

REFERENCE NOTES

A program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

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INSIDE THIS EDITION:

Marketing Libraries.....	1
Print Marketing Sources.....	2
Web Marketing Sources.....	3
ELM Database Update.....	3
Request for Assistance.....	4

INFORMATION BITS

Fall Library Conferences

Watch for presentations by MINITEX Reference Services at fall library conferences. Check the conference programs for further details.

Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO), October 4-6, Rochester, MN.

<http://www.memoweb.org/>.

"Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) Databases" (Oct. 6).

Minnesota Library Association (MLA), October 10-12, St. Cloud, MN.

<http://www.mnlibraryassociation.org>.

"ELM Databases: InfoTrac & National Newspapers 5" (pre-conference workshop, Oct. 9); "ELM Databases: FirstSearch" (pre-conference workshop, Oct. 10); and "All About ELM: The Electronic Library for Minnesota" (Oct. 11).

Branding? Promotions? Public Relations? What does Marketing have to do with Libraries?

Have you ever had the experience of telling someone you've just been introduced to that you are employed in a library and had them tell you that "I've always wanted to work in a library and read all those books?" And did you then have to clue them in on the fact that you rarely even look at a book during your workday (unless you are shelving it) given that you are simultaneously installing a new public printer, de-bugging the acquisitions system, taking meeting room reservations over the phone, starting an email ASKUS service, or teaching yourself the latest search upgrade for an online full-text database? Read books? Try me on my day off.

In spite of the fact that talk about the technology revolution, the Internet, and the "Information Society" is ubiquitous, there are plenty of people who just don't see that libraries, like schools, museums, and other cultural institutions, are in profound transition. Libraries no longer have a lock on books or information provision. People don't automatically think of using the local library to find sheet music, annual reports, or grant-writing information. Even the most loyal library patrons know that they can get some quality information or save valuable time searching the Internet from home. The truth is, our users often don't know much about what libraries have or what librarians do, and librarians as a whole don't know enough about promoting our collections, services, and facilities to those who might benefit from the connection. The fact that libraries now compete with bookstores and Internet vendors for "customers" propels us into the marketplace, ready or not.

If you are thinking about new ways to reach users or potential users, you'll want to know a bit about marketing jargon before taking action. Here's a heads-up about the language you'll encounter:

- **Marketing** is about starting or increasing use of specific collections, services, programs, or facilities to new or long-standing clientele.
- **Promoting** is about letting constituents and community members know what you are doing, keeping visibility and usage high.
- **Public Relations** is about making sure that your different publics have a positive view of and accurate, up-to-date information about the library.

The good news is that marketing and/or promoting your library might never be easier than it is right now. Increasing library visibility in a time of tightening public dollars is a hot topic. Take a look at the list of books, newsletters, and Web sites with marketing, promotional, and public relations-related information inside our newsletter. Of special interest is the American Library Association's "@ Your Library" campaign. This new, long-range initiative aims to help librarians promote public awareness of new and traditional services to different user communities. Everything that your library needs to start a community awareness campaign is right here. Information about the role(s) libraries play in the lives of students, families, business, civic life, and government is outlined. A rationale for "branding" or identifying libraries with specific cutting-edge services and technologies is offered, and directions for retrieving ALA materials online to start or enhance promotional efforts are given.

You may also want to take a look at the September 2001 issue of *American Libraries*, which has several feature articles devoted to library public relations and targeting potential library markets. Read about libraries that have formed partnerships with local tourism and convention bureaus, teen-pregnancy prevention programs, new business start-up programs and college

departments. Learn more about leveraging the work of your library board and Friends groups when working with city and regional councils. There is also an outspoken piece (“Where are Libraries in *Bowling Alone?*” p.60-62) discussing how libraries “serve as indicators and creators of social capital.”

“But I can’t stay on top of the services I already offer” you say? Librarians writing about the need for increased public awareness know how busy you are. You can’t and shouldn’t do it all, they respond. But be strategic, and do something. Don’t create a campaign to increase numbers or users if you are already swamped. Do better for one or more groups you serve or want to continue to develop. Improve communication with the community by cultivating local media to cover large purchases, special collections, new computers, or staff with special expertise. Concentrate on informing community movers and shakers about how the library can support their passions and vision.

Libraries are important public institutions, with a long, rich history and unique mission. We are good, often very good, at what we do: promoting reading and other types of literacy, educating citizens, fostering tolerance, and linking with other social, political, and educational institutions to build and support community. Letting people **know** what we are good at is essential to our enterprise.

