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Revisiting the Vision

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Upcoming Issues

Summer 2004
Local Advocacy

Fall 2004
TBA

Revisiting the Vision

Table of Contents

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Vol 10 • No 2 Summer 2004	*Local Advocacy*	April 15, 2004	June 15, 2004	Melanie Lightbody Jefferson County Library District

Revisiting the Vision

I became curious last summer as I labored to implement elements of the Statewide Database Licensing Program. I knew that the impetus for this new State Library program and several others supported by LSTA funds had been OLA's *Vision 2010*. I started to wonder what progress had been made toward each of the "Call to Action" challenges articulated by the Vision 2010 Committee (see *OLA Quarterly* Fall 2001, No. 3, p. 21; http://www.olaweb.org/quarterly/quar7-3/vicomm.shtml).

Are those goals being met?, I wondered. Are they still relevant? Have important new challenges emerged? Because recent programs supported with State Library staff and/or funding are a direct outcome of *Vision 2010*, my interest has been more than academic.

Although only a few years have elapsed since the 2010 goals were set, I thought it would be both interesting and instructive to look at our progress, and that perhaps an article in *OLA Quarterly* might be a good opportunity to reflect on the library community's accomplishments as well as the need for additional work. In the way of so many things, my idea of "writing an article" quickly expanded to editing an issue.

Vision 2010 began in 1999, when the OLA Executive Board charged the Vision 2010 Committee to develop a road map for the next decade. The committee took a "rational strategic approach to the planning process," conducting environmental scans to provide context, considering population, economy, and technology. The committee also looked at such issues as recruitment, and the political climate affecting information resources and infrastructure in libraries. However, members of the committee soon recognized that their real challenge was to describe how libraries must transform to become successful in a competitive environment.

The Vision 2010 Committee decided to focus on "a few giant steps" that promised to result in substantial progress in a few key areas, to help libraries remain at the "center of communities and campuses as primary providers of information services." The *OLA Quarterly's Vision 2010* issue included several thought provoking scenarios of our future, intended to stir the library community to pursue and achieve relevance and excellence in our rapidly changing world. I recommend that you re-read the issue and encourage you to participate in establishing the infrastructure and services that libraries require as we move toward the future.

The world around us has continued to change rapidly, and libraries with it. The environment in Oregon and our world is quite different than it was four years ago. Economic and political aspects have been transformed—and both are now significantly more challenging for libraries.

In *Revisiting Vision 2010,* our author-contributors will address the progress we have made toward *Vision 2010.* Some were members of the original Committee, others have been instrumental in forwarding some aspect of the "Call to Action" goals, including members of the Senate Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation. Each has a unique and informed perspective. This issue's contributors variously address the goals of the "Call to Action," or provide their reflections and opinions about the progress we've made and what we have left to do.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to our excellent librarians and colleagues whose contributions you are about to read. I have learned much from their perceptions and observations.

I hope that the progress and challenges recounted in this issue will inspire you to momentarily leave your day-to-day tasks and step into the future of library service in Oregon. It is your support and participation that will enable the library community to fulfill the challenges of *Vision 2010.*

—Pam Horan
Oregon State Library
Guest Editor

Call to Action:

Vision 2010 Committee

The Vision 2010 Committee stated that the citizens of Oregon are "best served if libraries remain at the center of our communities and campuses as primary providers of information services." The Committee proposed a "Call to Action" that would result in substantial progress in a few key areas, and that would answer three risks: inertia, adopting too broad a plan, and that libraries' valuable resources might be underused. If these risks are not addressed our opportunity to continue to serve the needs of our citizens will be lost. The Vision 2010 Committee challenged us to "take creative steps to maximize the use of our collections and services."

Statewide Library Card
- Sweep away regional, jurisdictional and procedural boundaries so every Oregonian has a library card that works at any publicly supported library.

Statewide Library Catalog
- Make the holdings of all Oregon libraries accessible through one catalog.

- Encourage Oregonians to place inter-library loans through the statewide catalog.

- Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.

Statewide Access to Electronic Resources
- Secure a broad and deep menu of state–funded electronic databases that are available to all libraries and library customers in Oregon.

E–Reference Services
- Create a collaborative on–line reference service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Statewide High Speed Network
- Ensure that every library has easy and affordable access to a high quality, high bandwidth telecommunications network.

Serve Every Child
- Nurture the joy of reading by providing every child in Oregon with quality library services from both public and school libraries.

Strong and Diverse Workforce
- Bring the highest caliber of leadership to every Oregon library.

- Use the broadest range of skills and abilities from people with diverse educational, experiential, and cultural backgrounds.
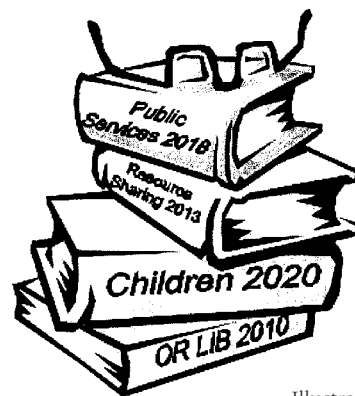
—Illustration by
Robin Speer
2004

Revising the Vision, Recasting Our Goals

by Cindy Gibbon

Senior Library Manager
Multnomah County Library

Past Chair
OLA Public Library Division

Statewide Library Card
- *Sweep away regional, jurisdictional and procedural boundaries so every Oregonian has a library card that works at any publicly supported library*

Statewide Library Catalog
- *Make the holdings of all Oregon libraries accessible through one catalog.*

Vision 2010 is a bold call to action for the Oregon library community. We've already made significant progress toward several of our goals. For example, we've agreed to divert Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from net lender reimbursement to the statewide database licensing program. Even in rural areas of Oregon most libraries now have access to high bandwidth telecommunications. Our pilot e-reference service is up and running. We owe our progress toward these goals to our level of commitment. A broad cross section of OLA members and the library community at large agreed these were high priorities for enhancing service to library users.

Significantly, the top two goals of Vision 2010—the Statewide Library Card and Statewide Library Catalog—haven't seen much progress. Why? Evidence from forums conducted around the state in Spring 2002 by the Public Library Division (PLD) Executive Board indicates we owe our lack of progress toward these goals to our lack of commitment. We must reexamine these two goals, because we really aren't collectively sure that either goal is worthy of our efforts.

During the months of February and March, 2002, the PLD Board conducted five forums on the concept of a statewide library card for Oregon. During the course of those conversations, we also received comments on the statewide catalog. Forums were held at the Public Library

Director's meeting in St. Helens; the Southern Oregon Library Federation meeting at Umpqua Community College; the Eastern Oregon Library Association meeting at Pendleton Public Library; at Hatfield Marine Sciences Center, Newport; and at Multnomah County Central Library, Portland. Based on the comments received at those forums, the PLD Executive Board reported the following findings to the OLA Executive Board on April 18, 2002.

What would a statewide library card look like if Oregon had one?
Forum participants generally agreed that:

- A statewide library card would allow in-person access to any public library in the state for any Oregon resident who has a valid library card from any participating Oregon public library.

- To deal with the issue of unserved areas, all participating libraries would agree to charge an established minimum non-resident fee to persons who live in an area where there is no tax-supported public library service.

- The card would be tied to a specific set of agreed-upon services applicable throughout the state.

- If the purpose of a statewide library card is to provide service to people in areas that have not chosen to support local public library service, there must be state funding to support their access. PLD Board did not recommend this approach, both because of the current fiscal and legislative climate and because it seems to reward those areas of the state that persistently resist funding public library service.

How would a statewide library card assist library users?
Many forum participants felt that a state-

4

wide library card provides little benefit where regional cooperative agreements exist. Most of the benefits of a statewide library card could be achieved by encouraging more regional agreements. For most Oregonians, in-person access is most relevant when it applies to libraries in their own home region. My in-laws, who live in Burns and use the Harney County Library, go to Bend regularly to shop or visit healthcare providers. For them, a regional agreement providing free access to Deschutes County Libraries might be very beneficial. But they wouldn't have much use for a library card that gave them free access to Tillamook County or Multnomah County Libraries.

Working regional agreements exist among libraries in many parts of Oregon. Identifying best practices and encouraging and assisting the development of additional meaningful regional agreements should be a priority for OLA in partnership with the Oregon State Library.

