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Lively Librarians Loose in the Limelight: Libraries in Popular Media

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Upcoming Issue

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President's Conference Issue

Lively Librarians Loose in the Limelight: Libraries in Popular Media

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OLA *Quarterly* is indexed in *Library Literature.*

Libraries in Popular Media

There once was a gal from Eugene
Whose first name was Mo, for Maureen.
Her job was really fun—
She was a librarian.
And truly life was peachy keen.

A call then came out from the *Quarterly*
"We need people who write and are orderly.
We have lots of topics.
Suggestions we won't nix
And you can guest edit the *Quarterly*."

One issue was 'Libraries and Media.'
"Do you think that includes Wikipedia?"
It's the issue for fun-
With that Mo, she was won.
And she cancelled her trips through Expedia.

That's how Mo found herself as an editor.
Most likely she had no competitor.
She sent out her own call:
"Come writers one and all.
Please help me to be the guest editor."

She tempted them with Stephen Colbert
He ran for president, not just mayor.
At National Library Week he scoffed,
ALA looked dim and soft—
Instead of hip, cool, and aware.

"If this is what you mean by media
We are so with you, on boardia.
We'll spoof that smart guy,
Even blacken his eye
And thwart his attempt at comedia."

The authors lined up with their stories
Dreamed up in their laboratories
From Bennett, Glass, Behrman,
To Jasper, Asch, Gilman,
Like so many smart Labradories.

To separate media from culture
Is like finding a generous vulture.
We gave it a shot
Plus copious thought.
Please judge what you think of the picture.

The other topic we could not avoid
Was image, although somewhat annoyed
That it seemed it still mattered;
The stereotype not yet shattered.
We're about ready to call Dr. Freud.

From blogs to Barney, spoof to Potter,
Then hip to heroes, who is hotter,
The authors put out their best stuff
Mo surely had more than enough.
There was lots of material for fodder.

We write of the *Times* and TV
Comics, You Tube, don't you see
All kinds of media
(even Wikipedia)
Are fair game for our wittery.

And now that our issue is done
Have we answered the question:
Do they go together,
Like birds of a feather,
Popular media and the librarian?

Guest editor
Maureen Cole
Eugene Public Library

The TV Shows We Want to See:

Lost Scripts from Libraryland

by Sandy E. Lucas
Freelance Writer

and

Sara T. Behrman
Freelance Writer and Consultant

At the time this article was written, the Writers Guild of America, representing more than 12,000 movie and television writers in their contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, were still on strike. Begun in early November, the strike continues to have an impact on the production of movies and prime-time TV programs, even though most studios had stockpiled dozens of movie scripts and TV shows had enough scripts or completed shows in hand to last until early 2008. As television producers begin to pull those scripts from their bottom drawers, will they finally show us the TV shows we want to see? Read from this sampling of what to expect when those lost scripts from libraryland are finally aired:

Here's the lost script from *Heroes*, NBC's Emmy and Golden Globe epic drama that chronicles the lives of ordinary people who discover they possess extraordinary abilities. As the show starts, a total eclipse casts its shadow across the globe, seemingly calling forth a multitude of everyday men and women with special powers. (For more background on the story, go to http://www.nbc.com/Heroes/.)

[Hiro has just returned to present-day Tokyo from 17th Century Japan. He is anxious to discover if his encounters with legendary swordsman Takezo Kensei have changed recorded history. He and Ando decide to look it up at the Tokyo Metropolitan Library. As the two men approach the library's entrance, they speak in Japanese (to be subtitled in English as follows).]

Ando: Please explain it to me one more time. You time traveled to the 17th Century, met the great samurai swordsman Takezo Kensei, and assumed his identity?

Hiro: Not quite, but never mind! I want to find out if my beloved Princess Yaeko has spread stories about me … I mean, about Kensei.

[Hiro and Ando enter the library.]

Hiro: Come on; let's ask the reference librarian where to find information about Takezo Kensei.

[They approach the reference desk. Yuki, the reference librarian, is turned away from them talking softly on the phone. Ando is distracted, puzzling over the information Hiro has just shared with him. Finally, Yuki puts the phone down.]

Hiro: Excuse me, Ms. Librarian?

[Yuki turns in her swivel chair to face Hiro and Ando. She is in her mid-twenties and stunningly beautiful. Both men's jaws drop to the floor.]

Yuki: Sorry to have kept you waiting. How can I help you?

Ando: Uh …

Hiro: We are trying to find out about the great samurai swordsman Takezo Kensei.

Yuki: Let me check our database. I'm sorry, but it appears all of the books containing information about Takezo Kensei have been lost or stolen.

Hiro: Stolen? That's odd, isn't it? What about another branch? Please check again.

Yuki: Sorry, gentlemen. Looks like you're out of luck. But if you give me your name and address, I can alert you

if and when the library purchases or downloads any new material pertaining to Takezo Kensei. With your e-mail address, I can sign you up for an RSS feed.

Ando: (smitten) Thank you so much, Ms … What's your name?

Yuki: (smiles sweetly) Please write your information here.

[Hiro writes his name down and he and Ando leave, somewhat befuddled. Ando's gaze lingers on Yuki for as long as possible. Yuki glances down at the piece of paper with Hiro's name on it and her expression registers a peculiar look of recognition. Once the pair is out of sight, she takes out her cell phone and discreetly dials a number. She says in perfect English:]

Yuki: It's Yuki. We have a situation. The time traveler you warned me about? He was just in here asking questions about Takezo Kensei. What do you want me to do about him?

[Cut to: Adam Monroe is sitting in his Montreal apartment.]

Adam: Just what we planned, love. Take care of him.

[Cut back to: Tokyo Metropolitan Library. Yuki covertly touches her index finger to the USB port and instantaneously, hundreds of documents whiz by on her computer screen. Her eyes work like a barcode scanner, processing all of the information within seconds. It is all personal information about Hiro: his birth record, health record, college entrance exam scores, bank account information, etc. She hits the delete key, and all of the open windows containing Hiro's information go haywire, eliminating all of the data. Then the screen goes blank in a flash.]

Maybe you'd prefer true crime, or at least a TV show that reveals how real crimes are solved? Here's the lost script from *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (commonly referred to as *CSI*), a popular, Emmy Award-winning CBS television series that trails the investigations of a team of Las Vegas forensic scientists as they unveil the circumstances behind mysterious and unusual deaths and crimes committed (more at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CSI:_Crime_Scene_Investigation).

[Captain Brass is reviewing a case file in his office. Grissom sits across from him, picking at a scab on his wrist.]

Brass: Excellent work, Grissom. Your team solved this case in record time. We barely had time to put Jane Doe on ice before you produced enough

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forensic evidence to convict that scum bug who whacked her.

Grissom: I'd love to take the credit, but it should really go to that new intern.

Brass: Intern?

Grissom: Haven't you met her? Gina? She worked tirelessly on this case. She's got amazing street smarts. It's really something the way she was able to get inside the killer's mind and crack this case.

Brass: You don't say … ? Hmm, that reminds me, how is the search going for Sara Sidle's replacement?

Grissom: (Groans) Let's just say Sara is going to be a tough act to follow. Why do you ask?

[Cut to: Break room. The aforementioned intern, Gina, is mulling over the paltry selection in the vending machine. Grissom enters.]

Grissom: Gina, in case I forgot to mention it, great job on the Jane Doe case.

Gina: Oh, it was nothing, boss. Just doing the job you're … er, not paying me for. Heh heh.

Grissom: Speaking of that … I don't know if you've heard, but we're in the middle of a search for Sara Sidle's replacement. How would you like to take over the job … at Sara's tenured salary?

Gina: Gosh, what an honor … I'm flattered. But I have to say no. I'll be starting Library School at U Dub in January.

Grissom: Library School? Gina, I'm offering you a high-paying job with one of the most prestigious crime labs in the country. Not to mention we're still the #1 rated show in the Nielsen's after eight grueling seasons.

Gina: I realize that, sir, but the University of Washington offers the most extensive ALA accredited Masters of Library and Information Science program in the northwestern United States. It's my dream. I can't pass it up. Besides, I can make four times an investigator's salary as an academic librarian! Don't worry.

Grissom: (Sighs) You've got spunk, kid. Good luck to you.

So, what if the writers' strike never ends? What if the only viewing options in the year 2108 are programs like *Antiques Roadshow*? (You can check out past seasons at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/roadshow/series/index.html.) What if, in its future 110th season, *Antiques Roadshow* is still continuing to prove that it will go to any lengths—more than 500,000 miles, in fact—to discover America's hidden treasures? Here's the future "lost script from libraryland" from the year 2108:

Voiceover: Don't go away … It's *Antiques Roadshow*—Newport!

Mark L. Walberg, III: Welcome to *Antiques Roadshow,* live from beautiful Newport, Oregon! Home to the newest and largest aquarium in the United States! We're about to start; people are lining up with their items, hoping to snag the attention with their family treasure of one of our expert appraisers.

