ability of the library staff to quickly review and assemble material. Some examples of useful RSS feeds include:

- *Washington Post* and most major papers
- Regulations.gov for tracking comments on proposed rules
- *Federal Register* public inspection Web site
- Industry blogs such as the D&O Diary http://www.dandodiary.com
- Google Alerts and Yahoo Industry news can now be converted to RSS

News alerts developed by industry sources for print periodicals are a rich source of industry news. Utilizing these alerts and electronic sources enables the Library to extract more value from firm licensed electronic content. One caveat for these sources is that their licensing agreements may constrain your awareness tool from being sent outside the firm or to a broader audience within the firm.

Administrative Considerations

One of the important decisions for creating a Library-produced current awareness tool is how to staff the effort. Issues of consideration are: staff preferences for being a specialist or a generalist, how much open time your staff has, and how to keep all staff aware of changes. Other challenges include how to back up searching and publishing duties for vacations, conferences, sick days etc.; how to balance this type of typically non-billable work against billable immediate needs; and how to evaluate if this is the most appropriate use of library resources. These are not insurmountable problems but are part of the planning process.

Future Opportunities

Currently the Thompson Coburn headlines are delivered via email, but new technologies may provide other delivery methods. In particular, RSS looks to be both a powerful delivery mechanism and a method of gathering data. Browsers such as Internet Explorer 7.0 and Firefox now are incorporating RSS readers. Bloglines and Google provide free readers for the individual. Services like Newsgator provide enterprise-wide systems. Future developments will need to look at using the firm intranet and other collaborative spaces to deliver content. Because the headlines are using emerging technologies, the Library provides the opportunity to test technology within the firm, further enhancing the Libraries' reputation.

The Thompson Coburn Library started the headlines in 2004 and now, nearly four years later, they represent a popular and valued Library product. The headlines contribute to the firm's business goals, enhance the Library knowledge base, and provide the opportunity to work collaboratively between offices. The Library is not dependent on a prestige physical space to represent its value; instead the headlines provide an opportunity to reach out to our clients throughout the firm. LLL

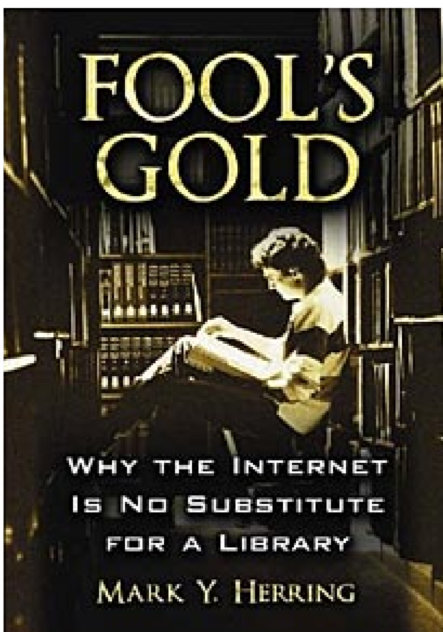
BOOK REVIEW

Karen Silber, Legal Reference Librarian, Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.

Fool's Gold: Why the Internet is No Substitute for a Library, by Mark Y. Herring; McFarland & Company, 2007, 191 pages, $45 (paperback).

Raise your hand if your existence in the library world has been called into question because of the Internet. Perhaps you have heard grumblings along the lines of, "Why do we need books when we have the Internet?" And, indeed, our libraries have been downsized and relocated to less prestigious settings often due to such grumblings.

Mark Herring, however, offers multiple reasons why the Internet should not be viewed as a replacement for libraries and library services. In Fool's Gold, Herring explains why the Internet is not equipped to carry out the work of a "real brick and mortar" library.