Thoughts on the statewide database/catalog

Forum participants shared these thoughts on the idea of a statewide catalog:

- Regional access agreements would not require the development of a statewide library catalog.

- Additional costs of providing interlibrary loan service based on a statewide catalog, including delivery costs, would require a state subsidy.

- A statewide database is no longer the only option for providing greater access to a broader range of materials. Examples of varying degrees of access include WorldCat, the expanded use of Z39.50, products such as WebFeat, and the efforts by automation vendors to use NCIP (National Circulation Interchange Protocol) whereby circulation

information is shared between different integrated library systems.

Thoughts on funding

We heard at all the forums that jurisdictions levying taxes to provide local public library service are unwilling to subsidize service to unserved areas. A state subsidy of local library services would be required to accomplish the vision of universal access promised by a statewide library card and a statewide catalog. Forum participants saw little chance of the Legislature funding such a program and did not favor use of LSTA funds for this purpose. Some participants were willing to consider use of LSTA monies to fund a pilot project only.

Participants were clear that a statewide database licensing program was their highest priority for use of any available funds.

Revising our vision

Based on these conversations, it seems clear that OLA must rethink the top two Vision 2010 priorities. The library community in Oregon is ambivalent at best about the Statewide Library Card and Catalog. For many of us, these are ideas whose time came and went in the last millennium, and we don't believe they will necessarily provide better library service to Oregonians today. Others doubt we will ever have sufficient state level resources to accomplish either goal and believe the resources we do have are better spent on other priorities.

What needs did we hope to meet for our users by establishing a statewide library card and catalog? Is regional, rather than statewide, cooperation the most practical way to meet those needs? Or can we envision a creative new strategy, with the power to capture our collective imagination and commitment? Let the conversation begin! 🍂

5

Statewide Catalog:

2004 Status Report

by Pam Horan

Technology Planning Consultant
Library Development Services
Oregon State Library

Statewide Library Catalog

- *Make the holdings of all Oregon libraries accessible through one catalog.*

- *Encourage Oregonians to place interlibrary loans through the state-wide catalog.*

- *Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.*

Although it appears that Oregon is some years away from offering an effective statewide library catalog to its citizens, the infrastructure necessary for such a statewide service is moving slowly into place. The goal would be to allow patrons to initiate requests for any library materials available in the state, and to receive them within two days—much as the Orbis Cascade Alliance borrowing system works now.

Figure 1 below provides a graphic representation, locating most of the public/academic library regional shared systems around the state.

Figure 2 on the following page gives a snapshot of Oregon's shared systems and larger public library systems, indicating the number of public and academic library participants, the population served or enrollment, the number of titles reported, and the variety of vendors used—Innovative, Epixtech iPac, Polaris, DRA, WebPac, Voyager and TLC.

From the table in *Figure 2* we can calculate that roughly 13 percent of Oregon's population is not currently in a service area with a public shared catalog or large library system. Moreover, roughly 20 percent (35 libraries) of Oregon's academic and legally established public libraries neither participate in a shared catalog nor are in a large library system.

The development and expansion of regional shared catalog systems that include public, academic and some school libraries has had a dramatic effect on the accessibility of library materials for patrons and the ease of requesting them, resulting in the growth of Interlibrary Loans (ILLs) throughout the state. Since 1995, the growth rate of ILLs has been consistently high, with a 2002–03 increase of over 12 percent.
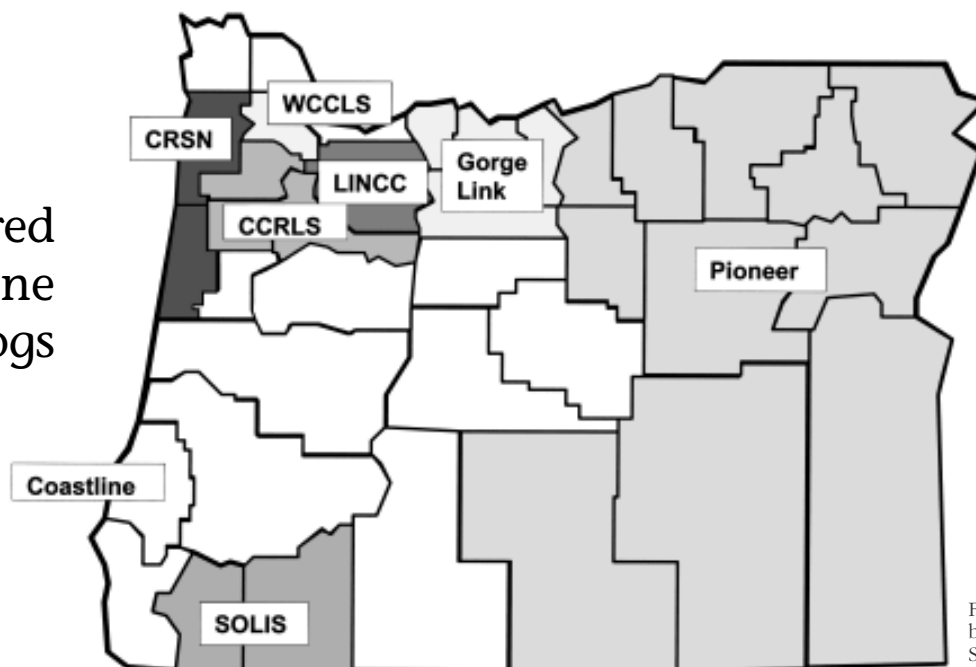
Shared Online Catalogs

Figure 1
by Jim Scheppke,
State Library 2003

OREGON SHARED SYSTEMS AND LARGE LIBRARY SYSTEMS 2004

SHARED CATALOG GROUP	VENDOR	OREGON PUBLIC and ACADEMIC PARTICIPANTS	PUBLIC LIBRARY POPULATION SERVED	ACADEMIC LIBRARY FTE	NUMBER OF TITLES	COUNTIES
CCRLS	WebPac	17	350,000	5,253	521,161	Marion, Polk, Yamhill pt. Linn
CRSN	DRA	13	68,630	336	395,208	Tillamook, Lincoln
Coastline	Innovative	9	62,650	1,749	300,000	Coos
Gorge Link	Epixtech iPac	4	43,517		188,000	Wasco, Sherman, Hood River
Lane County Library Consortium	Sirsi	6	98,295		260,161	Lane
LINCC	Epixtech iP	11	350,850		350,000	Clackamas
OPALL	Voyager Endeavor	7		4,027	520,000	Academic
Orbis Cascade Alliance	Innovative	18		83,498	6,632,487	Most academic
Pioneer Library System	Innovative	30	168,436	4,493	588,552	Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malhuer, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wheeler
SOLIS	Polaris	3	265,250	2,289	278,712	Jefferson, Josephine
WCCLS	Polaris	11	455,800		489,584	Washington
Large Library Systems						
Corvallis-Benton	TLC	1	79,000		247,920	Benton
Deschutes PLS	Epixtech iPac	1	126,500		182,457	Deschutes
Douglas Cty	Epixtech iPac	2	101,300	1,021	182,596	Douglas
Eugene PL	Polaris	1	142,380		295,866	Lane
Klamath Cty	Polaris	1	64,550		128,359	Klamath
Multnomah Cty	Epixtech-iPac	1	670,250		650,000	Multnomah
Totals		**136**	**3,047,408**	**97,077**	**12,211,063**	

Oregon Pop Est. 2002   3,504,700
Total public and non-profit academic libraries: 171

Figure 2

Although this double digit rise is impressive, it is far short of the robust growth of the previous three years (minimum 19 percent per year), which has been due largely to participation in shared systems by Oregon libraries. And Oregon ranks an impressive third in the nation for ILLs (470.65 per 1,000 population), far above the national average of 70.46 per 1,000. Only Rhode Island and Wisconsin make a better showing (National Center for Education Statistics, Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2001 Table. A2, p.110 at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003399).

A statewide catalog may be achieved more quickly than expected if changing technology and reduced costs allow. But local politics and political concerns may prove more daunting challenges than those of cost and technology.

Visions of Statewide Document Delivery

by Paula Hamilton

Chair
OLA Resource
Sharing Committee

Statewide Library Catalog

- *Encourage Oregonians to place inter-library loans through the statewide catalog.*

- *Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.*

How to provide document delivery from any one Oregon library to any other library within Oregon?