[Cut to scene. A man in his twenties with a ponytail has a piece of furniture with tiny drawers awaiting the attention of Gloria Lieberman from Sotheby's in London.]

Gloria Lieberman: When I saw what you were bringing in, I texted my colleagues in London and sent them a digital image. We are all tremendously excited. So, what can you tell us about this piece of furniture?

Young Man: Well, the family story is that my great-great-aunt was the library director in an Eastern Oregon town about 150 years ago. Apparently, this item was declared 'surplus furniture' after the library building was renovated, so the town let my aunt have this for free as a token of appreciation for her many years of service. My grandmother, who was the first to inherit it, told me that her great aunt was also an avid gardener. She used to keep seed packets in the little drawers. See, she kept flower seeds here, and vegetable seeds in this row.

Gloria: Seeds, eh? Do you have any idea about its original purpose?

Young Man: Well, not really. My grandmother let me keep my miniature racing cars in these lower drawers when I was a kid. She passed away a few years ago and left the unit to me.

Gloria: Well, I've only seen a few pieces like this before, but I've conferred with my colleagues and we all agree. It's a library card catalog, and apart from a few pieces of dirt, some scattered seeds, and what looks like a scratch from a rake here on the front (Gloria points at the scratch with her laser pointer), it's in

perfect condition. This is a fine example of furniture from the Art Deco period. Notice the metal of choice from that period used on the decorative drawers. The other interesting thing is that it carries a manufacturer's label: Brodart. That U.S.-based company specialized in the finest library furniture ever made. Now, do you have any idea of its value?

Young Man: Well, no. I mean, my grandmother kept it in the shed and let me play with it.

Gloria: Well, in our research we found that there was an auction in New York City a few years ago, so I can give you an estimate of auction value based on that. I estimate auction value to be within the range of $20K–$25K. Are you surprised?

Young Man: Really? You're kidding me? I had no idea. Not that I am planning to sell it, but … really?

[The scene shifts to a middle-aged woman talking to David Lackey, from the Portland Innovation in Science Gallery. Between them is a piece of equipment, with its many wires and cables neatly tied.]

David: I could not believe my eyes when you wheeled this item in. I've only seen pictures of these things. This is truly remarkable. Can you tell me how you came to have this piece in your collection?

Woman: Well, all I know is that my great-great-great grandfather was a professor of library science. Over the years, he collected library memorabilia and equipment. Over time, things were passed

down to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Some things were broken, but my grandmother kept this piece in her attic under a tarp. I have no idea what it was used for, although my father said that my ancestor's diary indicated that it may have been part of something called a "reference interview." Perhaps they plugged this end into the patron's data-port and recorded the answers?

David: Well, I can tell you everything you want to know and more. I specialize in mid-20th century library artifacts, which as I'm sure you know are among the hottest collectibles today. You really have a gem of a piece. This is called a teletype machine, and in the 1970s, this was a precursor to the fax machine and computer—you've heard of those machines, haven't you?

Woman: Well, I know what a computer is, of course, but I had no idea that they were ever this large!

David: A teletype machine was used as a communications device. My research in antique library equipment has turned up proof that this very same teletype machine may have been used in Iowa as part of what was called "a statewide library reference backup service." Library students in those days took Advanced Reference classes and communicated with reference staff in remote regions of the state by teletype; they created an early database of frequently asked questions, and helped answer stumper questions long before the invention of the Internet by Al Gore. This may even have been a pilot project for the award-winning early 21st century library information service in Oregon called "L-net." Of course, this was well before the days of imbedded data ports and virtual links to information databases that today we receive as children during our routine vaccinations for cancer and Alzheimer's. Do you have any idea what it's worth?

Woman: No. Of course, I'd only be interested in its insurance value.

David: You'll be surprised to learn that this qualifies as a museum piece. I can tell you that there are a number of science museums throughout the world that would like to acquire this for their collections. I'd place insurance value at $150K–$250K.

Woman: Oh my god. You're kidding me. I had no idea.

Still want more? Then stay tuned for *Dancing with the Stars.* Celebrity dancer Jim Scheppke will go toe to toe with author J.K. Rowling in the upcoming final competition! ❧

Look! Up in the Sky! It's A ... Librarian?
Librarians in Comic Books

by Robert Hulshof-Schmidt

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Okay, I admit it. I'm a superhero junkie. I'm a big fan of truth and fair play, and the idea that a (relatively) normal person might have secret powers to help pursue these noble goals has always appealed to me. A big part of the costumed crusader mystique is the secret identity. Most of us know the biggies. Bruce (Batman) Wayne—a millionaire playboy who is secretly the world's greatest detective. Peter (Spider-Man) Parker—photojournalist turned Web-slinger. Clark (Superman) Kent—who takes off his cape, puts on his glasses, and reports news for the *Daily Planet.* The vast majority of the caped and masked are either scientists or socialites (or both, in the case of Tony (Iron Man) Stark), identities that lend themselves to flexible hours and personal fortunes. But where are the librarians? Surely information professionals deserve their place in the pursuit for truth and justice! And we are there, if in somewhat smaller numbers.

Certainly the most famous costumed librarian is Barbara Gordon. By day the librarian daughter of Gotham City's police commissioner, by night Barbara donned cape and cowl as Batgirl. Premiering in Detective Comics #359 in January 1967, Batgirl quickly became a popular member of the Batman family of characters. (She also moved quickly to television, portrayed in the third season of the Adam West series by Yvonne Craig.) While her uncostumed profession was not given significant press, her library training certainly contributed to her legendary problem-solving skills.

In 1988, Barbara Gordon, who had hung up her cowl to concentrate on her civilian identity, was shot by the Joker, crippling her. Over the next year, she set up a sophisticated (pre-Internet!) computer network and established her new secret identity: Oracle. She now serves as an information broker to the superhero community, finding answers and unlocking secrets

for her costumed colleagues. Barbara is a pioneer, arguably the first digital librarian. She's also a rare example of a disabled superhero, operating ably from a high-tech wheelchair, and coordinating the work of the all-female super-team, the Birds of Prey.

Barbara (Oracle) Gordon at work
© *DC Comics*

Of course, the bad guys have to have equal time. Introduced in Detective Comics #463, September 1976, the Calculator was a two-bit supervillain who fought many of DC Comics' heroes. He ran around in a costume shaped like a big (you guessed it) calculator. In 2004, he (thank goodness!) abandoned the costume to operate an information network for villains not unlike the service provided by Oracle. In an interesting bit of social commentary, Oracle provides her information for free, while the Calculator charges $1,000 per answer.

Over at Marvel Comics, another librarian lurks amongst the colorful costumes. Introduced in 1980, Xi'an "Shan" Coy Manh is a Vietnamese refugee and a mutant superhero. Originally a member of the unfortunately named "New Mutants" (effectively the junior X-Men), she has the power to seize control of other people's minds. As Karma, Shan was the first field leader of the New Mutants.

Shan suffered from a bad case of the superhero-

Xi'an "Shan" (Karma) Coy Manh
© *Marvel Comics*

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ine blues, an unfortunate tendency of the comics industry to run their female characters through excessive turmoil. She was possessed by disembodied telepath Amahl Farouk, ricocheted through space and time, became the protector of an imaginary child in a desert wasteland, and temporarily lost track of her younger brother and sister when their apartment was bombed.

After disappearing for a few years, Shan returned as a librarian at the University of Chicago, where she was also a student. She eventually returned to the Xavier Institute, a private school where mutants learn to use their powers. Professor Charles Xavier (a.k.a. Professor X), her mentor during her New Mutants days, hired her as an office administrator and librarian for the school. In her costumed time, she served as a field leader for a squad of young mutants at the school. After recent (and of course dramatic) events at the Institute, Shan is out of costume again working as the librarian and French teacher.

Another hero who displays a talent for reference skills, though not a trained librarian, is Blok, a member of the Legion of Super-Heroes. The Legion is a team of super-powered heroes operating in the 30th century, featuring twenty-plus heroes from dozens of planets. Blok is a silicon life form from the planet Dryad. He is apparently the last of his people, Dryad having been destroyed when its sun went nova. He possesses great strength and endurance, effectively being a living rock.

After a series of misadventures, Blok joined the Legion. He was initially confused by his carbon-based teammates, and as a result spent a great

Blok
© *DC Comics*

deal of time in the Legion archives, learning the team's history. From his extensive research, Blok eventually had a more comprehensive picture of the team than any of his fellow heroes. He provides useful insight to his colleagues, assisting them in solving mysteries and defeating villains. Blok is also a personal favorite of mine—he pursued his research in the comic archives while I pursued my degrees.

Librarians have made a number of other minor appearances in comics. A fairly comprehensive bibliography by Steven M. Bergson can be found at the Libraries FAQ Homepage, http://www.ibiblio.org/librariesfaq/combks/combks.htm.