Herring begins with an overview of the bleak future of libraries if current attitudes regarding the Internet continue. He backs up his assertions with statistics showing that school age children in the United States are spending less time reading now than in the past, and that literacy rates continue to drop throughout the country. Herring also writes in depth about the types of information available on the Internet, highlighting the distinction between real information, random data, disinformation, and misinformation. He explains how the Internet presents "so-called" information; noting that one can obtain hundreds or thousands of hits in mere seconds only to sift through the results to find little to no real information. Herring also points out, as we librarians know, that not "everything" is on the web; and that what is there is not fully retrieved by search engines nor is it always indexed.

In his chapter on link rot and broken links, Herring notes that the duration of most links on the Internet is somewhere between eighteen and 36 months; meaning that some websites will effectively represent parts of an information superhighway that leads nowhere. While he acknowledges that proprietary databases do not have link rot per se, he suggests that the preservation of print materials in the online context does raise some important concerns: namely whether such preservation includes, for instance, the presentation and searchability of ads and pictures in a newspaper article, not just the text of the article.

Herring is also skeptical of e-books, warning that if we are to transfer printed matter to a new medium and possibly discard originals, we must then ensure that we will have consistent and lasting access to the matter within the new medium. After all, who can forget the eight-track cassette player or microfilm?

The book is 166 pages, not including the chapter notes. Overall, Herring made some good points, but I could have done without an entire chapter on Internet pornography.

I actually gave thought to his discussion on the literacy rate in the U.S. when I watched a story on the evening news on the same subject. One interviewee who had learned how to read was displayed amongst the backdrop of a public library. I was disappointed that nothing was mentioned in the story as to the role the library may have played in this learning experience. Libraries collect and arrange knowledge; they have for years. We librarians are meticulous in what we collect, and rightly so. Herring points out that libraries are, despite what some may believe, flexible in response to publishing and technological advances. Ultimately, he contrasts the stature of libraries to that of the Internet, calling the latter, among other things, "the flotsam and jetsam of what anyone wants to share even if what they want to share is faulty, wrong, wrong-headed, hateful, spiteful, racist and so on." A swamp of facts, he offers, is simply not the same as being surrounded by carefully organized information. **LLL**

Table Day at Georgetown Law

Catherine M. Dunn, Reference Librarian, Georgetown Law Library

In a new public relations effort designed to target upper class level students, the Georgetown Law Library recently began holding "table days" at the Georgetown Law Center campus. This article discusses what table day is, the origin of the decision to participate in table day, descriptions of the two table days conducted during the 2007-08 school year, and the lessons learned by the librarians at the Georgetown Law Library.

What is Table Day?

A large common area sits in the middle of the first floor of the main classroom building at the Georgetown Law Center, near both the exit to the cafeteria and the student lockers. The common area contains a series of wooden tables sitting along one of its walls with one or two chairs placed behind each table. Law Center approved groups can reserve one or more of these tables to promote themselves or their activities in the heavy traffic area. Most of the time, the tables are reserved by student organizations or student representatives of outside vendors, such as BarBri, Lexis, and Westlaw, but the Georgetown Law Library decided to participate in two table days, one per semester, during the 2007-08 school year.

Why Participate in Table Day?

Each year, the Georgetown Law Library sets specific objectives for the next year based upon goals set forth in a five-year strategic plan. The Georgetown Law Library decided to participate in a table day this year in order to help meet the 2007-08 objective of working to "expand and improve library services to upper class students." This objective was designed to help meet the greater strategic planning goal of working to "deliver library services seamlessly, integrating the two library locations and multiple information formats within the Law Center curriculum and community."

The Georgetown Law Center campus, located on Capitol Hill apart from the main Georgetown campus, consists of three separate buildings: a primary classroom and administration building; a building which houses the Williams Law Library; and an international building which includes the Wolff International and Comparative Law Library. While these buildings sit adjacent to each other, one must walk outside to move between them, and the main classroom building sits directly between the two buildings housing the law libraries.