Inspired by the futurist scenarios accompanying the *Vision 2010* document, the OLA Resource Sharing Committee (RSC) decided to apply for a grant to assist libraries to survive and thrive in the next quarter century. Committee members Aletha Bonebrake, Gretta Siegel, Ann Fox, Mary Jane Fisher, Frances Rasmussen, Lorraine Borchers, Jeff Ring, Greg Doyle, and Paula Hamilton fixed on pushing toward "the knife edge ridge," described in Deborah Carver's article as a place close to the summit, where the slopes drop off precipitously, and where, in order to reach one's goal, the summit, one must focus (Carver, 2001).

We decided to focus on maximizing the use of Oregon's library collections by developing a plan to provide document delivery to all libraries in the state.

Our committee work relates to resource sharing. The challenge for us, described in *Vision 2010*, falls under the charge to establish a statewide library catalog. Two objectives relate directly to the RSC:

1. Encourage Oregonians to place inter-library loans through the statewide catalog; and

2. Deliver library materials and information directly to the customer.

We realized that some libraries in the state did not participate in the courier service and others did not offer interlibrary borrowing because they could not afford to pay document delivery costs. But we also found that resource sharing in Oregon through interlibrary loans is steadily increasing due to the high visibility of resources to patrons, and the availability of patron-initiated borrowing. Assuming that patrons would be able to request materials directly from a statewide catalog, a statewide delivery system is both logical and necessary. With the goals of *Vision 2010* in mind, the RSC wrote a grant proposal under the auspices of the Oregon Library Association to the State Library to obtain Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding. The committee sought funding to develop a plan for an effective statewide delivery system in Oregon.

We were awarded LSTA funding and, in early 2003, hired Wes Stevens, Facilities and Operations Supervisor for Multnomah County Library, as our consultant. Wes examined existing in-state delivery systems, studied statewide plans operating in other states, and devised an extensive plan and maps outlining a highly effective statewide delivery system.

Wes and the committee later met with John Helmer, Nancy Nathanson, and Travis Honea of the Orbis Cascade Alliance, and together we developed the following goals:

Short term goals

1. Continue to publicize ("raise awareness" about) the courier system.

2. Approach selected libraries that clearly would serve well to become a forwarding site associated with a drop site, based on proximity.

3. Approach selected public libraries that would be good candidates to form new drop sites (based on volume, postage costs): Albany, Douglas County, Eugene, Hood River, and Springfield.

4. Begin a conversation with the OLA Board, the Oregon State Library, and the LSTA Advisory Council about the potential for subsidizing selected drop sites.

Longer term goals

1. Continue plans to reduce courier costs for selected sites (e.g. reduced fees for low-volume sites and options for less frequent pickups) during the next RFP for courier service, as the Orbis Cascade Alliance has done in the past.

2. Seek additional LSTA monies to fund a limited-duration project to help organize libraries not currently linked to the Orbis Cascade Alliance courier system.

3. Subsidize courier fees for selected sites (sites, formula, and source of funds to be identified).

Using this plan as a working document, we hope to cut through the barriers to providing efficient, cost-effective document delivery service to all libraries in Oregon. Our intention is to request a subsequent LSTA grant to carry out the goals stated above. With a statewide delivery system in place, can a statewide catalog be far behind?

For good reading, you will find the complete OLA Resource Sharing Committee report, authored by Wes Stevens, on our web page: http://www.olaweb.org/org/rs.shtml.

References
Carver D., 2001. The Knife Edge Ridge. *OLA Quarterly* 7(3):1.

Progress Along the Road to Statewide Database Licensing

by John F. Helmer

Executive Director
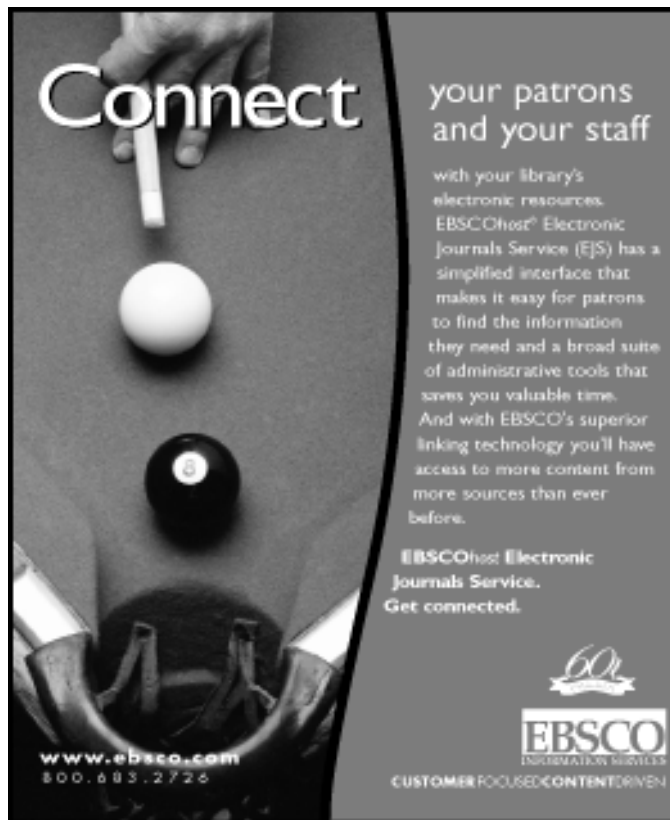*Orbis Cascade Alliance*

Statewide Access to Electronic Resources
* *Secure a broad and deep menu of state–funded electronic databases that are available to all libraries and library customers in Oregon.*

Are we making progress toward achieving the *Vision 2010* goal of securing a "broad and deep menu of state-funded electronic databases that are available to all libraries and library customers in Oregon?" Perhaps. But, as with any journey, optimism about progress depends on knowing what you're aiming for, where you are now, and whether you have the staying power to continue the journey.

Statewide database licensing in Oregon dates back to 1991, with the creation of OLA's *Vision 2000* and the resulting set of goals known as the Oregon Information Highway Project (OIHP) (Scheppke, 1995). By 1995 a group of librarians was working as the Statewide Database Licensing Group (SDLG). Deb Carver speaks of the "long and sometimes confusing process" (Carver, 1999) of jump-starting statewide licensing without central funding or project staff. The SDLG eventually decided that seed money was needed to get things started and they devised a program based on gradually declining LSTA subsidies. SDLG also found that an administrative partner was needed and turned to Orbis and the Oregon Educational Technology Consortium (OETC) to issue an RFP, sign purchase agreements, bill libraries, and pay the vendor. In a remarkably short time, libraries were weaned from LSTA funds and SDLG ventured forth into a new era of self-funded purchasing.

While pleased with this success, there was also a sense among many that Oregon was not doing enough. Although clearly worthwhile, SDLG was purchasing just two products and many libraries in the state could not afford to participate. At the same time, early projects in wealthy states like Michigan, Ohio, and California were expanding and being joined by new state-funded efforts in places like Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Surely, there must be a way for Oregon to keep pace with Mississippi.

As we entered the new millennium, two new visions emerged. One was *Vision 2010,* the other came from a grassroots effort known as Connect Oregon or CORE (Connect Oregon, 2001). Patterned after NCLive! in North Carolina, CORE's vision called for a statewide multi-type consortium funded by the state, LSTA, and participating libraries. CORE would begin with database licensing, then move on to other statewide priorities. The CORE effort gathered momentum very quickly and OLA sponsored a bill requesting state funding. Alas, although well received, the CORE bill died at the end of a busy legislative session.

The aftermath of the CORE effort led to the formation of the Senate Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation. In its final report, the Task Force identified "statewide coordination for purchasing databases" as the highest priority and stated that the Oregon State Library (OSL) "will become the host and fiscal agent for a new consortium organization charged with coordinating statewide services for Oregon libraries." (Oregon Senate, 2002). Unfortunately, task force ground rules stated that no new state funds could be sought and, after exploring various options, the task force concluded that LSTA funds should be used to supplement fees and support project staff at OSL. Financial support for this new effort would come at the expense of the net-lender reimbursement program, a long-standing effort aimed at encouraging ILL. Passage of Senate Bill 12 enabled OSL to play this expanded role and in 2003 the Oregon Statewide Database Licensing Program (SDLP) was born (Oregon Statewide Database Licensing Program, 2003).

