

July 2012

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Editor's Note: We're changing the way we date Reference Notes starting this month. Recently, we've dated each issue as the month it covers. So, traditionally this issue - which covers happenings in June - would be the June issue. Instead, we've decided to call this issue the July issue, since it is coming out at the beginning of July. We think this will give our newsletter the sparkly sheen of newness it deserves, nay demands. We haven't skipped any months; nobody's missed any issues.

Thanks, as always, for reading. ■

Minitex, a Successful Experiment

Carla Pfahl

The University of Minnesota Libraries' publication Continuum (Issue 10, 2012) celebrates Minitex's 40th anniversary with an article highlighting its history and accomplishments. Freelance writer Tim Brady talks about how Minitex, while familiar to library staff, is almost invisible to the patrons of those libraries that rely on Minitex services.

Today the name Minitex is used as a word with just an initial capital letter. However, it was created as an acronym for Minnesota Interlibrary Teletype Experiment. It seems odd today to refer to Minitex as an experiment since the programs that Minitex administers and supports have become invaluable components to most libraries across the state. Brady highlights comments from library staff and residents. One school librarian offered this statement: "Without ELM resources, we would struggle mightily to provide accurate, timely and reliable resources for our students."

To read the full article and see the latest statistics about Minitex's reach, visit: <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/continuum/minitex.html>. ■

Innovation in Instructional Software

Jennifer Hootman

Instruction is a long, well-established topic of discussion, interest, and professional development in the library profession. We even have an entire section devoted to it in the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) division of ALA. And over the years, there has been much focus and debate over forms of online instruction including research and analysis that have led to many changes in best practices. As various new software packages trickled onto the teaching scene and became increasingly more technologically accessible to library staff, online tutorials grew to become all the rage. Thus, web-based tutorials quickly began replacing many of the paper-based instructional guides and have worked well with other online tools such as LibGuides.

Fast forward to early 2012 to Lori Mestre's (University of Illinois, Urbana-

Champaign) article recently published in Reference Services Review (vol. 40, no. 2) that makes quite a challenging claim, “The results of this study indicate that across all learning preferences students performed much better in recreating tasks when they used a static web page with screen shots than they did after viewing a screencasting tutorial.” Did you just hear my mental brakes screeching to a halt? Really, students in this research study preferred a static web page with screen shots over being shown how to do something in a tutorial? This goes against years of previous studies articulated in library literature. Well, this is how things work, I suppose. New studies and understandings, new tools, new parameters and expectations, and new students with various educational experiences work to create a continually changing instructional landscape.



The article is definitely worth the read and taking the time to discuss with your colleagues. However, don't panic. All the effort you have put into your web-based tutorials is not for nothing. Though, Mestre does point to the greater effectiveness of instructional static web pages, she also emphasizes the overall effectiveness of offering a variety of instructional materials and tools for students which includes web-based tutorials. Additionally, Mestre provides some great best practices for creating instructional static web pages and web-based tutorials.

And for any kind of tutorial or guide, as a profession, we're always looking for ways to create more seamless, point of need instruction. In the May/June issue of American Libraries, I recently learned of new innovative software that

librarians at the University of Arizona developed called Guide on the Side. Meredith Farkas, author of the article, states that the software is accessible for librarians at varying skill levels to develop their own tutorials and appears as a box situated at the side of a live web page. Students can access this instructional object and follow the instructions and exercises along with the database on the same page. This eliminates having to switch screens and at the same time becomes part of the student's practical, real-time use of the database. For an example, check out the University of Arizona's Guide on the Side for JSTOR at <http://bit.ly/zA9DCf>.

I think this new software is brilliant. It's interactive, at point of need, and in the student's workflow. It also can be undocked, printed out, or hidden. Play around with it to see its features. They plan to provide the code for Guide on the Side at github.com to benefit the profession. This is a great example of a terrific new innovation as a result of experience, continual efforts to improve on a service, and collaboration. You can read the full article in ELM's *Professional Development Collection* database at <http://bit.ly/MjSydb>. ■

Bookawocky: A Celebration of Summer Reading

Beth Staats

If you haven't heard of it, Bookawocky, a summer reading program for kids and teens, is running this summer at MELSA libraries. Check out this KARE 11 news video starring 4 metro area librarians for more information: http://www.kare11.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=979223. ■

Reverse Psychology Library Advocacy

Matt Lee

If a group in your community united under a pledge to hold a public book burning party, you and your neighbors might take issue with that. Such a shocking act might even cause non-library users in your community to make their support for books and libraries heard.

A book burning party is just what a library in Troy, Michigan, planned. Well, it's what their library's marketing team

planned, anyway. This nicely done video tells the story of how that book burning party saved the library:
<http://youtu.be/nw3zNNO5gX0>.