There are two other manifestations of the hero-librarian that are worth noting. The costumed hero is such an iconic image that many libraries use it for promotional campaigns. A particularly robust example of this is the Super Librarian campaign launched by the New Jersey State Library in 2003. The Super Librarian, bespectacled and caped, appeared in a 30-second promotional video aired on cable channels, encouraging viewers to visit their local libraries. The promotion has been enormously successful, spawning a Web site, a one-shot comic book, and a number of contests. The Super Librarian can be found at http://www.njlibraries.org.

Finally, in April 1990, Preservation Graphics released a sampler comic featuring the Adventures of the Incredible Librarian. Focusing on preservation rather than reference, the cover of the comic features a grim Batman saying, "Outrageous! Brittle, deteriorating paper! A most deadly threat to all of us!" The five-page story inside has our heroine emerge from her secret identity, librarian Maria Norlander-Martinez, to capture a vandal who rips pages from library books. The project was ambitious in scope, including substantial text with library tidbits and

Librarians and Harry Potter:
An Introduction of the *SHHH!* Personality Assessment Instrument

by Connie J. Bennett
Director,
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Madame Pince, the cranky mistress of the library at Hogwarts, is hardly a role model to emulate. In the librarian's constant search for professional balance between providing generous community access to resources on the one hand—and safeguarding those resources from the public on the other—she's clearly on the parsimonious end of the continuum.

However, in a discussion of the librarian's image—or anything else, for that matter—in popular media, Madame Pince cannot be ignored. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books[1] are nothing if not popular. The seventh and final book of the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, sold a record-breaking 8.3 million copies in its first 24 hours on sale in the United States, according to Scholastic. "No other book, not even any of the six previous Potters, has been so desired, so quickly. *Deathly Hallows* averaged more than 300,000 copies in sales per hour—more than 5,000 a minute."[2]

Madame Pince provides an ironic contrast to the real-life librarians worldwide who have eagerly put the books into readers' hands, have opened library doors at midnight for special release parties, have sought to connect kids with more books through "read-alike" kits, displays, and lists. And to the real-life librarians who have defended the rights of youth to read the Harry Potter books at all.

Another record achieved by Rowling's books is frequency of challenges. The Harry Potter books were number seven on the American Library Association's list of the 100 most frequently challenged books of 1990–2000. In a 2007 Banned Books Week media release, the ALA reported, "The Harry Potter series ranks as the number one most challenged book series of the 21st Century (2000–2006)."[3] While many articles have been written in defense of the books, there have also been many written against them; Rowling's Madame Pince, guardian

of the Hogwarts library's restricted shelves, would stand squarely with the latter group.

J.K. Rowling has acknowledged that the Pince caricature is merely a plot device. During a benefit reading on August 2, 2006 at Radio City Music Hall, answering a question from a librarian in the audience, she said, "I thought you were going to attack me for Madam Pince and I would like to apologize for you and any other librarians (*crowd laughs*) present here today and my get-out clause is always if they'd had a pleasant, helpful librarian, half my plots would be gone. 'Cause the answer invariably is in a book, but Hermione has to go and find it. If they'd had a good librarian, that would have been that problem solved. So, sorry."[4]

With Rowling's books still occupying multiple slots on the best selling books list this week[5] no matter how you count it,[6] perhaps we librarians should move beyond the caricature to look for other aspects of the Harry Potter stories that can speak to our organizational—and thus perhaps to our professional—lives and images.

Libraries have, as organizations, adopted many of the tools and models of the business world to identify work styles, improve communication, reduce workplace conflict, increase team effectiveness and productivity, and for library staff to better understand ourselves and others. Many a library's staff-training day or leadership team retreat has included some type of psychological instrument, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator[7] (MBTI™) or the DiSC[8] (originally called the Personal Profile System®). Perhaps you know which co-workers are blue, yellow, red, or green in the Management by Strengths (MBS) survey,[9] or Merrill-Reid has sorted their Social Styles into analytical, driver, amiable, or expressive.[10]

In a similar rubric, we librarians can seek to understand ourselves and others better through use

of Rowling's personality assessment instrument, the Sorting Hat: Hogwarts Houses, hereafter referred to (in honor of librarians everywhere) as *SHHH!*

We are familiar with the basic *SHHH!* categories, named after the four wizards who founded Hogwarts over 1,000 years ago (Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, Salazar Slytherin).[11] In an annual ritual, each new Hogwarts student is sorted into one of the houses based on certain characteristics, revealed by the Sorting Hat's songs[12] as well as dialogue from throughout the seven books. Figure 1 concisely summarizes the information available from Rowling's original texts about the four *SHHH!* categories.

It is crucial for *SHHH!* to work with the original text for both psychological and professional integrity, as there are many,

Figure 1

Crest	House Description
	Gryffindor *You might belong in Gryffindor,* *where dwell the brave at heart,* *their daring, nerve, and chivalry* *set Gryffindors apart.*[13] Said Gryffindor, "We'll teach all those with brave deeds to their name."[14] Students of Gryffindor are typically brave, daring, and chivalrous. Famous members include Harry, Ron, Hermione, Albus Dumbledore, and Minerva McGonagall (head of Gryffindor).[15]
	Ravenclaw *Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,* *if you've a ready mind,* *where those of wit and learning,* *will always find their kind.*[13] Said Ravenclaw, "We'll teach those whose intelligence is surest."[14] Ravenclaw students tend to be clever, witty, intelligent, and knowledgeable. Notable residents include Cho Chang, Padma Patil, and Luna Lovegood (daughter of The Quibbler magazine's editor).[15]
	Hufflepuff *You might belong in Hufflepuff,* *where they are just and loyal,* *those patient Hufflepuffs are true* *and unafraid of toil.*[13] Said Hufflepuff, "I'll teach the lot, and treat them just the same."[14] Hufflepuff students are friendly, fair-minded, modest, and hard-working. A well-known member was Cedric Diggory, who represented Hogwarts in the most recent Triwizard Tournament.[15]
	Slytherin *Or perhaps in Slytherin* *you'll make your real friends,* *those cunning folk use any means* *to achieve their ends.*[13] Said Slytherin, "We'll teach just those whose ancestry is purest."[14] Salazar Slytherin prized resourcefulness, determination, a certain disregard for the rules.[16] Important members include Draco Malfoy, Professor Severus Snape (head of Slytherin) and Tom Riddle (later Lord Voldemort).[15]

many versions of Sorting Hat quizzes available.[17] There have even been some early attempts to link Hogwarts Houses to the MBTI™ —one insufficiently rigorous[18] and one limited to an analysis of the personality of Severus Snape[19]—as well as attempts to connect them to the four humors (sanguine, choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic),[20] and to the elements (earth, air, fire, water).[21]

This new *SHHH!* analysis is based primarily on five sources:

1. Text analysis of J.K. Rowling's seven books.[1]

2. The copyrighted Tough Teams essay[22] by Steven Wille comparing various four-quadrant assessment methods.

3. An exhaustive table of equivalents of four preference personality types (it even includes Jane Austen characters!) from a Web 2.0 site by "2 H."[23]

4. David Keirsey's Temperament Sorter-II, a four preference grouping of the sixteen MBTI™ types.[24]

5. Linda Beren's essays "Essential Qualities of the Personality Patterns"[25] and "Linking Interaction Styles to Other Models."[26]

Figure 2 shows the synthesis of these sources, allowing librarians to match a *SHHH!* category with results from other standard personality and styles inventories, and so move to something linked with the popular Harry Potter books beyond our connection to the biased stereotype of Madame Pince.

To discover patterns in the personalities of librarians, as well as the relationship of the stereotypical image to reality, the best source is Discovering Librarians: Profiles of a Profession,[32] which summarizes the various personality studies of our profession between 1934 and 1994, using several instruments. Mary Jane Scherdin's "Vivé la Difference: Exploring Librarian Personality Types Using the MBTI™"[33] looks at comparisons of the MBTI™ types in librarians as compared to the general population, in librarians by specialty, and by type of library. She reports on the findings of a 1992 ACRL study which found that librarians are more likely than the general population

Figure 2

DiSC®[27]	Gregorc[28]	Merrill Reid[29]	Keirsey Temperament[30]	Interaction Styles[31]	*SHHH!*
D Task Quick	CR Concrete Random	Driver Tell Control	Rationals Thinking/ Intuition (NT)	In-Charge™	Slytherin
I People Quick	AR Abstract Random	Expressive Tell Emote	Artisans Sensing/ Perceiving (SP)	Get-Things- Going™	Gryffindor
S People Process	AS Abstract Sequential	Amiable Ask Emote	Guardians Sensing/ Judging (SJ)	Behind-the- Scenes™	Hufflepuff
C Task Process	CS Concrete Sequential	Analytical Ask Control	Idealists Feeling/ Intuition (FN)	Chart-the- Course™	Ravenclaw

to be Introverted (more interested in the inner world of concepts and ideas than in the outer world of people and things) and Judging (preferring order, closure, and schedules to spontaneity and flow).[34] The most common MBTI™ types among librarians are ISTJ and INTJ, while the least common are ESFP, ESTP, ISFP and ISTP.