Now, as we begin 2004, the EBSCO contract managed by SDLG in partnership with Orbis Cascade Alliance and OETC

will soon come to an end. The State Library and the Statewide Database Licensing Advisory Committee (SDLAC) are working to define program rules and draft a new RFP. OSL is also considering the extent of its role and whether enlisting the help of other organizations, such as the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR), OCLC Western, Orbis Cascade Alliance, or OETC might make sense.

It has been a long strange trip, from *Vision 2000* to OIHP to SDLG to *Vision 2010* to CORE to the Senate Task Force and now SDLP, but have we made progress toward a "broad and deep menu of state-funded electronic databases?" The answer to that question depends on your perspective. A pessimist might say that we started with two products subsidized with LSTA funds, finally achieved self-funding by participating libraries, and have now dismantled the net lender program in order to spend even more LSTA money (now on a recurring basis) to replicate purchase of the same two products. An optimist might say that the net lender program was no longer effective and applaud its replacement by a robust database licensing effort. The optimist would further note that the previous SDLG process was risky and very limited in scope, while the new SDLP structure will have a much broader impact.

Although both have a point, I must admit to a strong preference for the optimist's view. Still in its early stages, the new Statewide Database Licensing Program marks an ambitious role for the Oregon State Library and shows much promise for the future. SDLP is a great new beginning but several factors will be critical to its success.

Oversight by SDLAC

Effective use of the Statewide Database Licensing Advisory Committee is critical to the success of SDLP. In its start-up phase, the project saw a few missteps and it is important that OSL now establish a practice of using the advice provided by the Advisory Committee. For their part, the Committee has made a very strong start and members should continue to stay in close communication with their constituencies and provide sound advice to OSL.

Active involvement of Oregon libraries

It is too easy to assume that others are looking after statewide database licensing. In order to create a first-rate program, Oregon libraries must follow the process, conduct thorough trials, provide feedback, stand by their purchase decisions and support OSL and SDLAC in their work.

SDLP is a worthy development that builds on the hard work and creativity of its predecessors. However, as a consortial junkie, I must admit to a great hope that Oregon is evolving toward the creation of a robust multi-type consortium charged with pursuing statewide goals. More important than such organizational details, I suggest that strong and recurring state funding is the legitimate goal of all such organizations. Some may consider it foolish to set our sites on state funding but other states have done it and CORE came close in a very short time and under difficult circumstances. Oregon libraries should resist the temptation to feel satisfied with incremental progress toward modest goals. Let's celebrate Oregon's progress but also recognize that much more can be done. As we continue the journey, every Oregon library has an important role to play in achieving success.

References

Carver D., 1999. Statewide Database Licensing the Oregon Way. *OLA Quarterly* 5(1) [sic]: [4(4)] http://www.olaweb.org/quarterly/quar4-4/carver.shtml

Connect Oregon, 2001. CORE: a Summary for Librarians. http://www.olaweb.org/core/librarian.html

11

What's Next for Statewide Digital Reference

by Caleb Tucker-Raymond

Statewide Digital Reference Project Coordinator Multnomah County Library

E–Reference Services

- *Create a collaborative online reference service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

The Oregon Statewide Digital Reference Service launched in the spring of 2003. In our first nine months, we received over 3,000 questions and are starting to see how important digital reference can be. We have learned a lot—especially that we don't know it all yet—but are excited about expanding the project and having more librarians learn with us.

The new service was jump-started in January 2003 with funding from a Library Services and Technology Act grant through the State Library. Our charge is to meet and expand the mission of a previous effort, Oregon Reference LINK, which was to provide an efficient and effective reference service for Oregon citizens through library-to-library collaboration. The new charge expands the Reference LINK second level reference service to link patrons directly to librarians.

Digitally connecting patrons with librarians was the easy part. All we had to do was put up some links to the service on our home pages and library patrons found their way. Learning to communicate effectively and professionally with these patrons has been much harder, because the only tools we have are the keys on our keyboards.

This feels like a new challenge, but some digital reference services have been around for over a decade. When we describe digital reference (or virtual reference) as a reference service that uses online tools to connect patrons with reference staff, we are talking about e-mail services, Web forms, and live chat services. What's new in digital reference is the awareness that there is a real demand for this service and that, as librarians, we need to provide the consistently high quality service that our patrons expect.

Luckily, our own standards of quality may be more stringent than what our patrons actually expect. We have received high marks from digital reference patrons who chose to complete our satisfaction survey. Of 435 respondents, 87 percent said they would use the service again, although only 75 percent indicated they were satisfied with it.

There is room for improvement and the focus should be on honing our digital reference communication skills. A cursory study of our service's digital reference transactions shows that participating reference librarians engage in a reference interview only about half of the time. Although the interview may not seem necessary for each and every question, it's clear that using one always results in a more professional reference transaction. And it's one of the marvelous things that librarians can do that Google cannot.

The trouble doesn't come from the quality of our staff, but from the medium we are using. In the fast-paced chat environment, we often forget to smile, or so it would seem to our patrons, who can only interpret our demeanor through the words that we type. Likewise, it is easy to misinterpret what a patron has written, especially when you are juggling windows on a computer screen and simultaneously trying to answer a reference question.

To tackle these challenges, the Digital Reference Service needs to provide training for Oregon librarians on the practice of digital reference, not just on how to use the software for the statewide project. Digital reference should be a transferable skill, and every reference librarian should know the basics. After all, if it's a valuable service to offer, it's a valuable skill for us to learn.

Offering every Oregon librarian the opportunity to learn these new skills is a

tall order, but we are prepared to expand the service by including every library that wants to participate in the statewide service as a provider. With increased demand for the service, we'll be able to provide more service hours, schedule more librarians during busy times, and call on subject experts more frequently. Currently only about 20 individuals get the opportunity to staff the Statewide Digital Reference Service each week.

At present the Statewide Digital Reference Service is geared towards very general reference questions. By offering more specialized services (or sub-services) for particular subject areas, geographical regions, the various Oregon consortia, or specialized patron groups, digital reference will expand and increase the demand for staff. The opportunities for increased digital reference in Oregon are only limited by the effort we give.

We invite all Oregon libraries—academic, public, and school—to consider participating in the Statewide Digital Reference Program. Your staff will learn, first-hand, digital reference skills, your library's patrons will benefit from local expertise, and your library will contribute to a valuable collaborative statewide service.

Statewide Virtual Reference:
a Second Call to Action

by Ruth Vondracek

Head
Reference and Instruction
Oregon State University

Chair
Statewide Virtual Reference
Advisory Board

E–Reference Services
* *Create a collaborative on–line reference service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*

*V*ision 2010 calls for the creation "of a collaborative online reference service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." The statewide virtual reference pilot project answers that call. Implemented in April 2003 by participating Oregon public, school and academic libraries, the service provides collaborative online reference service to anyone in the state. Although chat service is not yet available 24/7, users can ask questions by e-mail at any time, with a guaranteed response time of two days. Realistically, providing round-the-clock service may take longer to achieve because of staffing challenges; it would require either partners in a different time zone, contracting with reference service providers, or finding several night-owl librarians who are ready to pitch in during the wee hours. One question to explore will be whether 24-hour coverage is necessary or desirable.

Statewide reference service offers many benefits and opportunities to library patrons and libraries alike. For example, any Oregon library can now refer their patrons to the free online service and be assured that the patrons will find the help they need. This is a boon for libraries without adequate reference staff. In addition libraries that are providing service do not have to pay for the price of the software; LSTA grant funding currently covers those costs. For patrons, it means being able to get answers to their questions while they are online no matter where they are located.

The project presents a major opportunity for Oregon librarians to develop a regional knowledge base of reference specialists and collection strengths. A knowledge base of this type will facilitate reference referrals and complement the global referral service available through QuestionPoint, that some libraries are considering for use.

At Oregon State University (OSU) we envision virtual reference becoming a primary means of communication with our students and faculty for teaching and research. The capability of co-browsing coupled with the immediacy of chat and eventually Voice over IP (VoIP) enhances our ability to reach students at the time they need assistance, whether they are in dormitories, classrooms, or 200 miles away. We could set up appointments with students or faculty to meet online, consult one-on-one, set up sessions with an entire class and link the service to online classes delivered through Blackboard Learning System software. Librarians could also set up online office hours for specific classes.