The video is from 2011, so maybe you've seen it before. But it strikes me as a wonderfully surprising piece of library marketing. The campaign cuts through political rhetoric to articulate the value of libraries in an unequivocal way. Admittedly, it seems a tad disingenuous to toy with the emotions of our supporters, but in desperate situations desperate measures may just be justified. ■

Libraries, patrons, and e-books: Pew Research Study

Carla Pfahl and Beth Staats

The Pew Internet and American Life Project recently released their companion study to their April 2012 report, "The Rise of E-Reading" (<http://www.ala.org/news/pr?id=10031>). This report, "Libraries, patrons, and e-books," <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2012/06/22/libraries-patrons-and-e-books/>, was released on June 22nd and contains information about how library patrons and Americans overall are using e-books and e-book devices.



The report highlights usage among e-book readers. Most notably, the study finds that the general public - not just e-book readers - were not aware that libraries have e-books for borrowing. Many e-books readers that were aware of e-book services with their library stated that they while they appreciated the selection of titles, many reported having to be waitlisted for specific titles or that there was an incompatible file format to use the e-book.

Other highlights from the study show that library card holders are more than twice as likely to have bought their most recent book than to have borrowed it from the library, print or electronic. However, the respondents did indicate that they would like to know about and have available to them more borrowing options for e-books. Perhaps this is

OCLC Abstracts (<http://bit.ly/OAGlwZ>) summarized some additional findings of the report:

- 58% of Americans have a library card, and 69% say that their local library is important to them and their family. Library card holders use more technology, and they report that they read more books.
- 12% of readers of e-books borrowed an e-book from the library in the past year. But a majority of Americans do not know that this service is provided by their local library.
- E-book borrowers appreciate the selection of e-books at their local library, but they often encounter wait lists, unavailable titles or incompatible file formats.
- Many Americans would like to learn more about borrowing e-books. Library card holders are more than twice as likely to have bought their most recent book than to have borrowed it from a library. Many e-book borrowers purchase e-books, too.
- Leading-edge librarians and patrons say that the advent of e-books has produced a major transformation in book searching and borrowing at libraries.

For more detail, read the full report at: <http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2012/06/22/part-1-an-introduction-to-the-issues-surrounding-libraries-and-e-books/>. ■

Tech Tools - Storage & File Sharing

Jennifer Hootman

When recently reading an article this month, the sage lyrics of *Daft Punk's Technologic* came to mind,

“...Write it, cut it, paste it, save it,
Load it, check it, quick - rewrite it,
Plug it, play it, burn it, rip it,
Drag and drop it, zip - unzip it,
Lock it, fill it, call it, find it,
View it, code it, jam - unlock it...”

On Free Technology for Teachers (<http://www.freetech4teachers.com/>), I ran into “15 Free Tools for Storing and Sharing Files.” This article was a great reminder of what’s freely available for storing and sharing files but also mentioned several services that were new to me. Here’s the list of tools - check out which ones might be useful to you.

- Google Drive (<http://drive.google.com/>)
- Dropbox (<http://dropbox.com/>)
- DROPitTOme (<http://www.dropitto.me/>)
- File Dropper (<http://www.filedropper.com/>)
- File Stork (<https://filestork.net/>)
- Uploader Box (<http://www.uploaderbox.com/>)
- Minus (<http://min.us/>)
- Let's Crate (<http://letscrate.com/>)
- Just Beam It (<http://justbeamit.com/>)
- Forget Box (<http://forgetbox.com/>)
- Bay Files (<http://bayfiles.com/>)
- Drop Canvas (<http://www.dropcanvas.com/>)
- Dropmark (<http://dropmark.com/>)
- Sugar Sync (<https://www.sugarsync.com/>)



Check out the article at <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2012/06/15-free-tools-for-collecting-storing.html> to read about each tool and its primary features. Since so much of our work is done online and collaborative efforts require tools for sharing our files, then in the spirit of *Daft Punk*, read it! ■

Grant Opportunity for Public Libraries

From Minnesota Council of Nonprofits - Minnesota Grants Alert

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation is accepting proposals for a new program that aims to engage public libraries in improving the health of residents in low-income communities. The Public Libraries for Health program (<http://bit.ly/Lmt4Hu>) engages public libraries as partners, working collectively to improve health for low-income communities and communities of color. As trusted institutions with strong community ties, libraries can work with other organizations in their service area in creative and effective ways.