As a result of these structural issues, the law libraries must devote constant energy to coordinating their efforts to provide the best possible service to the faculty and students at the Georgetown Law Center. These efforts include public relations efforts to make the full student body aware of the breadth of materials and services available through the Georgetown Law Library. First year students must use the libraries and their resources in the context of their legal research and writing courses, but upper class level students can be more difficult to reach because many do not need to enter either of the law library buildings in order to attend their classes. As such, the Georgetown Law Library decided to participate in table day on the first floor of the main classroom building in order to increase its visibility to these upper class level students by highlighting the resources and services the law libraries provide to assist them in this more advanced stage of their legal education.

First Table Day: Fall Term 2007

The Georgetown Law Library scheduled its first table day appearance for Halloween, which fell on the last Wednesday in October. In preparation, the librarians in the public services department pulled together a series of existing library handouts designed to appeal to upper class level students, including a menu of available services for students in seminars, the law library's seminar paper research guide, an example print version of the online form for requesting a research consultation, and a library location guide. We secured a laptop to use in demonstrating resources and for students to use if they wished to request research consultations on the spot. Finally, in an effort to draw attention to the table and induce students to approach it, we brought ballpoint pens bearing the Georgetown Law Library logo and a basket filled with candy to distribute to the students.

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Table Day at Georgetown Law

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When table day arrived, one of the librarians scheduled to set up and staff the first two hours of the law library display noticed immediately that all of the other groups participating in table day had large signs and banners in conjunction with their displays. After noticing this, she went back to her office and printed off a couple of pages with "Library" in big letters to use as signs behind the display. She also grabbed some books from a display of library materials she had previously put together on the Salem Witchcraft Trials and put them up as part of the library's table day display to make it more visually appealing.

For the entire day, including early evening hours, one or two librarians from the Williams and Wolff libraries staffed the law library's table day display. The overall foot traffic through the area was considerably less than originally expected, but students did approach the display throughout the day, especially to take the free candy and pens. Some students voiced confusion about why the library was having a table day among the student groups and then seemed less than satisfied by the response. Also, numerous first year students seemed to lose interest in the display once they realized that much of the focus was on resources for seminar papers for upper class students. Of the upper class level students who visited the display, none of them ended up using the laptop to schedule a research consultation or for a demonstration of a research resource.

Sara Sampson, Head of Reference, staffs the Georgetown Law Library's table

Second Table Day: Spring Term 2008

During discussions after the first table day, the librarians at the Georgetown Law Library agreed that, although the visibility aspect had been good, certain adjustments needed to be made for the second table day, which was scheduled for the last Tuesday in January. From a purely aesthetic point of view, we decided to pursue larger and more sophisticated signs, comparable to those used by other table day participants, and to try to reserve the much-coveted "Table 1," which was the first table students reached upon entering the common area. In addition, we decided to schedule the next table day on a Tuesday, rather than a Wednesday, in order to reach more students. The weekly faculty meeting at the Georgetown Law Center takes place on Wednesday afternoons, so no classes are held at that time. In scheduling the first table day, we believed there might be more available law students simply milling about with no immediate class constraints during that time. Instead, it turned out that there were simply far fewer students in the common area throughout the entire day that Wednesday than during the other days of the week.

In addition to these changes regarding scheduling, table placement, and the sophistication of the display, we decided to make a more substantive change for the second table day. Specifically, we decided to establish a more well-defined and widely applicable theme than seminar paper assistance for upper class level students. Although we began participating in table day to target upper class level students, we determined that a broader theme applicable across all class years would allow us to provide better outreach to all students. Then, after individual students approached the table, the librarians staffing the table could tailor their discussions toward the particular student's needs, including the unique needs of upper class level students.

We decided to use the broad theme "things you do not expect to see in the law library" for the second table day. The highlight of the display was a set of books and magazines from the Georgetown Law Library's popular reading collection, as well as popular videos and DVDs from the media center area. Like the last table day, the display still contained piles of handouts detailing available library services, but the primary focus of the table was the display of books, magazines and DVDs. We also continued to provide the same free candy and ballpoint pens that were so popular at the first table day.