Our conversations about how to use virtual reference at the OSU libraries invariably draw us into discussion of several issues about the service. For example, how we can use this service to support the special needs of our individual library community? How can we ensure that users are referred to us when it is appropriate? How do we mesh the academic library instructional approach to the public library approach of giving answers? How do we staff a virtual reference service along with our reference desk service, e-mail and phone services, particularly when we are short staffed? Does it make sense for us to answer general reference questions when we don't have the specialized resources to answer them?

These questions are not unique to OSU. Other academic and public librarians raise similar questions. For example, we have few resources at OSU that help us answer questions about the value of collectibles and antiques, and many of us lack the knowledge of the appropriate resources. Similarly, many public librarians

would struggle with answering in-depth college level science questions.

The answer to some of these questions is rooted in traditional reference service methods, referring a patron to the best resource or person to answer their question. The immediacy of chat reference tricks us into believing that we have to answer even in-depth questions in seconds. I advocate that we should stay true to our principles of getting our patrons to the best information possible. This involves referring them to the most appropriate person to answer their question, even if it takes longer. Setting up an effective question referral network will facilitate this service. The RefTracker software, which refers questions via e-mail, is designed to route questions appropriately. To ensure the effective use of this software will require setting up a knowledge base of the subject specialties of Oregon librarians and libraries' collections strengths.

So far the virtual reference pilot project has focused on operational issues, such as working out kinks in the software (Tutor.com's Virtual Reference Toolkit, formerly distributed by LSSI), evaluating whether this is the software we want to continue using, creating a viable scheduling process, and training librarians to use the system to answer questions. The Statewide Virtual Reference Advisory Board appointed task forces to review and present information on such issues as use and service policies, quality standards, and assessment.

Before we transition from pilot project to full-fledged service several things must be accomplished. The project team limited the number of participants during the pilot to simplify the initial implementation. It is now time to open up participation to other libraries and build capacity for the librarians delivering the service. Once we begin to promote the system more widely, we anticipate an increase in the volume of questions, which will require staffing more librarians during each shift. The quality

standards, service policies, and assessment methods need to be developed further, agreed upon by the participating libraries, and then applied. In addition, the knowledge base of frequently asked questions and referral information needs to be built. All of these activities will require additional training and discussion. A future goal for the project includes looking for regional libraries with which to partner in order to expand the service including, for example, the Orbis Cascade Alliance as well as partnering with libraries in another time zone to broaden coverage.

It has taken the combined efforts of many libraries and our software vendors to get us where we are today with collaborative reference services. To continue to build a quality statewide reference service, we need your continued involvement. Consider this a follow-up "call to action."

High Bandwidth, Affordable Access

by Pam Horan

Technology Planning Consultant
Library Development Services
Oregon State Library

Statewide High Speed Network
- *Ensure that every library has easy and affordable access to a high quality, high bandwidth telecommunications network.*

Public libraries, the target of the *Vision 2010* challenge to realize universal high speed Internet access, have experienced dramatic improvement in affordable and reliable connectivity since the publication of the *Vision 2010* issue of *OLA Quarterly* (Fall 2001). At that time around 28 percent of all Oregon public library buildings offered 56K dial-up connections to their communities, and even libraries that had dedicated access often offered less than speedy connections. As of January 2004, only 15 of 210 public library buildings offered less than 256K, and only 12 of these still had dial-up.

The changes have come quickly and have been continuous. What has contributed to this relatively rapid evolution, the first step in enabling libraries to provide 24/7/365 services to its citizens?

E-rate discount program.
Although fewer than half of Oregon public libraries take advantage of the federal E-rate program, the cost savings are very important for libraries that choose to apply and participate. E-rate discounts have significantly reduced the cost of telecommunications and internet access for these libraries, with a little time and effort from library staff. Based on federal poverty measures (local participation in the National School Lunch Program), discounts can be substantial: if the student participation is 1 percent, urban libraries are eligible for a 20 percent discount, and rural libraries, 25 percent; at the high end, with 75 to 100 percent school

lunch participation, both rural and urban libraries are eligible for 90 percent discounts on services for which they apply. (For the complete program discount matrix, see the Schools and Library Division (SLD) site at http://www.sl.universalservice.org/reference/dmatrix.asp.)

State of Oregon Enterprise Network (SOEN).
State networking, now called Enterprise Network Services, has contributed to network affordability for some larger library systems and consortia, allowing them to subscribe to more comprehensive services with greater bandwidth and speed at a reasonable cost. In addition, under the auspices of the State of Oregon, its Department of Administrative Services (DAS) applies annually for E-rate discounts for telecommunications services on behalf of these library systems, further reducing costs.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
The Gates Foundation's farsighted and generous assistance in upgrading Internet connections for qualified public libraries as part of its State Partnership Program has provided improvement in connections for many of Oregon's smaller libraries. Most upgrades to more reliable, higher bandwidth took place during 2002, the year that the Gates Foundation brought its program to Oregon. The upgrades and the generous grants of high-end public access computers contributed to higher community expectations and have motivated libraries to assure dependable broadband connections, significantly benefiting users.

Local efforts by librarians, community organizations, and governments.
Beyond formal government and private programs, improved connectivity in small

libraries has been brought by another powerful force—the persistence and creativity of local librarians and generous community stalwarts, including Boards of Trustees, Friends of the Library groups, and community-minded telecommunications and ISP companies. These bootstrap groups have worked to ensure that their communities have fast, reliable connections at an affordable cost through community and other partnerships. A good example is Oregon Trail Internet, a Pendleton based service provider that was named OLA's Library Supporter of the Year in 2002 for its work with and support of public libraries throughout Eastern Oregon.

Oregon's High Speed Network.
Is there a statewide high speed network for libraries in Oregon? No. Yet 93 percent of library buildings offer broadband access to the Internet for their communities, using all manner of connections—e.g., DSL, frame relay, wireless, T-1, cable, satellite, T-3, and fiber optic. By providing this infrastructure, libraries make possible many 24/7 services for their users, including online catalogs, full text databases, online reference services, programming information for adults and children, and e-government resources.

Vision 2010:
Serve Every Child

by Angela Reynolds

*Youth Service Librarian
Washington County Cooperative
Library Services*

Serve Every Child

* *Nurture the joy of reading by providing every child in Oregon with quality library services from both public and school libraries.*

Youth Services librarians are passionate about reading and inspiring children to love reading. We are constantly searching for new and innovative ways to invite children into the wonders of reading. Our efforts to nurture the joy of reading by providing every child in Oregon with quality library services from both school and public libraries are enhanced by a variety of opportunities for professional development and interaction with other librarians that are offered by the Children's Services Division (CSD). It is vital to the profession that we be inspired with new ideas and be able to talk to others who work with children and parents. All librarians need this, but children's librarians thrive on it. Staff in libraries of every size and description are provided with opportunities to network, learn, share, and discuss our continuing commitment to serve every child through a variety of CSD projects and programs and in addition, State support:

* **Summer Reading**
  For over 25 years CSD has supported statewide Summer Reading. The history is long and involved—including a five-year experiment with sponsorship that tried innovative ways to make sure that every child in the state had access to a quality Summer Reading Program. Currently CSD is involved in the Summer Reading Collaborative, which allows all libraries in the state to receive a manual of ideas and programs, and order incentives at reduced prices. CSD offers workshops that showcase Summer Reading crafts, ideas, and simple ways to entice children into the library. Librarians know that keeping children reading for fun during the summer is important and helps children retain their reading skills. Summer Reading was developed specifically for that purpose—to make reading fun. Coming up with new ideas to keep the fun in reading is where CSD is a big help—members come together to share ideas and renew their dedication to this important program.

* **Spring and Fall Workshops**
  The Children's Services Division provides low-cost workshops each year. Attendance at national conferences is next to impossible for many Oregon youth librarians, so CSD makes it possible for those librarians and staff to get quality training and networking right here in the state. All-day workshops with a little fun thrown in are the perfect way to learn about current research and new programs, to meet colleagues, to share, and to become inspired by others. These workshops feature guest speakers, presentations from other librarians, and hands-on activities that we can use in our own libraries.

