

MINITEX *Reference* NOTES

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

October 2006

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*Sign-up for
ELM and
MORE
training
for you and
your library
staff!*

School Media Specialists: Unsung Heroes and Supporters

Kristen Mastel

Fall has been a flurry of new activity in the schools but also at conferences for the media specialists. Numerous media specialists have stopped by the ELM booth at the MEMO, Digital Content Conference for STEM, Education Minnesota, and hopefully at the soon-to-be TIES conference.

I was surprised by the media specialists and teachers at the MEMO conference, because they really took the time to come to our booth to learn about new resources they may not have incorporated yet, such as the **Research Project Calculator**. Once I started to tell educators and librarians how they could use **Minnesota Reflections** to do their Minnesota History projects and to compare secondary and primary sources, I could barely keep the bookmarks on the table! We also had a good turn out at our ELM Overview session with many newcomers to the profession, and seasoned veterans wanting to hear about updates.

Representing MINITEX at the Digital Content Conference for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education, Mary Parker and I exhibited ELM resources. We interacted with a few eager teachers who never have heard of ELM before. They were very excited to see a few things that we demonstrated in their areas of interest, such as:

- Where can you view a video on the Doppler Effect or see a speech by Albert Einstein? (Gale's Discovering Collection)
- Where is the journal Science Teacher? (Gale's Professional Collection)
- What database can you locate reliable information for an animal report for K-5 (especially, when all the books are checked out)? (Gale's Kids InfoBits)
- A historical photograph of a Mayo brother performing surgery could be located where? (MN Reflections)

This being my first Education Minnesota conference, I was a bit overwhelmed by the sheer size of the event. More media specialists were present than I had anticipated and they visited with us for a while sharing ELM stories and hearing about the new Research Project Calculator. I took some time to wander the exhibit area while my colleagues staffed the booth. It amazed me how diverse the exhibitors were. I was expecting mostly textbook publishers, technology companies and so forth. However, I saw school districts with their own booth looking to hire education positions, numerous outdoor education sites and various performing arts centers to name a few. One of the highlights of the day had to be when my colleague Jennifer and I had our picture taken in the giant Barnes & Noble chair after an author book reading.



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“Check It Out at Your School Media Center” was one session you could attend during the Education Minnesota conference. During the session the four presenters stressed how they came from a teaching background and how much they love teaching, and that it is still an integral part of their position. Six key topics were discussed with in-depth answers from the four presenters; they included:

- Recognizing that collaboration with teachers to boost student achievement is a key role for school media specialists and asking what could that collaboration look like at each level?
- How can the school media specialist help enhance the value of Internet-based resources?
- Teaching is an integral part of the school library media specialist role. What are some lessons you’ve used to teach key information and technology literacy skills?
- How can a school media specialist assist with staff development in a school?
- If your school doesn’t have a school media specialist, what can they do?
- If your school library media program doesn’t look like this, what can you do?

Never being a media specialist myself, I found their examples to be remarkable and uplifting. To hear how a sixth grader was so excited to receive a fish stamp for reading pages for their Big Fish Book Reading Challenge I found inspiring. On the flip side, not having a media center or specialist was difficult to discuss, as everyone in the room was a strong supporter of media centers; the importance of media specialists is integral to a student’s capacity to learn. Another issue addressed was how to allocate funds with shrinking budgets. I must give kudos to the panel for discussing the importance of using and implementing the ELM databases into curriculum with the teachers. This was a great session with several people in the audience who were teachers who learned about how to partner with librarians, along with up-and-coming media specialists.

Look for us at the TIES Conference!

Minnesota’s Virtual Library
Saturday, December 2, 2006
1/2 day hands-on workshop

MINITEX Library Information Network staff will provide an overview of available resources, an update on new features and content, a hands-on introduction to searching and suggestions for incorporating these resources into your curriculum. Participants will learn what resources are available, how to access resources and why ELM is better for research than the Internet.

ELM, MDL and MnLINK: The Express Tour

Tuesday, December 5, 2006 11:20-12:10p.m.
Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) is an online virtual library available at no charge to all residents of Minnesota. It includes magazine, newspaper and journal articles, reference sources, Spanish-language resources, electronic books, and

research and homework tools. With the MnLink Gateway, you can search online catalogs of Minnesota public, school, state government and other libraries. Minnesota reflections, a project of the Minnesota Digital Library, is a collection of photographs and digitized documents from libraries, historical societies, and museums across the state, in a searchable database. MINITEX References Services staff will introduce you to these three important library resources.