In 2012, the Blue Cross Foundation will award grants to four libraries across the state for programs or projects that advance health equity. The Foundation will fund up to four grants of up to \$50,000 each, which may be used for an existing project or a new opportunity. Project activities may occur anywhere in the public library's local community and do not have to take place on public library premises. Proposals are due by noon on July 20, 2012 (<http://bit.ly/MXYUPN>). ■

AskMN

Google Buys Meebo: Meebo Messenger Shutting Down

Carla Pfahl

In case you haven't heard the news, Google has bought Meebo. Meebo is a social platform connecting users with each other in an online environment using a desktop computer or mobile device. Libraries are most likely familiar with one Meebo product in particular: Meebo Messenger, which allows users to log into one or many IM accounts to connect and communicate with other IM networks. The reason why libraries took to Meebo Messenger so well was because there were no firewall issues using Messenger. The announcement of the purchase came on June 4th and already Google is making big changes. The biggest change will come July 11th when Meebo Messenger is shut down: <https://www.meebo.com/support/article/175/>.

This does not give libraries much time to transition to a new platform if they want to continue giving patrons an online option for asking questions. Looking on the brighter side – at least this is happening in summer when, traditionally, online inquiries slow down (at public and academic institutions alike). Meebo is also giving users until July 11th to download their chat logs so they will be able to retain history of chat sessions.

It looks as though Google is looking to gain a larger share of the social networking market. The purchase allows Google to fold Meebo's personnel and technology into the Google+ network: <http://www.slashgear.com/google-to-shutter-meebo-services-july-11-11233111/>.

An option for Minnesota libraries looking to maintain their online reference and information services presence is AskMN, Minnesota's statewide 24/7 online reference service. Libraries participating in AskMN receive a QuestionPoint subscription with access to a 24/7 chat form, a chat widget (similar to the Meebo Messenger), and an email form. There is also the option of purchasing text messaging from Mosio's TextALibrarian or Upside Wireless and having that integrated into your QuestionPoint subscription allowing your institution to manage all online service points from one location.

Minitex provides training and administration of accounts so there is help in getting started. If you are interested in hearing how AskMN can help your institution or interested in hearing what participating libraries have to say about using AskMN, contact Carla Pfahl, pfahl001@umn.edu, 612-626-6845. ■

Community Reference and Embedded Librarians

Beth Staats

My colleague brought a very interesting article from the May/June 2012 issue of *American Libraries* to my attention. The article is titled, "Community Reference: Making Libraries Indispensable in a New Way," and was written by four librarians with Douglas County Libraries in Colorado: Colbe Galston, Elizabeth Kelsen Huber, Katharine Johnson, and May Long. My colleague had a hard copy of the article from the actual journal, but I went ahead and printed the article via ELM's *Academic Search Premier* <http://bit.ly/KteW5r>. After reading the article it made me wonder what other libraries are doing this same thing, and why aren't ALL libraries doing this? I'm sure it has a lot to do with staffing, budgets, etc., but I can imagine the huge benefit to towns, cities, and communities if more libraries had a community reference project.

Jamie LaRue, library director for Douglas County Libraries (Douglas County is the 8th most populous county in CO and is located midway between Denver and Colorado Springs), had a hunch that even though traditional reference questions are not coming into the library like they used to, there are still questions out there that can be answered by librarians. LaRue feels that the library's most powerful asset is its librarians and professional staff. So, what better way for librarians to work with the community than to get out there and get involved in area schools, city councils, economic development councils, and other community organizations? Douglas County Libraries is "embedding" librarians throughout the community into such local organizations. This way they can attend meetings, answer any reference

questions that may arise, and work with community leaders to find out what issues are bubbling up in the community. According to the article, these embedded librarians find that it is important to follow three guidelines in order to “create something strategic, impactful, relationship-centered, and part of their everyday duties.” They need to show up, pay attention, and stay in touch. Apparently the basis of community reference is embedding librarians. Getting them involved in community organizations is key. The first experiment that Douglas County Libraries had with community reference and embedded librarians involved LaRue and a group of property owners working to improve a downtown shopping district. Librarians from the nearby branch also attended the meetings and helped with everything from taking minutes to research to hosting information on the library website. When the project was finished, the property owners “mentioned the importance of the expert research the librarians provided, the communication we facilitated, and the credibility a partner like the library brought to a fledgling organization.”

The next step in the process of community reference, building relationships, may also be the most difficult. The expectation is that the librarians show up and pay attention and try to find ways to get involved in whatever the group might be working on. The embedded librarians can now really use their skills as researchers to keep the group informed and educated on whatever issue they might be focusing on. “Community reference projects are essentially community reference questions on steroids.” This way the librarians know what is happening in their communities and the communities know what they do and how they can be a great asset.