* **Stories by the Sea**
  Now in its tenth year, this Storytelling Festival presented by CSD and the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts inspires and creates storytellers in libraries around Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. The festival features high-quality workshops at a low cost. Storytellers known worldwide have been featured at this festival, and Oregon's librarians and children benefit each year from this wonderful opportunity. Teaching children to love stories teaches them to love reading and Stories by the Sea keeps that love alive in all who attend.

- **Mock Caldecott**
  The CSD presents a day of intensive book review in the Mock Caldecott program. Librarians gather to learn about artwork and critical reviewing skills, to look at the newly published books, and to choose their own Caldecott Award. Many attend each year to see the new books and to talk with others about the books. School librarians attend as well, many to get a look at the new books and make decisions what to order for their own libraries after attending.

- **Conferences and Scholarships**
  CSD always offers excellent choices for children's staff at the annual conference. Preconferences often bring nationally known speakers and authors to the state. For CSD members who have monetary needs to attend conferences and workshops, CSD offers scholarships that help pay for attendance.

- **Evelyn Sibley Lampman Award**
  Each year the division honors a person who has made a significant contribution to the lives of children in the state or Oregon. Attendees at the Lampman Award breakfast are always inspired by the Award Winner's speech.

- **State Library Support**
  The Oregon State Library (OSL) has been committed to helping libraries in Oregon provide quality library service for every child. OSL's primary tool is the Ready to Read Grant established during the 1993 Legislative Assembly with the endorsement of the Oregon library community. The grant provides state aid to "establish, develop or improve public library services to children, ages 0 to 14, with an empha-

sis on preschool children." Every legally established public library in Oregon is eligible to apply for the annual Ready to Read Grant. During the 2003–2004 grant year, the Ready to Read budget was $597,311 and was distributed to 118 libraries. The average grant was $5,062. In 2003 State Library staff published a report analyzing how funds had been spent during the grant years 1996–2002, whether library service to children had increased, and how additional local funds were leveraged by Ready to Read funds. The full report and more information about the Ready to Read Grant is available on the Oregon State Library Web site: http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/r2r.html.

Serving Every Child

by Jim Scheppke

State Librarian
Oregon State Library

Certainly the most difficult OLA *Vision 2010* goal to meet will be to "serve every child." The OLA Vision 2010 Committee, which I was privileged to serve on, used this goal statement to tackle two objectives. We wanted to highlight the importance of library service to children, in school libraries and in public libraries. We also wanted to highlight the problem of Oregonians, children and adults, who do not have public library service.

It is the latter problem that makes this goal to serve every child so difficult. The State Library was founded in 1905 to bring public library service to every Oregonian, but unfortunately, nearly a century later, about one out of ten Oregonians lives outside the boundaries of a public library service area. Public library services in Oregon are provided by cities, counties, special library districts and a few school districts. In 2002 there were 325,772 Oregonians in 11 of Oregon's 36 counties without a public library, because they lived outside of one of these jurisdictions providing library service.

You may be surprised to learn that 88 percent of "unserved" Oregonians reside in a cluster of five counties in the Willamette Valley. The largest number reside in Marion County (99,418), and the second largest number reside in Lane County (87,475). Other large numbers of unserved Oregonians reside in Polk County (34,698), Linn County (34,305), and Yamhill County (29,440).

There are historical reasons why these five counties have the vast majority of Oregon's unserved. At the turn of the 20th century they were among the most densely populated counties, with rapidly growing cities that were ripe for the establishment of public libraries. The first public library-enabling legislation, passed by the Legislative Assembly in 1901, only allowed for cities to establish tax-supported public libraries, this being the predominate governance model for public libraries at that time. It was only through the visionary leadership of Multnomah County Library director Mary Frances Isom that the Legislative Assembly was persuaded to amend the public library law in 1903 to allow Multnomah County to establish what was then only the third county library in the country. But the amendment only applied to Multnomah County. By the time the State Library Commission was established in 1905, many city libraries had already been established or were in the process of being established. Even though the first State Librarian, Cornelia Marvin, was, like Mary Frances Isom, a great believer in "larger units of service," it was too late to change this initial direction in all but Multnomah County.

All it took was one city library to be established in, say, Eugene in 1904, or Salem, also in the same year, or Albany in 1907, to set the model for public library development in a particular county, and we have been struggling with the unintended consequences of this ever since.

What will it take to serve every child in the 11 counties noted above? At least in the five counties that account for 88 percent of the problem, it will take nothing less than some fundamental changes to public library governance and funding patterns that go back nearly a century. Are we up to this challenge? The State Library Board is certainly committed. They were asked by the Oregon Library Association to strongly support all the goals of *Vision 2010*—in effect, to make them our primary goals as well. The Board agreed to this, and we are very mindful of this commitment.

The State Library has made a major commitment of LSTA funds to plan for bringing library service to every child and every adult before the end of the decade. We have funded grassroots organizations in Lane County and in Linn County to spearhead these efforts, and we meet with these groups regularly. In 2004 we will use LSTA funds to support planning efforts in Lane, Linn, Clatsop, Columbia, Jefferson, Wheeler, and southern Marion counties to bring public library service to all. The

The Face of Oregon's Library Community

by Janet Webster

Head of the Guin Library
Hatfield Marine Science Center
Oregon State University

and Maureen Cole

Associate Director/Reference
  Librarian
Kellenberger Library
Northwest Christian College

Strong and Diverse Workforce

- *Bring the highest caliber of leadership to every Oregon library.*

- *Use the broadest range of skills and abilities from people with diverse educational, experiential, and cultural backgrounds.*

Call to action

The face of the library community changes annually as people retire, new staff members are recruited, and current employees learn different skills. Individual faces change (just look in the mirror), as do our institutional faces. In *Vision 2010,* we call for a "strong and diverse workforce" in Oregon's libraries. We challenge ourselves to "bring the highest caliber of leadership to every Oregon library." We urge the library community to "use the broadest range of skills and abilities from people with diverse educational, experiential, and cultural backgrounds." This call to action focusing on the face of the library community emerged from the realization that the profession was aging, Oregon's demographics were changing, and our libraries needed to respond.

Various studies and reports describe the changes in the library profession as well as U.S. society in general. An often cited study by the American Library Association showed a progressive loss of professional library staff resulting from an aging population as well as decreasing recruitment and retention in the library field (Lynch, 2000). According to a 1999 random sample survey of ALA members, 45 percent of the profession was between 45 and 54 years of age, and only 13 percent was under 35. Other survey evidence suggested that 40 percent of librarians may retire in the next nine years or less (St. Lifer, 2000). The evidence mounted as indicated by a recent report in the Monthly Labor Review on the aging of the 'baby boomers' (Dohm, 2000). Specific information on school librarians was less easily identified; however, a study of the teaching profession suggested similar trends (Hussar, 1999).

The OLA Board recognized that this vision of the future could lead to a major shortage of well-trained employees, making it difficult to offer quality library collections and services to every Oregonian. During my OLA presidency in 2001–2002, I charged the OLA/OEMA Joint Committee to address the issue of retirement and recruitment in Oregon's libraries. The Joint Committee decided to see if the national statistics reflected the situation in Oregon. Only when we understood the local situation could we focus our attention on developing aggressive plans to address retention and recruitment issues.

A coherent description of the demographics of academic, public, special and school librarians was simply not available. The Oregon State Library, the Oregon Department of Education, and the National Center for Education Statistics compile statistics that helped but did not put an accurate face on recruitment and retention issues. The most interesting source we found was the fall school survey that every school must complete. This identifies all personnel by age, education level, FTE, and position filled. We incorporated a copy of the fall 2000 data into our work.

As comparable information was not available for the public and academic libraries in the state, the Joint Committee looked for a simple, inexpensive way to collect data. We settled on a survey of OLA and OEMA members. We distributed the surveys at our annual conferences in 2002 knowing that our samples would be slightly skewed to those most active in our profession and perhaps to those more established. We decided that this was acceptable as we were concerned with replacing those who want to be involved in the library community as leaders and innovators; these people attend our annual conferences.