Teacher Librarian or Librarian as Teacher

Kristen Mastel

Recently, working on a project for MINITEX I ran across numerous articles from [Teacher Librarian](#) about Web 2.0 technologies. I never before have read this publication and found the articles to be extremely applicable, blogs for example, and written for the novice to understand. I like the stance that this publication takes. They recognize that school media specialists are also educators and give them the tools and information behind new technologies, such as blogs, and how they may encourage teachers to employ them. Also, articles provide just enough information for media specialists to keep up with some hot topics that students are discussing. I particularly liked two articles that were featured June 2006. *School Library Blogging* by Keith McPherson discusses the notion that information literacy and blogging are intertwined. The second article, *Searching for a Blog Posting on the Web* by Holly Gunn, points out the five major blog searching sites for staff and students to use when looking for what people are currently discussing on a topic. These articles and many others play up the importance of being involved in the curriculum of the school and knowing what your teachers are currently instructing, so that as their information professional, you can intertwine these new mediums with lessons and projects occurring around you.

Best Free Reference Web Sites – Eighth Annual List

From the Machine-Assisted Reference Section (MARS) of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)

Recently published in a fall 2006 issue of *Reference & User Services Quarterly* is the eighth annual list of Best Free Reference Web Sites produced by MARS. The committee reviews sites in all subject areas and selects only free sites that meet their criteria for ready reference and would be of value to all library types. The committee applies the following criteria in reviewing nominated Web sites for selection:

1. Quality, depth, and usefulness of content
2. Ready reference; usefulness for reference to answer specific questions
3. Uniqueness of content
4. Currency of content

-
5. Authority of producer
 6. Ease of use
 7. Customer service (i.e. contacts are responsive, purpose of the organization stated)
 8. Efficiency (i.e. graphics load quickly, required plug-ins are available for download, speedy server)
 9. Appropriate use of the Web as a medium

The 2006 Best Free Reference Web Sites are:

AF: Acronym Finder

<http://www.acronymfinder.com/>
Mountain Data Systems, LLC

American Rhetoric

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com>
Michael E. Eidenmuller

Art & Architecture Thesaurus

http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/aat
Paul Getty Trust

BBC News

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>
BBC News

The Big Cartoon Database

<http://www.bcdb.com>
Dave Koch, The Big Cartoon Database (bcdb.com)

Constitution Finder

<http://confinder.richmond.edu/index.php>
University of Richmond

Crash Course in Copyright

<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/Intellectualproperty/cprtindx.htm>
University of Texas System, Georgia Harper

How Products are Made

<http://www.madehow.com/>
Thomson Gale

In the first person: An index to letters, diaries, oral histories, and other personal narratives

<http://www.inthefirstperson.com>
Alexander Street Press

Metacritic

<http://www.metacritic.com/>
CNET

National Atlas

<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/>
United States Department of the Interior

Recalls.gov

<http://www.recalls.gov>
The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

SchoolMatters

<http://www.schoolmatters.com>
Standard and Poors, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Urban Legends Reference Pages

<http://www.snopes.com>
Barbara and David P. Mikkelson

WebMD Health

<http://www.webmd.com/>
WebMD, Inc.

To view additional web sites, annotations for the selected Web Sites and past lists visit the following MARS Web Site: <http://www.ala.org/marstemplate.cfm?Section=marspubs>

Source

Pappas, Mimi and Carol S. Rusinek, et. al. "Best Free Reference Web Sites - Eighth Annual List." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 46.1 (Fall 2006):34-39.

Hands-On ELM Training Sessions

Jennifer Hootman

MINITEX Reference Services staff has been conducting hands-on ELM training sessions by invitation from Multitype Library Cooperation Systems and public school districts. In September, Robin Chaney, director of the Southwest Area Multicounty Multitype Interlibrary Exchange (SAMMIE), requested four distinct three-hour ELM training sessions. Two of those sessions were held at Benson Public Library and two were held at Slayton Public Library with a variety of library types represented by the participants. In October, Lynn Dosch of the Rochester Public School District requested two separate ELM training sessions for the district's school library media specialists. The school media specialists that work in an elementary school attended the morning session and those that work in a middle or high school attended the second session. Nancy Steele, director of the Southcentral Minnesota Inter-Library Exchange (SMILE), requested an all-day workshop for all librarians in the SMILE system. Librarians representing academic, public, and school libraries attended.

MINITEX Reference Services staff has received positive feedback from training session participants as well as the Multitype System directors. We are eager to schedule more ELM training sessions and can customize them to your needs! Please contact us for more details!

Five Weeks to a Social Library

From a blog that we follow, we thought this course might be of interest to you. Five Weeks to a Social Library will take place between February 12 and March 17, 2007 and will be limited to forty participants. This is the first free, grassroots, completely online course devoted to teaching librarians about social software and how to use it in their libraries. The course will be taught using a variety of social software tools so that the participants acquire experience using the tools while they are taking part in the class. However, course content will be freely viewable to interested parties and all live Webcasts will be archived for later viewing.

The course will cover the following topics:

- Blogs
- RSS
- Wikis
- Social Networking Software and SecondLife
- Flickr
- Social Bookmarking Software
- Selling Social Software @ Your Library

For more information and to apply visit:

<http://www.sociallibraries.com/course/>

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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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Services Office at the University of Minnesota*