Resources

Newsletters

The Shy Librarian: Marketing and Public Relations for Librarians. Published by Librarybook, Inc. 4 issues/year \$35. (860) 521-4182. <http://www.shylibrarian.com>

In the Spring 2001 premier issue, editor Marcia Trotta says that “people who are unaware of what libraries have to offer don’t use us. If people are not using us, they probably don’t feel that our services are essential. And why would they be

willing to fund us? *Promotion* of our services and skills is the foundation of our support. That is why I say that librarians can no longer afford to be shy!” (p. 3).

Each issue of *The Shy Librarian* offers tips on how to develop and implement a library marketing plan and provides a forum for libraries to share their success stories. The first two issues feature topics such as the “wine librarian” in Sonoma County, a “library director for a day” program, public relations in youth services, re-design of library Web sites, marketing electronic resources, summer programming, and image archives. Regular features include a “Library Public Relations on the Net” column, book reviews, and photographs of “Unshy Librarians.” These slim issues are packed with a broad range of ideas from libraries across the country.

MLS: Marketing Library Services. Published by Information Today, Inc. 8 issues/year for \$74.95. 609-654-6266. <http://www.infotoday.com/mls/mls.htm>

According to the publisher, *MLS* is a valuable resource because of the environment in which libraries operate: “In today’s economic climate, with costs rising and profits dwindling, it has become especially challenging for many organizations to turn a profit. Competition in the marketplace is increasing the demand for information, while the budgets for information centers are decreasing. The library and information sectors have to escalate their fight for every budget dollar, and some struggle to justify their very existence.” *MLS* offers all types of libraries ideas for marketing their services. Issues generally feature a cover story, ideas for action, special reports from recent conferences, book reviews, and an “in the news” section.

Articles from recent issues cover techniques for attracting teens to the library, marketing a virtual library, having an eBay auction as a library fundraiser, and using customer feedback. One full-text article from each issue is available on the Web site, with the archives extending back to January 1998.

Books

Walters, Suzanne. *Marketing: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians.* Neal-Schuman, 1992. ISBN 1555700950. 103 pages.

Wolfe, Lisa A. *Library Public Relations, Promotions, and Communications: A How-To-Do-It Manual.* Neal-Schuman, 1997. ISBN 155570266X. 208 pages.

These two titles are from the established *How-To-Do-It Manuals for Librarians* series published by Neal-Schuman. In *Marketing*, the author begins with marketing principles and concepts that can be applied in the library environment. The manual continues with tactics (public relations, advertising, direct mail, and telemarketing), evaluation, a sample marketing plan, and worksheets.

Library Public Relations delves deeper into the areas of public

Reference Notes

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Main Website.....http://www.minitex.umn.edu
Reference Email.....ref@othello.lib.umn.edu
Reference Intake Form.....
.....http://kinglear.umn.edu/reference/refdb
Office Hours.....Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm

WEB Sites

Free Marketing Resources for Libraries

<http://www.galegroup.com/freestuff/>

Gale Group's new program "Find Yourself in the Library" offers this Web site containing links to free marketing and advertising information. The information is easy to customize--simply download Gale's pdf. file and print the item. Types of materials available include bookmarks, fliers, certificates, posters, newsletters, and thank-you cards. For example, "Reading Between the Lines" Reading Record allows kids to keep track of books they've read and encourages them to visit the library more often. They also offer "Press Release Relief," tips for putting together a press kit without a publicist. If you're looking for ways to promote and advertise your library, this would be a great place to start!

@ your library The Campaign for America's Libraries

<http://cs.ala.org/@yourlibrary/tools.cfm>

ALA's "@ your library" campaign is a national public education initiative about libraries and librarians in the 21st century. The goal of the campaign is to let the American public know that 1) libraries are changing and dynamic places, 2) libraries are places of opportunity, and 3) libraries bring you the world. The "@ your library" campaign offers librarians a site dedicated to "PR Tools & Materials." This site contains information on how to get started in the Campaign, including promoting community involvement, reaching out to the media, plus much more. A customizable brochure and flyer are available to use in your library's newsletter or Web site. ALA offers examples of answers to tough questions you might be asked about the campaign. This site also offers a large selection of print ready artwork and bookmarks with slogans appropriate for public, academic, and school libraries. Most are available in Spanish and English.

