

MINITEX

Reference NOTES

A Program of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

September 2007

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Another Successful Stint at the State Fair!

Beth Staats

Once again, we had a banner year at the Minnesota State Fair. Eighty-five volunteers staffed the “Try Cool Tools @ Your Library” exhibit booth twelve hours a day for all twelve days of the Fair (Thank you volunteers!). The volunteers included folks from all types of libraries in Minnesota including MnLINK Gateway libraries, the University of Minnesota Libraries, libraries from the Minnesota Digital Library Coalition (MDLC), health sciences libraries, as well as MINITEX staff. This year the *Cool Tools* included:

- ELM, the Electronic Library for Minnesota,
- MnLINK Gateway,
- Research Project Calculator,
- Minnesota Reflections,
- My Health Minnesota → Go Local.

This was the fifth consecutive year of promoting ELM at the State Fair and the second year in the Education Building. Over **20,000** Fair-goers picked up handouts, tried the *Cool Tools*, or talked to the volunteers. As in past years, enthusiasm and excitement for libraries and the *Cool Tools* is still going strong. This is evident by comments from Fair-goers such as:

- “I learned about ELM last year. It’s great, I love it.”
- “I use MnLINK all the time, living 30 miles from the nearest library MnLINK has become my link to books. It’s invaluable.”
- “Every year I learn something new at this booth!”
- “This is awesome and will totally help me.” (An eighth grader commenting on Research Project Calculator)
- “I just found out about MnLINK and went on and requested a knitting book and it came so fast!”
- “Libraries are the best thing our taxes buy!”



Carlos Portillo and Jennifer Hootman

**Beyond Google:
How do students
conduct academic
research?**
[http://www.first-monday.org/
issues/issue12
8/head/index.
html](http://www.first-monday.org/issues/issue128/head/index.html)

Although this is a re-run (mostly) from previous September *Reference Notes* by Heidi Armstrong Temple, former MINITEX reference Services librarian, these observations from our days in the land of sloppy-jo on a stick still hold true and are good reminders for us all:

- People are excited about online resources – especially those who aren't currently users of the physical library.
- Even some regular, devoted, savvy library users don't know what electronic resources their libraries offer.
- Even some regular, devoted, savvy library users don't realize that the online resources from the library are not the same as doing a search on Google.
- Tangible examples of what a database offers – articles from today's *New York Times*, popular magazines like *Consumer Reports*, articles from medical journals, resources for kids doing homework and school projects – really grab one's attention.

So, what can you gain from living vicariously through our fair experience?

- Go out to meet your users – and *potential* users – where they are and in the context of their interests: community meetings, organizations, events, fairs, etc.
- Don't assume that your users and your community already know what is available at the library – you must tell them, again and again.



Fair-goers learn about Cool Tools

Flickr Photos!



MINITEX Reference Service staff recently began uploading conference, training session, and exhibit photos to a Flickr account. You may add comments to each image! Also, it is easy for library staff to copy and save the images that we have taken during an onsite training session and use them for their own websites, publications and publicity outlets. All our

photos are marked for noncommercial use with Creative Commons.

The account can be viewed by visiting the Flickr page directly, at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mtxreference/>. You may also see our Flickr badge of rotating pictures on our blog, at: <http://blogs.minitex.umn.edu/reference/>.

Homeschooling with ELM

Kristen Mastel

MINITEX presents at numerous homeschooling conferences, such as MACHE, Minnesota Catholic Home Educators Conference, and Minnesota Homeschoolers Alliance. During these events, our presentations are well attended and our exhibit booth is hopping with parents wanting to learn about free online resources to assist in teaching at home. Kelly McGillick heard



Family of Homeschoolers

MINITEX present at a homeschooling conference back in 2006 and contacted MINITEX to deliver a presentation to a local group of parents and students in Scott and Le Sueur counties. Our answer was a resounding: YES! MINITEX recently began working with school media specialists to reach the teachers and students in public schools directly, but this was the perfect opportunity to educate those that use public libraries and their homes as classrooms.



Lori Weldon

Lori Weldon, Director of the New Prague Library, graciously opened the library doors two hours early at 7:30am in early September for an ELM training session with the junior- and senior-high aged students and their parents. This allowed me to do an hour overview with about thirty minutes of hands-on time at their five public computers, which otherwise would have been occupied if we were to do a session during open hours at the library. A few of the parents brought their youngsters with them, and they sat quietly in the back of the library working on coloring books. Weldon and I informed the parents that, "If we didn't know you brought children with you, we never would have known they were here . . . they were so quiet." This respect transferred to the older students as well; they were active participants and answered my questions regarding full-text and databases with ease. After a jam-packed overview, we hopped over to the computers, and I bounced from computer to computer looking up journal

titles with the parents and showed, for example, how to access *Consumer Reports* and the *Star Tribune*. At the end of the session the group and Weldon thanked me numerous times for the training session and taking time out of my day to come down and teach them. Kelly even hinted at a possible second training session once everyone had a few months to practice and get used to the ELM databases and other resources!