The second table day was a much greater success than the first table day. Many more students were passing through the common area, and a greater number of them stopped to look at the display and ask questions. As we anticipated, several of the students were surprised to learn that the law library even had a popular reading or DVD collection. Also, as we hoped, many of the students who initially stopped to inquire about the display or take some candy or pens ended up taking copies of the same types of more substantive library handouts provided during the first table day, which were piled on the tables around the display.

Despite the success of the second table day, however, there are still opportunities for improvement for future table days. For example, despite efforts to sign up for "Table 1" for the second table day, there was some confusion and we ended up using an alternate table. Also, we are hoping to design and order a more sophisticated banner for the Georgetown Law Library to use at future table days and other events outside the library buildings. Finally, we have not yet kept any statistics on how many students came up to the table and which types of questions were asked the most, but we are now working to design a means of documenting this information during future table days.

Lessons Learned

Overall, the Georgetown Law Library's experiment with participating in table day went well. In a school with such a large student population, staying visible to as many students as possible is vital to the success of our efforts to provide the highest level of service to our users. However, such projects need not be limited to large academic institutions. Rather, institutions of any size and focus can benefit from a similar public relations project that tries to reach potential users in settings more familiar to them. For anyone who wishes to undertake similar public relations projects, here are some of the key lessons learned by the Georgetown Law Library you should keep in mind:

- Schedule and choose your location wisely. Try to choose a day, time, and location where you will achieve as much visibility as possible. If the "perfect location" is in a low foot traffic area, for example, choose another location.

- Establish a clear purpose/create a theme. Do not assume your users will intuitively understand the purpose of your effort. Instead, consider creating a theme focused around an underused resource or service so you can promote the resource or service and the library at the same time.

- Create a professional looking display. Use sophisticated signs or other types of visual aids to draw attention to the display and to enhance credibility. You may want to bring a laptop and/or other equipment as well if you believe they will be of interest to your users.

- Never underestimate the power of pens and chocolate. Distributing sweet treats and other small tokens will draw a broader audience to the table, which is essential to the success of such an event, so consider handing out treats or other small promotional items as part of your display.

- Provide substantive materials. Even if you choose a lighthearted theme and hand out candy and the like to help generate interest, be sure to include substantive materials, such as handouts, as part of your display so you can provide this information to potential users after they approach your display.

- Staff the table in manageable shifts. Consider your own staffing ability before deciding when and how long to staff the table. We limited each shift to two hours or less and staffed librarians in pairs so they would remain invested in and enthused about their table day duties during the full duration of their shifts.

- Keep detailed notes. Even if you believe you will remember, be sure to take detailed notes on what worked well and not so well, and then keep them in an accessible place for easy reference and use for future events. The notes we took on the first table day experience were essential to our ability to hold a much more successful table day a few months later. **LLL**

In a school with such a large student population, staying visible to as many students as possible is vital to the success of our efforts to provide the highest level of service to our users.

Roger Skalbeck, Associate Law Librarian for Electronic Resources & Services, Georgetown University Law Library

Two RIAs that are A-OK: AIR and Silverlight

Back in 2002, Macromedia (now owned by Adobe) came up with the concept of the Rich Internet Application (or RIA), a term used to describe a way to combine the functionality and speed of desktop applications with the speed of Internet-delivered data. The richness comes from the ability to process data locally and use functionality from the client computer. The "Internet application" part means that these tools get information (videos, audio, database content, etc.) from the Internet.

In a Gartner Research report from 2005, three analysts predicted that "Gartner does not expect full mainstream maturity and adoption [of rich internet applications] before 2008."[1] Now here we are in early 2008 and Microsoft and Adobe are trying to achieve just that: mainstream maturity and adoption of RIAs. Microsoft just launched Silverlight; and Adobe's AIR application just finished beta testing.