Extrapolating from the mapping of Figure 2, this study would indicate that using the SHHH! analysis, 34.6 percent of librarians would be sorted into Hufflepuff, 34.4 percent into Slytherin, 24.9 percent into Ravenclaw, and only 5.9 percent into Gryffindor.[35] (Or as quizilla's "Which Mix of the Hogwarts Houses are You?"[36] would put it, librarians are most likely to be Slytherpuff!) Perusing further breakdown of the figures, technical services staff is more likely to be Hufflepuff, children's librarians to be Ravenclaw, and administrative staff a mix of Slytherin and Ravenclaw. By type of library, public and school librarians are more likely to be Ravenclaw, academic librarians to be Slytherin. Another study indicated that support staff is most likely to be Hufflepuff.[37]

Of course some may feel that a trade-off between the Madame Pince image and that of Slytherin is not necessarily an improvement; I need not point out to librarians that necessities of the narrative arc of the story line (exploring the battle between good and evil) does not necessarily parallel organizational life within libraries. "While we should never put people in boxes and keep them there, it is useful to classify behavior so we can better understand behavior and leverage strengths."[22]

SHHH!, like other personality typing, can be helpful for understanding various perspectives as well as recognizing our own strengths. Librarians, like all humans, are not pre-programmed, but have options in our interpretations and responses to the events and interactions of our lives. Perhaps Albus Dumbledore is speaking to all of us

when he says, "It is our choices, Harry, that show us what we truly are, far more than our abilities."[16]

Or as Harry, himself, echoes in the epilogue to the last book: "Albus Severus … you were named for two headmasters of Hogwarts. One of them was a Slytherin and he was probably the bravest man I ever knew … If it matters to you, you'll be able to choose Gryffindor over Slytherin. The Sorting Hat takes your choice into account."

"Really?"

"It did for me," said Harry.[38]

Footnotes

[1]*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (June 26, 1997) (titled *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the United States), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (July 2, 1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (July 8, 1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (July 8, 2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (June 21, 2003), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (July 16, 2005), and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (July 21, 2007), all published by Scholastic.

[2]Article by Hillel Italie, AP National Writer, Sun Jul 22, 2007

[3]www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/challengedbanned/challengedbanned.htm

[4]www.accio-quote.org/articles/2006/0802-radiocityreading2.html

[5]This week's top 150 best-sellers: asp.usatoday.com/life/books/booksdatabase/default.aspx

[6]For an article on the change to the New York Times Best-Seller list due to the Harry Potter phenomenon, see archives.cnn.com/2000/books/news/07/21/potter7_21.a.tm

[7]www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics

[8]www.toughteams.com/papers/fix_people.htm

[9]www.strengths.com

[10]www.tracomcorp.com/products_services/social_style/model.html

[11]*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets,* p. 150

[12]Songs appear in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (p. 117–8), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (p. 176–7) and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (p. 204–7); lyrics also available at hpbeyond.net/hpb/info/song. There's also an original Pokemario song, "Which Hogwarts House Do You Belong In?" (www.mugglenet.com/songs/whichhouse.shtml)

[13]*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,* p. 117–118

[14]*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix,* p. 204–207

[15]House crests and examples from www.personalitylab.org/tests/ccq_hogwarts.htm <http://www.personalitylab.org/tests/ccq_hogwarts.htm>.

[16]*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets,* p. 333

[17]Good sources for quizzes include harry-potter-harry-potter-swicki.eurekster.com/sorting+house+quiz and www.harry-potter-games.com/Sorting_Hat_quiz.htm. There's even a LiveJournal quiz, at community.livejournal.com/sorting_elite that was covered in a National Public Radio interview with designer, July 14, 2005. Warning! I know from personal experience that you can waste a lot of time here … so let me also mention my two favorites: http://www.personalitylab.org/tests/ccq_hogwarts.htm and www.thealmightyguru.com/Reviews/HarryPotter/Docs/Quiz-House.html

[18]readerravenclaw.livejournal.com/9441.html?page=2

[19]whysnape.tripod.com/mbti_afic.htm

[20]www.friesian.com/types.htm#potter

[21]www.lelandra.com/tarotbook/harrypotter-elements.htm

[22]www.toughteams.com/papers/4-quadrant.htm

[23]www.2h.com/personality-types.html

[24]http://www.keirsey.com/pum_2.aspx. Keirsey's Temperaments were first introduced in his book *Please Understand Me* (Tandem, 1984), and are based on the MBTI pairs NT, NF, SJ and SP. Others besides Keirsey have created schematics to reduce the sixteen MTBI types to four, notably Isabel Myers' functional pairs (NT, NF, ST, SF) "the most important factors by which to group preferences"(Myers, quoted by Hirsh, Introduction to Type in Organizations, *Consulting Psychologists Press;* 3rd ed., 1990, p. 11).

[25]www.16types.com/Request.jsp?lView=ViewArticle&Article=O ID percent3A59667&Page=OID percent3A59669

[26]www.16types.com/Request.jsp?lView=ViewArticle&Article=O ID percent3A128971&Page=OID percent3A128972

[27]www.discprofile.com

[28]gregorc.com

[29]www.tracomcorp.com/index.asp

[30]www.keirsey.com/pum_2.aspx

[31]Linda Berens, *Understanding Yourself and Others: An Introduction to Interaction Styles,* Telos, 2001.

[32]*Discovering Librarians: Profiles of a Profession,* edited by Mary Jane Scherdin, ACRL, 1994.

[33]Ibid., p. 125-156

[34]Ibid., p. 132-4

[35]Ibid., p. 134

[36]http://www.quizilla.com/users/Ciela13/quizzes (select "Which Mix of Hogwarts Houses are You?")

[37]*Discovering Librarians,* p. 166-7.

[38]*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,* p. 758

We're Content Creators, Too:
Libraries and Blogging

by Isaac Gilman
Access/Instructional Services Liaison, Pacific University

The Shifted Librarian. Annoyed Librarian. Loose Cannon Librarian. Foxy Librarian. Bitter Librarian. Laughing Librarian …

Like a litany of rejected characters from Dark Horse Comics, the list continues, seemingly ad infinitum. But these aren't stereotypes thrust upon librarians by Hollywood or the popular press, though they may be appropriate descriptions for some of our co-workers. These are but a few samples of library advocates and agitators of the "new media"—the blogosphere.

One of the earliest examples of Web 2.0 technology, blogs have experienced exponential growth since the term "weblog" was coined in 1997 to describe the reverse-chronologically-ordered, interactive, online "journals."[1] As with any new technology, reception—and utilization—by librarians has been less than uniform. For many librarians and libraries, however, blogs are an attractive entrée to the world of 2.0 librarianship:

> "Blogs are a simple and efficient way for **librarians to stay informed** and for **libraries to disseminate information** in a timely manner. The format's central benefits are ease of use and clear presentation of updated content. Many blogging tools are designed to make publishing easy, regardless of the user's technological skill level." (Emphasis added).[2]

At the risk of being simplistic, there are two families of library blogs. There are those intended for other librarians/library staff, which perform the **staying informed** function (let's call them *professional* blogs). And then there are those intended for library patrons/the general public, which perform the **disseminating information** function (let's call these *outreach* blogs).

Before going further, an important addition should be made to this demarcation of blogging functionality. If we adhere too literally to the one-dimensional ideas that blogs only allow librarians to "stay informed" or allow libraries to "disseminate information," a *crucial* function of both professional and outreach blogs is lost: the encouragement of interactivity and dialogue. Blogs' true utility to libraries and librarians is found in the union of current content and communication—in the dialogue generated between fellow professionals and staffers, and the interaction fostered between library staff and patrons.

Professional Blogs

For a profession that has been, in general, notoriously slow to adopt new technologies (but we're getting better!), professional blogging is the ideal "gateway" technology: it offers low risks and high benefits. And it's free!

Professional blogs are generally maintained by individual library professionals, library staff or others working in related areas (e.g., vendors or academics). Though some bloggers are pseudonymous, most make no secret of their identities or their agendas. Topics of blogs are as diverse as the librarians who write them; though it is little surprise that many blogs address technological issues.

The greatest benefit of professional blogs is that they lend needed immediacy to the sharing of ideas and knowledge in the library world. While traditional peer-review publications are valuable, they cannot approach the benefits of blogging:

- Instantaneous distribution of new ideas about technology, best practice, customer service, staffing, etc.—which enables quicker adoption of new/improved technologies or practices.

- The ability to comment on, discuss, and debate ideas (without clogging e-mail inboxes with list-serv messages).