How are you reaching out to the homeschooling population in your area? Share stories and comments at our blog post, at: <http://blogs.minitex.umn.edu/reference/>

More M.O.R.E. Training

Kristen Mastel

Starting last month, MINITEX began offering an intensive four-part series covering various aspects of the Minnesota Opportunities for Reference Excellence workshop through an online webinar format. The six participants led energetic discussions and demonstrations regarding the reference interview, ELM databases, online searching, virtual reference and many other topics. Each completed thorough pre-work and post-work for every session; often participants brought the readings up in class discussion or tied them into their demonstrations. Some of the comments included: "I enjoyed listening to my classmates give their descriptive and evaluative remarks on assigned databases and being able to compare them to my own use." and "I have appreciated the interaction with other students in the class, particularly because of the wide varieties of libraries and experiences represented."

Congratulations on a fabulous collaborative learning experience!

July 2007 participants include:

Corrine Eckhardt (Blue Earth Community Library)

Martha Bartels (Chaska Library volunteer)

Nancy Kerr (MN Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)

Jean Goblige (MN Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)

Patricia Passig (Central Baptist Theological Seminary)

Susan Fremming (Stillwater Public Library)

Space is limited to 8 participants per series. Slots are still available for the December and February M.O.R.E. webinar series. To register, visit: <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/events/training/>

Fall Webinar Schedule

MINITEX Reference Services will be offering a number of new and updated webinars this fall. Here is a highlight of some of the session being offered:

ProQuest Newsstand Complete: ProQuest has many updates to their database and some redesign features to their website. Learn how to best utilize this database through features such as creating bibliographies and websites, search alerts, export features, suggested topic search help, and new limiters and refined search techniques.

Gale K12: Gale has introduced their new Power Search tool and web redesign for Discovering Collection, Junior and Student Editions. The new redesign features give patrons improved search query performance with additions such as "Did you mean?" search help, easy-to-navigate "narrow by..." options, and new search options. We will look at new content additions to Gale K12 such as newspapers, NPR transcripts and over 45,000 biographies and critical essays. We will also explore the new customizable search features in the Power Search tool.

EBSCO Databases: We break out the different EBSCO databases and take a look at new features and added content. Take an advanced session on the inner workings of the different databases, learning search techniques and how to best customize results.

WorldCat: OCLC has made major changes to the functionality and accessibility of their WorldCat database over the past year. Learn what they have been up to, what social networking tools have been integrated into the database, and how to best use the different components to connect resources, libraries, and patrons.

We will also be offering new and updated webinars on new tools for your libraries such as web page creation, blogs, podcasting, mash ups, digital reference and instant messaging, and other areas of reference services and community outreach. Look for new session updates through listserv announcements and by visiting our webinar training opportunities page: <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/events/training/webinars.asp>

Registration is now open for the 2008 College of DuPage Teleconference Season!

Register to view the teleconferences at a regional site or via desktop streaming!

More information on how to register and detailed descriptions of each teleconference is available on the MINITEX teleconference website, at:

<http://www.minitex.umn.edu/events/teleconferences/>

October 26, 2007

Soaring to Excellence: Finding the Trends that Matter - Get Your Environmental Scan On

MINITEX Podcast of the Month

Kristen Mastel



Beth Kelly

During September, I had the opportunity to interview Beth Kelly, former Duluth Public Library Director, reflecting on her career, aspirations and future retirement plans. Beth was kind enough to participate in a phone interview using Skype, so neither of us had to travel and fit me in between her upcoming trip to Ireland and numerous volunteer commitments. For Kelly, libraries are a place of

cooperation, environmental consciousness, civility, and self-directed learning, among other things.

We encourage every librarian to be the “voice” behind a MINITEX podcast and share your expertise and experiences with the greater community. Podcasts are featured

on the MINITEX Reference Services blog under the category “On the Road with MINITEX.” If interested in participating in a podcast or you know someone who would be great to interview, please contact me.

To listen to the podcast interview with former Duluth Public Library Director Beth Kelly, visit: <http://blogs.minitex.umn.edu/reference/>

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The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a Federal agency that fosters innovation, leadership, and a lifetime of learning, and State Library Services & School Technology, the Minnesota state library agency, supports MINITEX Reference Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

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