How to Write a Marketing Plan by Amelia Kassel

<http://www.infotoday.com/mls/jun99/how-to.htm>

This article goes through the following steps for creating a marketing plan:

- prepare a mission statement
- list target markets
- describe your services
- identify marketing and promotional strategies
- understand the competition
- establish marketing goals
- monitor results

Your Attention, Please! Marketing Today's Libraries: We've got to tell everyone that we are going digital! by Beth Carpenter

<http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/sep98/story2.htm>

This article discusses different ways of marketing your library's technology to patrons. Areas covered include offering classes, advertising on the Web, generating word of mouth, and publishing avenues. The author offers creative suggestions, as well as "some great sites to study."

relations in the library world. The manual guides you through early stages of developing a PR plan, defining the library's message and audience, and developing a corporate identity. Specific strategies and methods addressed include print communications, media coverage, volunteers, community involvement, an environment that supports your message, technology, programs/special events, and a professional network. The author concludes with discussion of challenges by type of library and guidelines for evaluating your efforts. Throughout the manual are sample documents and checklists.

Karp, Rashelle S., ed. *Part-Time Public Relations with Full-Time Results: A PR Primer for Librarians*. American Library Association, 1995. ISBN 0838906613. 54 pages.

Prepared by the Public Relations Section of the Library Administration and Management Association, this primer covers some of the same topics as *Library Public Relations* (see previous annotation) although in fewer pages. With contributions from practitioners in public and academic libraries, this book offers sections on news releases, photo releases, and public service announcements; exhibits; library publications; special events; desktop publishing; diversity; image; and PR lessons from business and communications. It also provides sample documents and forms plus helpful checklists.

ELM: New Databases, New Interfaces

The Gale Group has recently combined several of their reference databases into one super-sized database called the *Discovering Collection*. If you have ever used Gale's *Junior Reference Collection*, navigating the *Discovering Collection* should be a breeze (don't get too comfortable with it, though, because within the next few months the interface is going to change). The *Discovering Collection* incorporates such reference resources as *Junior Reference Collection*, *Discovering Authors*, *Exploring Shakespeare*, plus much more. It provides integrated access to the same *DISCOVERING*, *EXPLORING*, and *U*X*L* content previously available as separate databases.

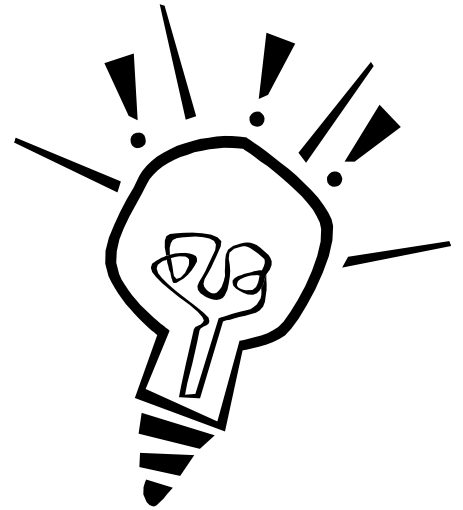
Health Reference Center Academic is still available, with addition of the *Health & Wellness Resource Center (HWRC)*. The new database is a comprehensive research tool providing integrated access to medical, health, and wellness information through a more intuitive Web interface. *HWRC* combines information from health and medical journals, pamphlets, general interest publications, and reference sources. For more information on these databases, visit http://www.galegroup.com/cust_serv/training_fact.htm.

As of July 29, ProQuest databases--including *National Newspapers 5*--are accessible through the ProQuest 5.0 interface. This interface offers several enhancements and new features that make it easier to use. For a guided tour of ProQuest 5.0, connect to <http://www.il.proquest.com/hp/Features/PQ5/intro.html>.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Occasionally, MINITEX Reference Services receives a request for a poem, quotation, picture, story or something that cannot be found by checking standard sources. The Reference staff would like to appeal to the collective memory of MINITEX participants for assistance. Please forward any leads on the following questions to Reference Services at: **612-624-4150 or 800-462-5348**. Here is what we are looking for:

The source/origin of the phrase: "Hold her, Knute, she's a buckin'!" Variations of the phrase appear to include "she's headed for the rhubarb" and "she's headin' for the timber." (89)



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do you think about *Reference Notes*?

great reference books



topics you would like addressed

fantastic web sites



spotlight on your
reference library

We would like to know what you would like to see in upcoming *Reference Notes*. Please either call us at 800-462-5348, send us an e-mail (see page 2 for addresses), or fill in your comments below and mail this form to MINITEX Reference.

Terrific web sites, reference books, and other sources you use:

Comments / Suggestions:

Name: (optional) _____

Library: (optional) _____ Phone: (optional) _____

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1999 EVENTS CALENDAR

- June 5-10 **Special Library Association** will be holding their annual conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Please see their web site for more information: www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml
- June 16 **Academic Library Advocacy Day** at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN
- July 2, 1999 **National Literacy Day** Contact: Focus on Literacy, Inc., P.O. Box 504, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021