- The linkage of library professionals from around the world who are writing about/working on similar issues—via *blogrolls* (lists of recommended blogs on a bloggers site) and *trackbacks* (a method of notifying a blogger when his/her work is mentioned on another blog, and a good way of keeping track of discussions that span more than one blog).

- The ability to monitor multiple information sources (blogs) at once using RSS feeds.

- The ability to publicize and respond quickly to pressing issues be they political, legislative, professional, etc.

Fittingly enough, Eric Schnell (Ohio State University) used his blog to express the role that blogs can play in professional development:

> "While I respect the role that traditional publication plays in archiving our professional communications, I still can't help but to feel that they can no longer be the trusted source for the dialog and communication going on in our profession today. *Libraries are largely dependent on and are competing with technologies that change every nine months.* How are we supposed to progress as a profession in such a changing environment when it still takes a year and a half for an article to move from submission to publication?" (Emphasis added).[3]

There is little doubt that professional blogs will continue to play an important role in the exchange of ideas and in the growth and development of library practice, services and technology. And while there are benefits to creating a blog with the entire library world as your audience, the same collaborative benefits can be seen with blogs created for internal library use.

For those who are interested in starting a professional blog, free blogging platforms like Blogger (www.blogger.com) and Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) make it simple to get started.

Recommended Professional Blogs

Information Wants to be Free
   http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/index.php
YALSA
   http://blogs.ala.org/yalsa.php
DIY Librarian
   http://diylibrarian.org/
Tame The Web: Libraries and Technology
   http://tametheweb.com/
Librarians Matter
   http://librariansmatter.com/blog/
Library Garden
   http://librarygarden.blogspot.com/
Infodoodads
   http://www.infodoodads.com/

Outreach Blogs

Outreach blogs take librarians from behind the desk and place them, their skills, and their resources, in patrons' homes and online lives—all with the benefits of immediacy and interactivity. Depending on the type of library, the blogging possibilities may differ, but the underlying goals should remain the same: provide patrons with a forum that puts a personal face on the library; provides current, desirable, and valuable information; and provides an opportunity for patrons to interact with library staff (via blog comments). Some examples:

Academic libraries are perfect candidates for *subject blogs*—blogs devoted to a certain area of study or research. Librarians can write about research tools, new library classes, and anything else relevant to scholars in that area. Faculty or students can

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subscribe to the blogs via RSS feeds, and receive updates automatically.

Examples

University of Oregon Literature & the Library
http://libweb.uoregon.edu/tools/blogs/literature/

Oregon State University Archives
http://blogs.library.oregonstate.edu/osu_archives

All libraries—from school to public to academic—can benefit from **blogs aimed at specific patron groups.** One common example is a public library teen services blog. Blogging for teens is a logical combination; it's a familiar venue for many teens and, most importantly, one in which they will feel comfortable.

Examples

Tigard Teen (Tigard Public Library)
http://tpltigardteen.blogspot.com/

Birth to Six News (Corvallis-Benton County Public library)
http://www.corvallislibrarybirthtosix.blogspot.com/

Wired Distant—Pierce Library News & Views (Eastern Oregon University's Distance Education blog)
http://answerlandpierce.blogspot.com/

News blogs are perhaps the most common type of outreach blogs used by libraries. As the name implies, they are an excellent means of posting current events and other important information related to the library—new resources, programs, materials, staff, etc.

Examples

OHSU Library What's New
http://library.ohsu.edu/blog/

Library News from Watzek (Lewis & Clark College)
http://library.lclark.edu/newsblog/

The possibilities for outreach blogs are only limited by the library's scope, and the library staff's time (and imagination). While some larger libraries may decide to purchase a blogging platform such as MoveableType or Wordpress (which also offers free blogs), free blogging platforms are more than sufficient for almost all blogging needs. And a free way to expand a library's online presence—while reaching out to patrons—is certainly attractive.

Four Blogging Tips

While blogging is free, and easy, consider the following before falling headlong into online authorship:

- **Innovation for the sake of innovation is, well, pointless.** Don't blog without a purpose. You may feel swept up in the heady rush of "twopointopia" (a condition which compels otherwise rational people to implement Web 2.0 applications just because they're new and different), but it's important to consider why you are blogging and who you are blogging for.

- **Know your (technical) limitations.** For some public and school libraries, internet firewalls and filtering software may be set up to block blogs. If this is the case, you may find it hard to start even an inter-staff blog. Contact your system administrators beforehand to make sure it won't be a problem—and if it is, work with them to find a work-around.

- **Be consistent.** The very heartbeat of blogging is the promise of new material. Without constant attention and posting, a blog's audience will quickly wane—rendering your blog irrelevant.

- **Be yourself.** Whether you are writing a professional blog or an outreach blog, authenticity on your part will be respected (and expected) by your readers.

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A Librarian Mom's Thoughts on Librarian Images in Preschool Television

by Emily Asch
Head, Technical Services and Systems, Pacific University

How do our children learn about libraries and librarians? From many sources-not just from school, the public library, or family and friends. Images are regularly communicated to our children that create and reinforce ideas and opinions about librarians. As librarians, we all know and believe that libraries are central to a community, foster literacy and learning, and promote community building. As a librarian, I want all children to embrace libraries and librarians and recognize that we are valued contributors to their environment.

Recently I was watching *The Many Adventures of Mr. Mailman* with my 3-year-old. This show acquaints children with geographical and cultural information about places in our world through the mailman's route. On this day, we watched the mailman make a delivery to the library. Mr. Mailman found a very upset woman, dressed as a stereotypical librarian who shushed him for asking a question above a whisper. What does this show my daughter? Will she ever want to ask a librarian a question now that she has seen this unpleasant woman? This "educational" show presented a horribly negative image of libraries and librarians to my child. How many other similar images of librarians are out there for preschoolers to subconsciously absorb?

Of course, not all representations of libraries and librarians are wholly awful; it's a mixed bag. *Higglytown Heroes* presents community members as heroes that help Higglytown children solve problems. These "heroes" include a plumber, firefighters and—a librarian. The librarian in Higglytown is a positive and helpful character. Unfortunately, he is also a stuffy person wearing an argyle sweater and a monocle. (The creators should be given some credit, however, for making the librarian a man.)

Thankfully, when we flip our channel to *Dora the Explorer* the images change: librarians are fun, exciting, and helpful.

The images reinforce the positive role of the library within our communities and our children's lives.

In *Dora the Explorer,* Dora receives a special backpack to return her library books. She is very excited to receive her special backpack and has fun returning the books. With Dora, our children observe exciting events and parental reinforcement of libraries. However, we can't forget that the negative messages are only a few clicks away. For children at this developmental stage, who are trying to make sense of their world, television is a common source of information. Whether that information is negative or positive, our children draw upon the images on the screen to help form their views on the world around them.

We can help strengthen Dora's message and contradict the Mailman's. I took my daughter to get her library card last month. She was excited and placed the card in a place of honor, her princess box! Her excitement about the card, and her love of books and libraries, are fed through a variety of sources: characters on television, the people around her, and her innate desire to discover.

I think it is vitally important that our children—our future—receive appropriate messages from the world around them. Presenting images of scary librarians is detrimental to our communities. The lasting effects of these messages can lead to adults with ingrained ideas about librarians that present a barrier between the community and libraries. For instance, I work with a university student who plans on going on to library school next year. She was recently asked, quite seriously, "don't you need glasses to be a librarian?"

With college students still thinking of librarians as the woman in the bun and glasses, we need to ask: where does that image still reside, and resonate so, that our

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Who Do They Think We Are?

by Catherine Jasper
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Not long ago, an article in the local paper about our public library began with "Rid your memory of those dank, dusty rooms where stern old ladies shush anyone who coughs," and then described the wonderful ways the library does not fit this image.[1] It hit me. So many articles about libraries open with this stereotyped image only to go on to contradict the image.

A search in Lexis-Nexis found hundreds of stories that opened with this same stereotype. I found "Most people think of libraries as places full of dusty, unreadable tomes, nerdy types and ... well, silence,"[2] from Australia. There was "Modern, colorful and welcoming, the library defies the stereotype of libraries as dusty, dull places where librarians tell visitors to 'shush',"[3] from Wales and "At the age of 32, Cervantes is far from the librarian stereotype best characterized as an elderly woman who wears her gray hair in what would appear to be a painfully tight bun and glares sharply at anyone who dares to speak at audible volumes,"[4] from California. From *The New York Times* there was "Librarians? Aren't they supposed to be bespectacled women with a love of classic books and a perpetual annoyance with talkative patrons—the ultimate humorless shushers?" And surprise, the answer was, "Not anymore."[5] Marylaine Block, librarian and author, gathered hundreds of news stories about library events while working on *The Thriving Library*. She says, "Fully half of the news stories I've collected start with the reporter's astonished announcement that the librarians don't shush and the library events are fun."[6] Clearly, newspaper articles repeatedly rely on this stereotype for a hook.