Our face

The survey sample of 148 from the OLA conference shows the predictable bulge of people in their 50s. Most have an MLS. Most plan to retire in their sixties. But there are several of us who think we will work much longer! The number of those younger than 40 does not appear to be strong enough to replace the 50-something monolith.

the near future. The 2003 Oregon School Directory reports a nine percent decline in the number of media specialists between 2000 and 2002. While no causes are described, we can imagine that it's likely a combination of retirements without replacements as well as layoffs. Besides the 50s bulge, we should be concerned with the meager numbers of younger media specialists.
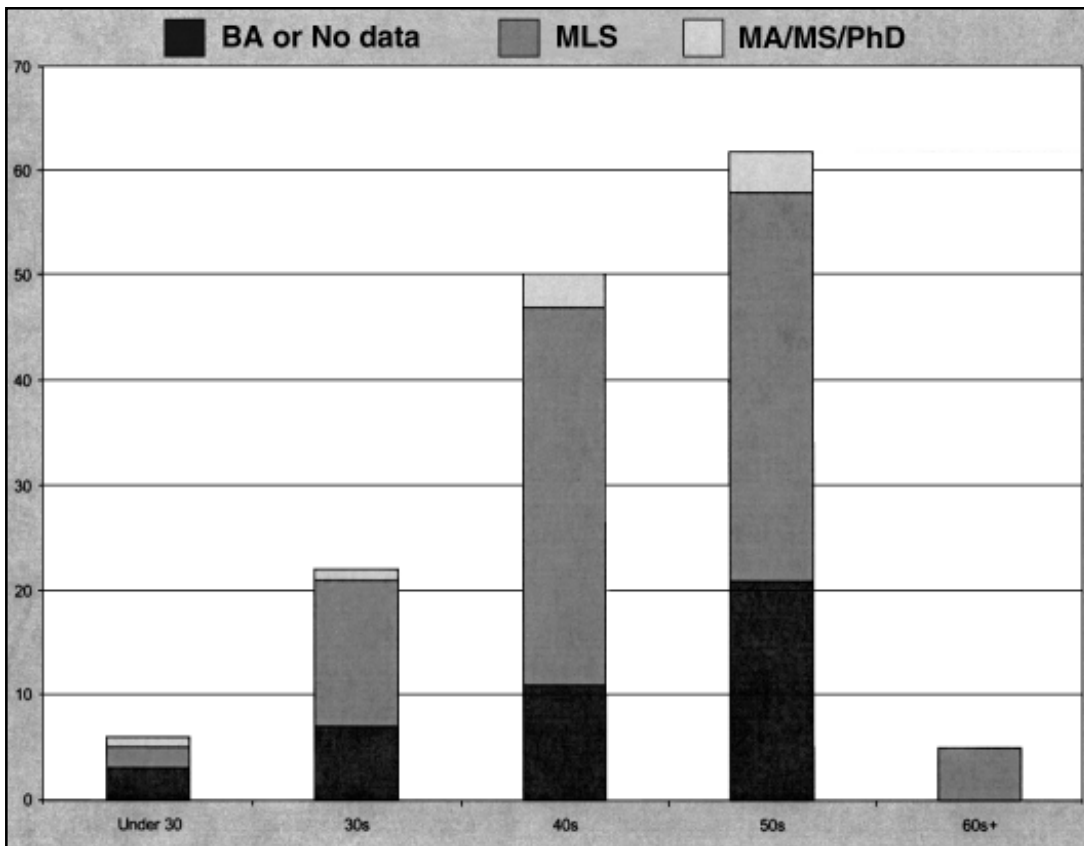

Figure 1
Sample of OLA members by age and education level

Academic libraries seem to have a slightly younger crowd than the public libraries. However, this could be a reflection of the sample population at the OLA Conference that tends to attract far more public library people than academics.

From the fall 2000 school survey data, most media specialists are in their fifties—57 percent of all media specialists and 64 percent of those with master's degrees. That means that many are eyeing retirement in

Our sample of 100 from the 2002 OEMA conference was smaller than the one from fall 2000, but still pointed out some interesting characteristics. For example, media specialists are much more specific about retirement dates, perhaps reflecting the more structured public school environment.

Next steps

Obviously there is more data we could collect, and more analysis to be done of
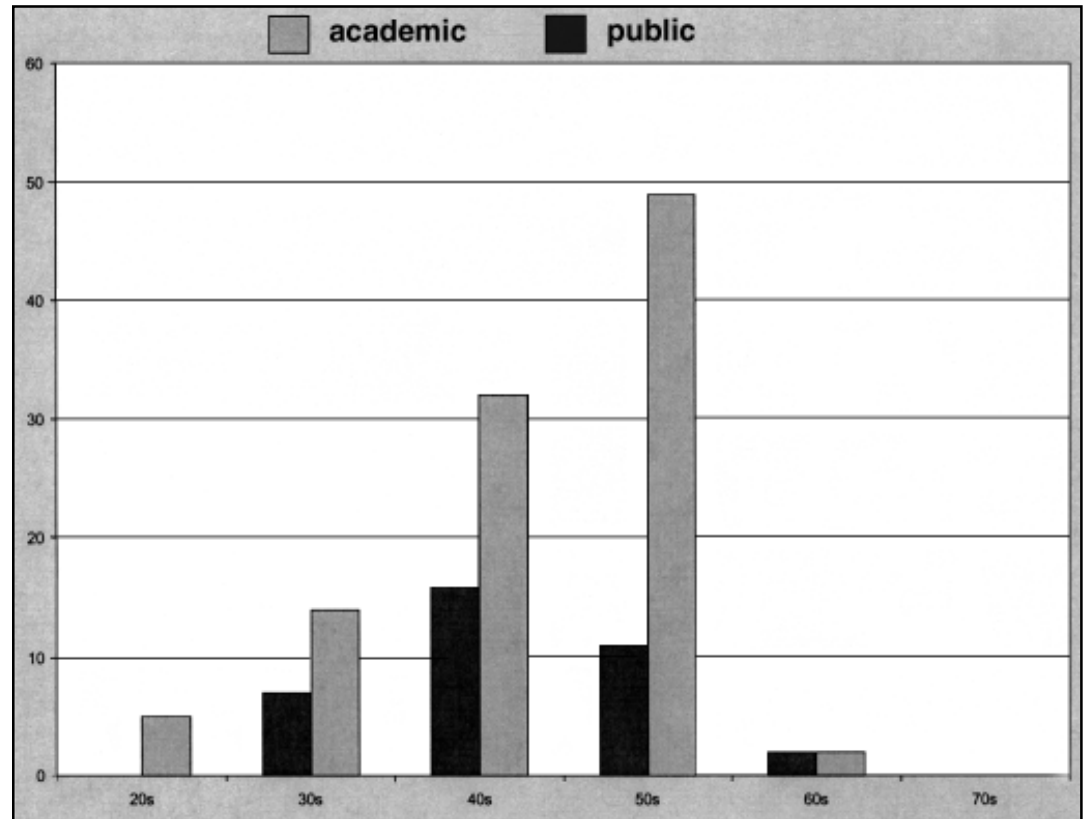
23

Figure 2
Sample of OLA members' age by type of library

the data we have. Yet, our simple research does give us part of the face of Oregon's library community: we are aging and those of us in our 50s plan on retiring in the next ten years. We did not collect ethnicity or gender information, but can safely assume that here again we would reflect the rest of the country—predominantly white and female.

So, what can OLA do to help all of Oregon's libraries address their staffing needs strategically? We can share ideas for replacing experienced library staff as they retire as well as recruitment methods that attract diverse candidates to serve our varied communities. The OLA/OEMA Joint Committee began this sharing with an excellent session at the 2003 conference.

Following up on this, I suggest the following ideas we can pursue as a community to realize the *Vision 2010* call to action for "a strong and diverse workforce."

- Develop an OLA recruitment Web page that extols the pluses of working in any Oregon library. This could support the recruitment efforts of all libraries.

- Give feedback on ALA recruitment Web site so it's attractive to prospective professionals.

- Offer more conference programming around human resource issues. We lack a forum for sharing ideas and challenges.

- Involve library school students in OLA projects and on committees, making them active in the profession early.