Conceptually, both AIR and Silverlight are installed just like any other plug-in or add-on application, such as the Adobe Acrobat Reader. In actuality, they are meant to do much more than just let you read documents in a different file format. To understand the current potential of the RIA concept a bit more, let's take a brief look at what AIR and Silverlight are all about.

Adobe AIR: Concept and Requirements

This is a free application you download from the Adobe website (www.adobe.com/products/air/). On its own it doesn't do anything, so it's essentially an empty container for your computer. You install this container once, and then you download individual applications to run within it. At its heart, AIR is meant to deliver desktop applications to run independently of the Internet browser. Currently, AIR works on Windows and Mac platforms, with a Linux version coming soon.

Adobe's selling point for people developing AIR applications is the lack of any need for new skills-separate applications for different operating systems. Typical applications are written in Flash, Flex (an open source development language owned by Adobe), or with other standard web technologies. For users, the selling point is that this is a unique standalone desktop application that delivers information from the Internet, without requiring a complicated installation process.

AIR includes a database engine called SQLite, which is small and integrated with the AIR framework. By having the database capabilities directly in an application, users can interact with data locally without the need to interact with a remote database system through a web browser.

Example Applications

At this point in time, there are very few applications out for AIR. As an indicator of the emerging status of this application, somebody recently posted to their blog a review entitled "8 Adobe AIR Applications that DON'T Suck" (http://tinyurl.com/3y3kb9). I don't think the rest of the applications suck, but development is still at an early stage. The following are two applications that Lights readers might find useful.

Google Analytics Reporting (beta 2)

If you run a website, one easy way to track traffic to your site is to use Google Analytics. With a single JavaScript file on your pages, Google gives you great traffic analysis for your site. The Analytics Reporting Suite application makes it very easy to view data collected by Google. As with most things Google does, the online user interface for Google Analytics is very good. That said, many people may prefer the Adobe AIR application to view this data, as it puts the data all within a single desktop application, while not limiting any of the online analysis options.

Another promising application is from NASDAQ. They have a tool for brokers and

[1] M. Driver, R. Valdes, and G. Phifer. *"Management Update: Rich Internet Applications Are the Next Evolution of the Web,"* (Gartner, 2005), http://sebringsoft.com/images/riacom-factbook.pdf (accessed March 20, 2008).

financial analysts to review market transactions as they happened. Users may focus on specific stocks and even rewind and replay transactions down to the second. Because analyzing information like this requires a fair amount of data, it's a great solution to leverage your local computer's processor to crunch the numbers. For questions involving the timing of securities trading and second-by-second NASDAQ stock prices, this AIR application seems to provide unique analysis tools hard to get from other sources.

Microsoft Silverlight: Concept and Requirements

A simple description of Silverlight is that it is Microsoft's answer to Flash. It's an environment that integrates video and other multimedia content in an interactive online interface requiring a browser plug-in to view content. Microsoft provides the plug-in for Mac and Windows operating systems, and a third-party company is working on a product called Moonlight, which should soon be available for the Linux operating system. Get the plug-in here: http://silverlight.net.

For designing Silverlight applications, Microsoft provides a Software Development Kit (SDK), and there are several introductory videos about Silverlight on their website. In March 2008, Silverlight 2.0 was released. Prior to this, Microsoft provided two separate demonstrations of this technology, confusingly listing them as 1.0 beta and 1.1 alpha. Silverlight 2.0 is the beta version of 1.1 alpha, which makes even less sense.

One technical aspect of Silverlight that is not emphasized online is that it can also be used to develop desktop widgets for use in a Windows Vista sidebar. If you haven't used Vista, these are the small programs that you place on your computer desktop to get weather updates, RSS feeds and other types of information. Having custom desktop applications interact with websites is a model similar to Adobe's AIR. The reason this is not a core feature of Silverlight is that these widget applications can only run on Vista.