If every example was of people and places not fitting the stereotype, why was the stereotype so widespread? Does the public stereotype us or is the stereotype just an interesting lead? To investigate I made a survey at Survey Monkey and posted to non-library discussion lists. Also, I surveyed passers-by on the street. I avoided librarians, as I was not after their perception of their public image, as Ruth Kneale investigated in 2002 with her Librarian Image Study.[7] The questions were simple and open-ended. I received 35 responses—17 local ones from Bend, Oregon and 18 from throughout the United States and Canada. Clearly, this is an unscientific sampling, but patterns emerged from these small numbers.

Librarians

Thirty-five responses yielded 105 adjectives to the question, "What are three words or phrases that describe librarians (the actual people)?" As with all the other questions, I grouped responses into categories. The number one category was Smart/Knowledgeable, with 18 people, more than half, describing us that way. In second place was Helpful (17) and in third place was Competent (14) though Nice was close behind with 11. Three people described us with stereotypes (glasses, sweaters, female, strict, old and short), but none of these are terribly negative. Nobody said anything about shushing. No one mentioned buns. No one called us grumpy. I was encouraged.

Libraries

The question, "What are three words that describe libraries (the place)?" yielded 35 responses and 105 adjectives. Again I was encouraged. The most common description of a library was Peaceful/Welcoming with 21 responses. Twenty people (57 percent) described the library as Quiet. Quiet was, in fact, the most common first word out of people's mouths. All the positive associations that came right after—enriching, exciting, inspiring, interesting, productive, stimulating—convinced me that in today's world of constant noise and input, quiet is a good thing. In third place were responses that reflected the library as a resource—for

books, information, and media.

No one said musty or dusty or dank. No one said boring or dull. Things were looking good.

What We Do

I next asked, "What are a librarian's most important responsibilities?" and "Name three (or as many as you can) reasons you would contact a librarian." Because of duplication, I combined these questions and ended up with 147 distinct responses. The only unanimous response of the survey was this one: All 35 people said librarians help people find books. Twenty-three people said Finding Information/Help with Research. In third place was Answering Questions about Library Resources. Checking Books In/Out (15) and Handling Library Accounts (12) beat out Develop/Maintain Collection (9), Readers' Advisory (7), and Programming (5).

Are We Educated?

I asked, "How would one go about getting a job as a librarian?" to gauge awareness of our credentials. Fifteen people indicated a degree in libraries was required. Five people thought you had to have a college degree, but not in a particular field. Six people said you can just go to the library and apply. Eight people didn't have a guess. One person said you "go down there and volunteer." Combining these numbers, 60 percent of respondents thought librarianship requires some kind of a college degree.

Who They Think We Are

The public perception that emerged from this informal survey looks like this: We are smart, helpful, competent and nice. Libraries are welcoming, quiet and rich in resources. We help people find books and information, manage the materials in the library, and help people navigate the library. We probably have a college degree.

Not a bad public image, but some things are missing. Only one person mentioned technology skills. No one mentioned electronic resources. Services that we see as the heart and soul of our profession (collection development, readers' advisory, outreach, programming) were named by very few people. No one mentioned the library as a place—free and open for gatherings. The public does not have a strong sense that we have a specialized body of knowledge and skill set. The pattern in my survey was consistent with a slightly larger survey, the 2005 *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources: A Report to the OCLC Membership* which surveyed 3,348 people. Two, of many, conclusions from the survey are, "'Books' is the library brand. There is no runner-up," and "Most information consumers are not aware of, nor do they use electronic information resources."[8] The public is not aware of the changes that have occurred in libraries, and we should work to change that.

I'm no longer bothered by the librarian stereotype. The media might be stuck on it, but I don't think people are. It's what the public doesn't know about us that needs improving. We offer quiet and books, but we offer so much more. We need to work to inform people, not about who we are or aren't, but what we can do for them.

Footnotes

[1]Raff, L., A Library Evolution - Deschutes County Takes Facilities Beyond the Shelves, *The Bulletin,* February 4, 2007.

[2]Downie, S., Comedy's New Chapter, *The Daily Telegraph,* October 31, 2007.

[3]Collins, P., State-of-the-Art Library Opens its Doors, *South Wales Echo,* January 3, 2007.

[4]Villicana, S.E., New Librarian Fosters Reading, *The Porterville Recorder,* July 26, 2007.

How Hip Can You Get?

by Traci Glass
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"A Hipper Crowd of Shushers"… huh?!

How cool are librarians? Way cooler than we thought, apparently. Seriously—we are a cool bunch of people. In the *New York Times* article written about our coolness, there we are in the picture, looking hip and aloof, drinking drinks that we've renamed using Dewey Decimal classifications. Oh, didn't you know … we talk Dewey. Even McSweeney's, the Über-cool publishing house founded by Dave Eggers, the literary illuminati, if you will, has a Web column that tells people about what wacky days we have working at the library … and oh, did I mention that we are really hip?

After doing some research like a good librarian, I discovered that we don't know how cool we are, nor do we care. Any and all kinds of librarians wrote reactions to that article. Some thought it was cute, some didn't think twice about it, and some, like me, felt like rolling their eyes. Unlike most professions, it seems for librarians, stereotypes are the only way people can deal with us; which, I guess, most of us are used to. We have to be either serious workers who are shushing people into oblivion or hip twenty-somethings who refer to their alcoholic drink as "613.96 C." You should see the list of stereotypical librarians listed on the "Librarians in Popular Culture" page at Wikipedia. Personally, my favorite is Barbara Gordon, AKA Batgirl, AKA Oracle—she was tough and smart. But, I digress.

As I was saying, we're used to being stereotyped. We've seen the Librarian Action Figure and laughed. We've smiled politely when we hear, "Don't you just read all day?" For the most part I can handle it. But when I read that article, I was bothered by two quotes. First, Rick Block, an adjunct professor at two graduate schools for librarians, said this: "When I was in library school in the early '80s, the students weren't as interesting." Unfortunately, in order to seem hip, we've now started alienating fellow professionals in the field, creating an "in" and "out" mentality, just like in high school. I don't need to seem cooler than anyone I work with. Nor do I think that identifying yourself as more interesting than co-workers is going to win you any prizes—unless they decide to give you the "I'm Cooler Than Everyone" award.

The second quote that bothered me was Brooklyn Museum librarian Sarah Gentile's response to the question: "Why become a librarian?" Her answer? "Because it's cool." Wow. So many great answers to that question … here's a good one to start with … to uphold a standard of a truly democratic society. Come on, "because it's cool??" Apparently, the only thing cooler than being a librarian is being inarticulate.

Unfortunately, in our society, making something cool is akin to making something socially acceptable. I mean, if it's not cool or making me cool, what's the point? There's nothing wrong with liking the things in the article; it's just the elitism that oozes out of it that's upsetting—that being young and hip is better than everything else. I'm afraid that librarianship is going to turn into one of those ironic things that people liked just to be ironic and then when it wasn't ironic anymore, it suddenly wasn't cool.

I will keep on thinking being a librarian is hip. And, after I'm done writing this piece, I won't spend another minute thinking about the coolness factor of librarians. But, hey! How cool is it that I wanted to be a librarian before it was cool?! 🌿

References

A Hipper Crowd of Shushers, *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/fashion/08librarian.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin

Librarians in Popular Culture, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Librarians_in_popular_culture

Librarians and Pop Culture:
What's the Skinny, Anyway?

by Ruth Kneale
Systems Librarian for the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope Project

So, some of you may be wondering if there's any pop culture relevance for librarians anymore. I'm here to tell you the answer is a resounding "Yes!" and to share some of the pop culture references of the last couple of years. Let's dive in!

If you haven't heard of the movie *The Hollywood Librarian: A Look at Librarians through Film* (http://www.hollywoodlibrarian.com/), well, now you have! It shows "the realities of 21st century librarianship, including stereotyping, censorship and intellectual freedom, and the total impact of librarians in our culture and society," and it premiered last summer at the annual ALA meeting. The filmmakers are now traveling the country; check your local public library to see if they'll be showing it!

If you're interested in cheesy Indiana Jones-inspired world adventures starring a nominal librarian character, look no further than Flynn Carsen. He's the hero of two TNT made-for-TV movies, *The Librarian: Quest for the Spear* (http://tinyurl.com/292d9w) and *The Librarian: Return to King Solomon's Mine* (http://tinyurl.com/u4zvl). A third movie is in production and supposed to be released in 2008. Grab the popcorn and your willing sense of disbelief!

Down under, the Australian Broadcast Company recently aired a six-part miniseries called *The Librarians* (http://www.abc.net.au/tv/librarians/). From the press release, "The six-part series centers on the trials and tribulations of Frances O'Brien, a devout Catholic and head librarian. Her life unravels when she is forced to employ her ex-best friend, Christine Grimwood—now a drug dealer—as the children's librarian. Frances must do all she can to contain her menacing past and concentrate on the biggest event of the library calendar—Book Week." A surprise ratings hit for ABC, the series is about to be released on DVD.