The final step in a community reference project is to stay in touch. This can involve tracking data to share with other librarians embedded in the community. One way Douglas County Libraries has done this is via a blog for professional staff to post information and updates from their communities.

Embedded librarians and community reference projects benefit everyone. In a time when library funding is frequently being cut, it is important for the public to know what we do and to see how they can benefit from libraries and librarians. Community groups and non-profits usually don't have a budget for independent researchers so having a professional librarian involved is a huge benefit for them. It seems that we keep hearing the term “reinvent” in library-land, but libraries do indeed need to continue to reinvent themselves to stay relevant and in demand, and by implementing a community reference program, libraries can increase their presence in the community, while making our value evident. ■



ELM Spotlight

Some Professional You-Time

Matt Lee

You can't spell summer without "u," so take a break for some you-time this July. If the summer finds you with a little bit of free time at the edges of the work day, remember that ELM contains many professional journals for librarians. Relax and take 30 minutes to get caught up on the news of the profession.

You might search for topics you've heard about throughout the year, but haven't had a chance to investigate: Makerspaces, the Google ebooks copyright kerfuffle, and open access publishing might pique your interest, for example. The Professional Journals ELM page is a good place to start to find databases for searching the library literature broadly: <http://www.elm4you.org/databases/content/professional>.

Or you can always browse your favorite library publication. Here are some examples of journals included within ELM:

- [American Libraries](#)
- [Public Libraries](#)
- [School Library Journal](#)
- [Journal of Academic Librarianship](#)
- [Reference & User Services Quarterly](#)
- [Computers In Libraries](#)
- [Information Outlook](#)

Find the databases where these are included, and search for additional specific publications, using our Publications A to Z list: <http://www.elm4you.org/#publications>.

And, when you're all caught up on that and ready for the most mindlessly entertaining site on the web, click on over to Pointer Pointer: <http://www.pointerpointer.com/>. Not all you-time need be professional, after all. ■

ELM on Facebook

Beth Staats

For those of you who are Facebook users, ELM has its own Facebook page too. The direct link is <http://www.facebook.com/ELM4You>. The next time you are logged in to Facebook, be sure to "Like" ELM on Facebook, where we will be posting news and events relating to ELM. ■



MN Digital Library Annual Meeting

Matt Lee

The 10th annual MN Digital Library meeting was held on June 18th in St. Paul. Attendees heard from keynote speaker Rachel Frick of the Digital Public Library of America, representatives of the MN Digital Library on recent projects, and community members in a number of breakout sessions.

Frick began the day with background on the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) project. That ambitious project is not only focused on amassing a nationwide collection of electronic content, but adding value to that content through a number of means. They plan to have a set of “deliverables” ready by April of 2013. Those deliverables include a governance plan for the DPLA, a blueprint for building the collection, new content, a prototype interface, and an engaged community (of partners, rather than users, I assume). The work of the DPLA, as Frick succinctly put it, is to give “local content national context.” Learn more about DPLA at <http://dp.la/>.

Handouts and presentation slides from the day’s breakout sessions should soon be posted to the MN Digital Library website: <http://www.mndigital.org/training/meetings/>. ■

New MN Reflections Collection

Marian Rengel, Minnesota Digital Library

The Rice County Historical Society now has a collection in Minnesota Reflections: <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16022coll15>.

Their collection contains photographs of the Holy Cross Church and celebrations of the church. It also has documents from the funeral of Bishop Henry Whipple.

Thanks to Sue Garwood, Rice County Historical Society, and her staff and the Northfield History Collaborative for this contribution. ■

WebJunction MN

WebJunction Minnesota Webinars: From Grant Writing to Telling Your Library’s Story

Cec Boone, Minitex

Check out the WebJunction Events Calendar (<http://www.webjunction.org/content/webjunction/events/wj.html>) to see the list of new, free webinars that will be available to the full Minitex library community this summer. The Calendar also provides access to archived versions of recent webinars. Staff of Minnesota libraries may register to become members of WebJunction Minnesota (<http://www.webjunction.org/partners/minnesota.html>) and have access to a full catalog of self-paced, online courses as well as the webinars that are available to all.

July and August webinars include:

Grant Writing for Libraries Serving Children, Wednesday, July 11, noon Central, 60 min.
Registration: <https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=717273728>

Bridging the Digital Divide with Mobile Services, Wednesday, July 25, 1 p.m. Central, 60 min.
 Registration: <https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=716535564>

Librarians are Wikipedians Too, Thursday, Aug. 2, 1 p.m. Central, 60 min.
 Registration: <https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=715386796>

Telling the Library Story, Thursday, Aug. 23, 1 p.m. Central, 60 min.
 Registration: <https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=716559000> ■

Reference Notes

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