Example Applications

Adobe's AIR applications focus more on processing data and desktop applications not suitable within a web browser. Conversely, Microsoft Silverlight examples are much more focused on content. Showcase applications include memorabilia from the Hard Rock Café, and highlights from the 80th Annual Academy Awards.

This summer, Microsoft plans to provider Silverlight-based coverage of the summer Olympics with 2200 hours of live, interactive video. According to reports online, viewers will be able to see live statistics together with broadcast video, watch "picture-in-picture" to track multiple events, and interact with the sports.

On the main Silverlight website there is a showcase of applications and sites using the technology (http://silverlight.net). Unfortunately, of the 170-plus applications online, there don't yet seem to be any relevant to the legal or library world.

The one Silverlight implementation that I've used a few times is for the South by Southwest Interactive festival showcase (http://pulse.sxsw.com/). This is a showcase of material from a media conference in Austin, Texas, where event photos are intermingled with high-quality videos from various presentations done at the conference. There are only five videos out of more than 100 presentations in the showcase, so it's by no means a full conference archive.

Conclusion

In the Gartner Research report cited above, it was predicted that "[b]y 2010, at least 60 percent of new application development projects will include RIA technology, and at least 25 percent of those will rely primarily on RIA." Because Microsoft and Adobe are making a big push with these new RIA technologies, we should soon start seeing some exciting applications in this area.

I would not be surprised to see LexisNexis or Westlaw develop an Adobe AIR application to allow searching of their respective databases from a single desktop application. These desktop applications can provide more features than you have in your web browser, and they provide great branding opportunities for anybody developing them. The application can have a logo anywhere within the window, and it creates desktop and application icons specific to your product.

Whether or not AIR and Silverlight create the next big evolution of content on the web, they are presumably here to stay. Oh, and one more thing is even more predictable: in 2008, IT managers and we users will have to deal with yet another browser plug-in and add-on application in order to get the content we need online. I think it will be worth the effort. LLL

Conceptually, both AIR and Silverlight are installed just like any other plug-in or add-on application, such as the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Professional Reading

Billie Jo Kaufman, Associate Dean for Library & Information Resources, Pence Law Library, Washington College of Law, American University

I am a voracious reader. Fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, newsletters, magazines, journals, law reviews…all day, everyday. Of course, I suspect many of us are—we're librarians.

When I decided to pursue a career in librarianship, I also completed a double major in Reading Education. My logic was if folks can't read they may not need librarians or libraries. Over the years I have participated in literacy projects and programs, books clubs (personal and professional), and continue to follow up on reading education concepts, methods and insights.

Why do I do all of this reading? Reading is a time-passer and hobby for me, but I also read as a method of continuing education. Professional reading is vital to me in keeping up with management concepts; technology and the needs our users will have in the future; possible funding resources; public relations and marketing; and human resource dynamics. The list goes on and on.

The really interesting thing in my reading is the "transfer value." The transfer of information from one field to another is fascinating. Even if I'm reading *Family Circle,* I find useful articles that I can apply to library needs or situations. When I read American Libraries, I take ideas from public or corporate library settings and rework them into the academic law library environment. It's amazing how even children's library solutions can be adapted to graduate professional school needs. I don't limit this transfer to library articles. Reading *Forbes, Fortune,* or other business periodicals, I often see or steal an idea that can be useful in the library setting.

The other transfer I make is adopting methods used by writers to demonstrate their ideas. Do they use charts or tables? How do they depict their narrative visually? How do they demonstrate budget information to their bosses and boards? These ideas have been invaluable in making my own boring statistics, data, and information more meaningful.

Now, you know my secret: I have very few ideas of my own. I read, I tweak, and then—wow!—a problem is solved! A new idea works! So what do you read? What's routed to you? What transfers do you make? Asking these questions as a part of the interview process can be most telling as you make candidate decisions.

As you do your personal and professional reading, think, "how could this be applied to my library, its users, its needs? You are what you read! Or maybe your library is what you read! LLL

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