Casanova was a Librarian: A Light-Hearted Look at the Profession (http://www.casanovawasalibrarian.com/) by Kathleen Low was published last summer. The book "provides a peek at the lighthearted, humorous, sexy and intriguing side of librarians;" check your local library for a copy.

Miss Wilhelmina Zukas continues to have adventures in and around the Bellehaven Public Library in the mystery series from Jo Dereske (http://www.jodereske.com/work3.htm). *Catalogue of Death,* the tenth in the series, was published in April 2007. You've got to love a librarian whose epithets include "Oh, Faulkner!"

I like Rex Libris a great deal! This comic series by James Turner (http://www.jtillustration.com/rex/) tells the story of Rex, the "tough-as-nails Head Librarian at the Middleton Public Library and his unending struggle against the forces of darkness." Rex has been around a while, and now he protects anything and everything in the library from those who would do harm to it. Eight issues have been released, along with a compendium (with additional stories!). If you like your librarians with big guns, teleportation crystals and buttertarts, here's where you'll find them!

Engineers have Dilbert … librarians have Dewey! The comic strip Unshelved (http://www.unshelved.com/) tells the story of the Mallville Public Library, primarily through the eyes of Dewey, the YA librarian. There's a librarian here for everyone—the perky children's librarian, the technophobic reference librarian—even the branch manager. (And Mel is a lot nicer than the PHB!) If you aren't reading Unshelved, please start doing so immediately. Trust me!

In a similar but completely different vein, also be sure to look at Shelf Check (http://shelfcheck.blogspot.com/), another strip about working in a public library, but from a very different perspective.

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Pathfinder to Librarian Likenesses in the Media

by Gretchen Leslie
Reference Volunteer,
Concordia University Library
and Temporary Consultant,
IEEE, Inc.

How could the topic "Libraries in Popular Media" be complete without some kind of a "library pathfinder?" This brief article is intended to be a lighthearted path to sources I have found both fun and informative.

Read on and
- find out what to watch so you can see libraries and librarians portrayed in the media;

- review the titles of a few good books about librarians and libraries in the media;

- discover a media shock for your system as you view online clips of a terrific 1947 black and white vocational film called *The Librarian.*

What to Watch

There are several Web sites that list movies featuring librarians and/or libraries. I have selected four that are current and detailed. URLs are provided, along with quick descriptions.

1. Martin Raish has put together one of the best Web sites listing movies about libraries and librarians. His site is titled "Librarians in the Movies: An Annotated Filmography" and it is current, thorough and very well organized. Libraries as places are found in the B Group. Find his filmography at http://emp.byui.edu/RAISHM/films/introduction.html. The site was updated March 1, 2007.

2. A.G. Graham's Web site "Movie Librarians: Notable Librarians & Libraries" takes a different tack than Raish's, and the reviews are more thoughtful integrated comments on the topic than summaries of individual films. The last time I looked, January 1, 2008, the site had been updated. The URL is http://home.earthlink.net/~movielibrarians/.

3. Jennifer Snoek-Brown's 2006 Wisconsin Library Association paper puts the focus on librarians, but of course, often includes the context of the library itself. "Connecting Librarians and Film: Librarian Portrayals and Stereotypes" is an 18 page PDF listing of movies with succinct summaries. Download the PDF at http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/conferences/2006/documents/LibrarianFilmList.pdf.

4. "Film Librarian" is a Web site that describes itself as "… an online database of films featuring librarians." The very good lead article by Steven J. Schmidt is titled "Top ten films featuring librarians." However, I must note that not all the films listed in the database have annotations or reviews, so it is difficult to figure out which films use the library itself as the "star" of the media. The URL is http://www.filmlibrarian.info/ and it was last updated May 7, 2007.

Check your local public library for holdings of these titles, but you may need to rent or even buy some of them. One tip, if you go to Amazon.com, searching the "Listmania" function will find several good lists of movies for purchase, including "Librarians in the Movies: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly: A list by Kitty Bookish-Nerd," and "Hollywood Looks at Librarians A Listmania! list by Tony B. Small."

What to Read

Books—what pathfinder would be complete without them? Here are several titles I have found easy to read and very useful for the topic at hand. It should be noted that these books focus more on librarians than libraries themselves.

1. *The Image of Librarians in Cinema, 1917–1999,* is authored by Ray Tevis and Brenda Tevis. Published in 2005, it is very well written and easy to read. WorldCat shows the book at five locations in Oregon. The ISBN is 978-0-7864-2150-3, it is 240 pages in soft cover, about $45. What I really liked about this book was the thoughtful analysis around each "librarian character" as fixed in the historical time of the movie, putting a very useful context on the perception of what is was like to be a librarian in a particular era.

2. *Librarians in Fiction: A Critical Bibliography,* is by Grant Burns. WorldCat shows it available in three Oregon libraries and several more in Washington. The ISBN is 978-0-7864-0499-5, it is 191 pages in soft cover, with a 1998 publication date. This is a readable reference book, with very complete details about librarians as characters in books, short stories, and plays.

3. Published in 2007, *Casanova Was a Librarian: A Light-Hearted Look at the Profession,* was written by Kathleen Low. The book has a lot of statistical parsing out of our profession, but the piece dealing with "novelty gifts for library professionals" will be very useful at the holiday season. And look for the quotes she has pulled out of various films, books, musicals, and poetry. These quotes go to the heart of the issue of how libraries and librarians are perceived in the popular media. The ISBN is 978-0-7864-2981-3, it is 184 pages soft cover, about $45. WorldCat shows the book in three Oregon locations and two Washington locations.

4. Should you wish to get a totally out-of-this-world perspective on libraries and librarians, try to find a copy of James Turner's *Rex Libris : I, librarian.* In this comic book, Rex fights aliens misbehaving in the reference section and giant evil beings who keep books overdue. WorldCat showed Bend's Deschutes County Public Library as holding a copy. Published in May 2007 by SLG Publishing, the ISBN-13 is 9781593620622, it is 176 pages soft cover, about $15. Find out more here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rex_Libris.

Discover a media shock for your system. View online clips of a terrific 1947 black and white vocational film called *The Librarian* at the Web site http://www.archive.org/details/Libraria1947. The film is courtesy of the Prelinger Archives, and was produced by Holmes (Burton) Films, Inc. The film does an amazing job of putting you into a working, 1947 public library.

Atrocious Academic Activity for Amusement and Abstraction

by Garrett Trott
Instruction-Reference Librarian,
Corban College

Humor is everywhere, even in libraries, and especially in academic libraries. Everywhere from students' chronicles of lost books to a staff member finding books in their office that were checked out in 1984, humor exists. Stephen Colbert on Comedy Central demonstrates this in his satirical style. However, not everyone takes a liking to satire, especially when the intention is to make fun of something that one highly values. One is not often sure how to take it. Do they laugh with the comedian? Become offended and be silent? Leave the library profession and become a door-to-door salesman? Or perhaps they should laugh with Stephen Colbert and at him in one foul swoop. If you are ready for some Colbert style comedy, read on.
       —GARRETT TROTT

As none of you are probably aware, this is National Comedy Week. What a better place to celebrate this than the local university library.

Comedy is always happening at the library. Just look around.

Books are funny and a library is full of books. While it may not be that much fun to actually read books, there are several things that can be done with them that provoke humor. Anyone using a book as a hat provokes laughter. Particularly in the moist Willamette Valley, where rain oftentimes permeates the academic scenario, using a book as a rain deflector provokes humor.

There are even educational benefits for using a book to deflect rain: osmosis. It is oftentimes believed that education can occur by placing information on one's head. This information simply seeps into one's brain and the material is learned. Osmosis is a learning endeavor which, many argue, should not be taken lightly.

However, new research reports are showing that there are more useful tools that can be used for keeping one dry, even in the Willamette Valley, than a book.

Research reports also suggest that while osmosis is a wonderful tool, its overall rightness has come into serious debate in academic circles.

There are also practical benefits for having books in a library. Books are a wonderful resource for teething. Young children love to teethe and salivate on books. The hard, yet gentle, surfaces of most hard cover books give infants exactly what they need for developing their first teeth. This feature grants those who work in academic libraries an exceptional benefit. They can bring their infants to work with them and simply let them loose in the stacks. The multiple books in an academic library provide the child with hours upon hours of teething opportunities.

Even though books may serve as wonderful teething tools for infants, they are rather expensive ones, as the teething process tends to destroy at least part of the book. Not to mention the fact that when the ink on the pages gets wet, it bleeds. There are more useful tools for teething that are less expensive, last longer, and don't have the potential health hazards that bleeding ink can cause.

These few examples point out the versatility of printed material in the academic scenario. And most academic libraries have lots of books.

But, wait, just a second. We are referring to an academic library. How does any of this relate to the purpose of education, other than osmosis and perhaps alleviating some of the concerns of faculty, staff, and students by providing free child care? Put simply, it doesn't.

Books, especially since so few people are fans of them, have become useless for academia. Since a library is only about

books and academia has always had the intention of pleasing its clientele, the library is on the verge of vanishing.

Academia's intention of pleasing its clientele is obvious. When tuition gets too expensive, academia joyfully chops its tuition to an affordable rate. When its faculty and staff raise concerns about their income, academia gleefully responds by raising their rate of pay. When students complain about their grades, academia responds happily by giving the consumer (the student) the grade they want. After all, they paid for it.

Since books are no longer useful, why have them?

Long, long ago in the age of BI, before the Internet, books were necessary. In order to track down information, books and other printed media were indispensable.

Things have changed. The age of the Internet (AI) is here. Everyone knows that books really aren't useful anymore, with the few exceptions listed above. The Internet has replaced them. Books are no longer necessary.

Libraries, particularly academic libraries and thus librarians are about books. This tradition continues. If you wanted some instruction on how to use a database or a catalog, you'd better look in other places. If you wanted instruction on how to find good resources on the Internet, don't look to a librarian. Between keeping the academic library quiet and making sure that books were shelved correctly, there was no time for these other trivial tasks.

Academic librarians are passionate about the fact that libraries are only about books. Their sense of overall rightness is truly exposed in the wrath of the academic librarians. Beware of the wrath of the academic librarian!

The academic librarians will come to an academic library that has committed the atrocity of purchasing non-printed media and the wrath will begin. The wrath is simple, yet effective: mis-shelving. These items will be lost in library land forever!

But wait! Is the library, even the academic library, really just about books? True, there are a lot of books in any academic library. The library though, is more than just books. The library is about information and making that information available to patrons. Information comes in a variety of formats, not just books.

With this new revelation, the wrath of the academic librarians has been appeased. Other material may now enter the academic library realm without fret that the wrath will come to pass.

With the ease of the wrath, the academic library has become the home for databases, videos and DVDs both for personal entertainment and instruction-use. The once trivial tasks of assistance with research, instruction, tutorials, and reference service have moved to the forefront of the academic library.

While it may be true that many people are not fans of books, this does not suggest the frivolousness of the academic library. To equate the modern library, yes even the modern academic library, as an Eiffel Tower full of books is wrong. It has become much more than that.

Academic librarians and academic libraries are places of humor and thus, an appropriate setting for National Comedy Week. Being members of a service-based profession, librarians are no longer people who just love books, sit in their comfortable little chairs and go around shhhh'ing people all the time. No. Librarians, even academic librarians, are people, real people. They serve, they instruct, and in response to atrocious actions, they deliberately mis-shelve. ✿

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Why Libraries Are a Threat to America!
(Ode to Stephen Colbert)

by Eva Calcagno
Manager,
Washington County
Cooperative Library Services

(with inspired contributions from Barbara Kesel, Barbara O'Neill and Stephanie Lind)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The WORD for the day is Parody. Parody, as in an artistic work that imitates the characteristic style of an author or a work for comic effect. So, if you are one of those librarians with no sense of humor, read no further. If you've never heard of, watched, listened to, read, or video-streamed Stephen Colbert (http://www.comedycentral.com/ shows/the_colbert_report/index.jhtml), just stop reading right now. You'll just be confused, and probably irritated. And we don't need anymore irritated librarians around here.*

Stephen Colbert is no fan of books. By extension, he's also no fan of libraries or librarians. Following are six reasons libraries threaten Stephen Colbert's America. This is a call to arms to stop this assault on American values and protect the America we know and love!

1. **Libraries give things away.** Libraries check out books to anyone. For free. Without a deposit, VISA number, first born child (see #3 below) or any other collateral. These are books that are purchased with the hard-earned tax dollars of you and me, buddy. I want some accountability! They're loaning them to any Tom, Dick or Harriett who walks through the door. "Here—take two books; they're free!" That's not the American way. It undermines the economy and creates a welfare state. Makes people think they are entitled to government largesse. It was bad enough when it was just books, but now libraries are giving people DVDs and CDs, too. Well, Ms. Librarian, your free checkout of *Pursuit of Happyness* is taking food out of the mouth of that pimply-faced clerk at Blockbuster!

2. **Librarians trust people.** Anyone who can fill out an application form gets a library card and is treated like the President of the United States. The homeless, the home bound, immigrants (EVEN illegal ones), homosexuals, redheads, belly dancers, tofu eaters, and any miscreant who wanders through the door. "Thanks for visiting your library. Please come back again soon!" Whatever happened to trust, but verify? Well, this Commander in Chief thinks we're spending too much time pandering to those freeloading library card-carriers!

3. **Libraries encourage children.** Libraries let children run amok, unsupervised, reading anything they can pull off the shelves. Encouraging them just puts crazy ideas in their heads, allows too many opportunities for mingling with adults. You might be thinking, "Children are our future!" Well, they're going to blog your career into obsolescence faster that you can say, "social networking software." Don't encourage them. They should be firmly ensconced in that basement room of the Carnegie Library where they belong.

4. **The Internet.** Need I say more? Just go ahead and change the library sign over the front door to say, "Pornography Den." And again, you let people use the Internet for *free*. You could at least broker music downloads to cover the cost of the T-1 and save a few of my tax dollars. Sure, the Internet's a "source of information" but is giving little Suzi (faves: sushi, alt rock, the OC and yellow. Go Bears! Woohoo!) a high-speed opportunity to update her MySpace account really informational?

5. **Too many facts.** Dictionaries and reference books are elitist. There are those who think with their heads and those who think with their hearts. Real

Americans make decisions by what they believe, by what they know in their hearts. They don't need Mr. Webster to tell them what's what! Reading the facts just encourages people to question, and questioning is very unpatriotic. We're watching you.

6. **Librarians purportedly promote "freedom of choice."** Freedom is not free, baby! Choice is bad. It creates false hopes and just fills peoples' heads with dangerous ideas. It leads to anarchy and plants the seeds of terrorism. Well, are you with us or against us? Libraries are a code RED on this Patriot's warning system! ✍

Look! Up in the Sky!
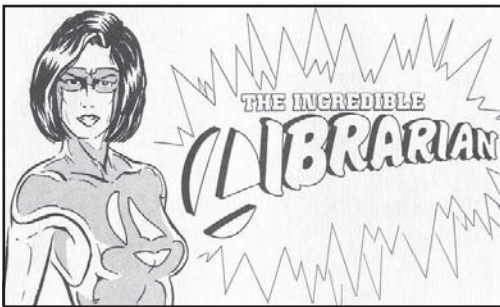
preservation information. It was also bilingual—you can flip it over and read the same material in Spanish. Unfortunately, despite promises of full issues to come, the Incredible Librarian only appeared on a lavender T-shirt and this tantalizing sample issue.

The pages of comic books reflect the world around them. Over the past decade, costumed heroes have increasingly used online resources and sophisticated research skills nearly as much as muscles and utility belts to defeat injustice and tyranny. The Justice Society, the world's first superhero team, hired an archivist to manage their more-than-60-year history for them. With her vast information and communication network, Oracle may well be the most influential hero in the DC Universe. Who knows where the next costumed librarian may show up, fighting for truth, justice and a meaningful reference interview! ✍

We're Content Creators Too

Final Thoughts

If they did nothing else (and they do), blogs would be valuable for one simple reason: they allow librarians (and libraries) to shape their identities in the eyes of patrons. Visions of Katherine Hepburn and Shirley Jones—or even a "shush-action" Nancy Pearl—may be hard to shake, but blogs give librarians a new way to communicate their true value and expertise, along with the depth of library resources and the importance of library-related issues.

By utilizing a platform that is only increasing in popularity and visibility, library staff can share ideas with each other, collaborate on innovative new services, and further convince patrons of what we already know—libraries (and librarians) are relevant, current, accurate and authoritative. And kind of cool, too. ✍

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A Librarian Mom's Thoughts

college students still think of librarians in such stereotypical ways? And, what does this mean for those students and adults who need assistance but won't ask because of this image? What does it mean for the future of libraries if their caretakers (librarians) are viewed as unapproachable?

Will our children, and their children, see libraries as welcoming community spaces? We must keep trying to reach children and adults through our services and resources to create richer communities—and to create an image that outweighs the weight.

Who Do They Think We Are?

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Librarians and Pop Culture

Emily Lloyd shares the stories of Jan, who is trapped behind the reference desk, and her clueless boss; the questions and situations Jan deals with regularly make me glad I'm not on a reference desk myself!

There are plenty of other things out there—toys, books, movies, even search engines "modeled" on librarians, one of which was released in late 2007 (findingDucinea, which bills itself as "Librarian of the Internet"). Keep your eyes open—as long as these activities are going on, then librarians have pop relevance!

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