- Devote an issue of the *OLA Quarterly* to recruitment and retention issues.
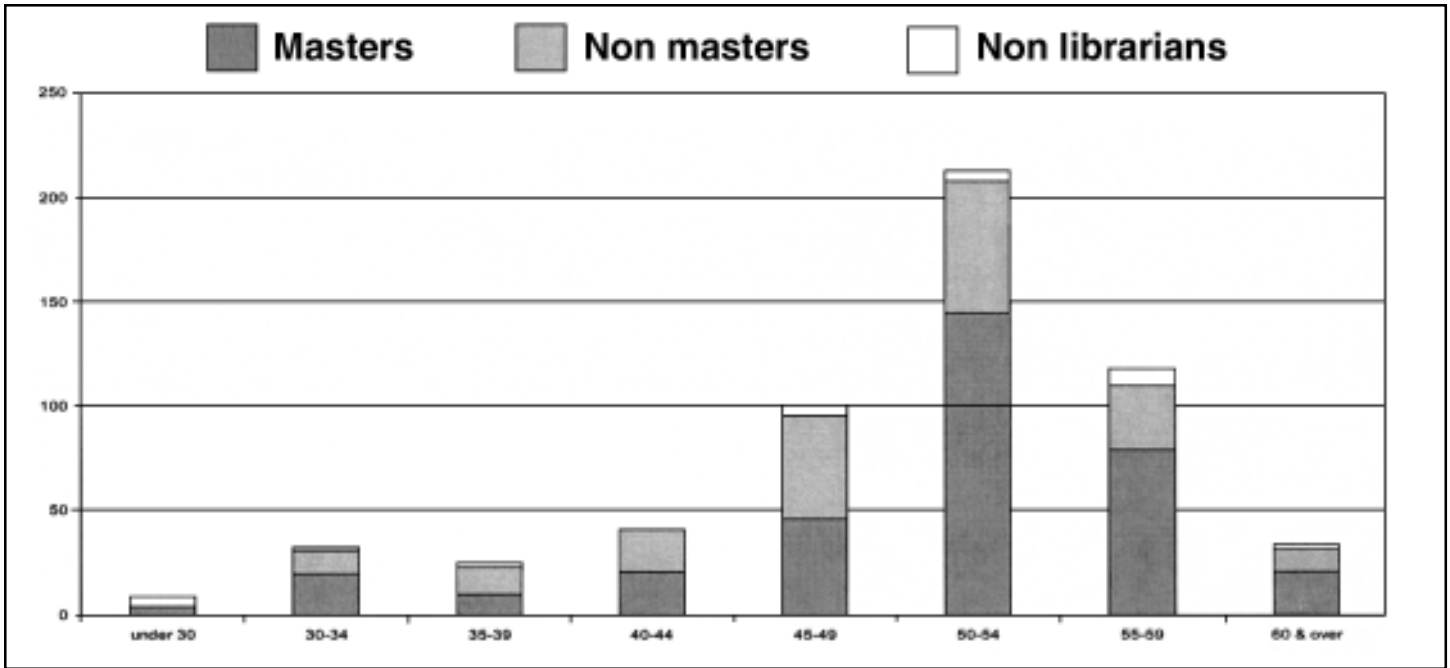
Figure 3
Oregon media specialists by
age and education level
(Fall 2000)

- Share information on how many libraries are "growing their own" as a strategy to attract and keep good staff members.

- Offer annual OLA scholarships for MLS students who are members.

- Continue to periodically collect data about the demographics of OLA members so we can monitor where we are going as a community.

- Assist our OEMA colleagues as they confront the reality of the shift from degreed to non-degreed staffing of school libraries.

- Work with career counselors in the state to ensure that librarianship is presented as a viable career option on college and high campuses.

- Stay alert to other groups working on recruitment issues as we are all facing the graying of America. ❧

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25

The View from a Cozy Library on the Coast of Oregon

by Wyma Jane Rogers

Director
Newport Public Library

Even the most misfitting child
Who's chanced upon the library's worth,
Sits with the genius of the Earth
And turns the key to the whole world.

I love the last verse of Ted Hughes' poem, *Hear it Again*. It eloquently affirms what I believe and what I value in libraries. As the Vision 2010 Committee gathered around a table in 1999 to prognosticate the health of libraries in the year 2010 it seemed that each of us understood we were on a mission. We had to create a plan that would not just improve libraries in Oregon, but save them. The "Call to Action" was prefaced by the notion that we must accomplish the list of tasks in order to *survive* as the places where a human hand reaches out and helps a child turn that key to the whole world.

To examine the "Call to Action" four years later in the context of this small library on the coast, I checked Newport Public Library's mission statement for relevance. It includes the phrases "personalized service," "diverse and popular materials," and "foster children's learning." Achieving the goals in the "Call to Action," *Vision 2010* can further our goals for library service, but will the library be saved?

In Rita Dove's poem, "The First Book," she says of opening a book for the first time "it's not like it's the end of the world—just the world as you think you know it."

Statewide card

Encouraged by the University of Oregon's leap forward to offer service to residents statewide, we gathered political support to do the same in Newport. We were poised to open our library to visitors from all over Oregon, when we found ourselves in contract negotiations to determine payment for service to District residents. How could we enact library service to all while we were negotiating a fee for service? This is the knot we must untie so we can offer a statewide card. And in Newport as in Oregon, we must do it while people still care.

E-reference

We participated in the pilot project for statewide virtual reference, *Answerland*, and learned a great deal, including that there is a legitimate need for e-reference. However, we think a regional virtual service might be more useful to patrons. Enough users of the service asked our staff questions about their local libraries that we plan to provide e-reference locally, and ultimately hope to share the service and task within our consortium, the Coastal Resource Sharing Network.

Statewide databases

Although making the databases available is a good first step, it should be followed by local partnering with the schools so that students K–12 get guidance in using the information. In Newport, we cannot depend on school personnel to teach students how to use the databases. Budget cuts have caused most libraries and computer resource centers in Lincoln County schools to be closed more hours than they are open.

Through our consortium we subscribe to several databases. To present an alternative to Googling through the Internet, Newport reference librarians teach classes in how to use the databases. These small classes are popular with adults, but we have not yet found the carrot that will attract students to participate in them. We experimented with Homework Helper classes, but they didn't fly. Once school is over for the day, the kids just want to play. We expect the local high school principal to be appointed to the Library Board this month. Already, without coaxing, he has brought forward this same issue. We hope in the next year to progress in marketing the databases to students.

Statewide catalog

Simultaneously searching a choice of library catalogs may be more useful to the public than searching a statewide catalog. Too many false drops can be more discouraging than no access at all. A long list of

hits, most of them nowhere near what was requested, could leave patrons feeling that they are incapable of using the catalog, or worse, that the library is inadequate to serve them.

That's something like the way I felt talking to Julie, the Amtrak Robot. When I told her I wanted to go from San Diego to Los Angeles, she sent me to Boston. I cleared my throat, tried again and got a ticket to Lawrence, Kansas. A la Dave Barry, I want to assure you I'm not making this up. Julie Robot had too many options and lacked the ability to discern among them, dooming both of us to failure.

Library users are a lot smarter than Julie, but they may not think like librarians. Statewide access to all library catalogs will be a wonderful tool so long as we design it for a mix of users and build in the ability to choose a smaller universe.

Recruiting for diversity

Newport has a culturally diverse population, and the majority of our library staff is white and over 50. We need to add younger staff and some who speak Spanish. We have a few opportunities for hiring and have to choose among many needs. Last year we hired a new young adult assistant, at the same time lowering the average age of library staff.

We recently added a bilingual storyteller, paid by the hour with Foundation funds. Staff chose someone who showed promise of the basic ability to enact a story for children, and trained her. She has been successful, and the bilingual story program is thriving. When staff hours become available, we hope to build, a few hours at a time, a Spanish-speaking position.

Statewide network

The Coastal Resource Sharing Network benefited from the SOEN rate and now has T-1 lines to all public library buildings in Lincoln and Tillamook Counties, greatly improving catalog access and incorporating Internet for all.

Serve every child

When all but two school librarians in Lincoln County were cut from the budget two years ago, we lost our partners in the goal to serve every child. Our best efforts to regroup involve the Summer Reading Program and a Young Adult Advisory Committee. The Youth Services Librarian has worked with the Title I reading class teachers to include their students in the Summer Reading Program activities. Children who need help with reading register for the Summer Reading Program and attend the activities. They study at the library with tutors after the weekly Summer Reading programs. This year we extended cooperation to three daycare centers.

Through a Trust Management Grant and the Young Adult Assistant, an advisory committee made up of middle and high school students has revamped the young adult corner, dubbing it the "Youth Domain," helped select new materials, and participated in Friday night Mystery at the Library events. We may have lost ground, but through staff efforts and community partnerships we are again moving toward serving every child.

Survey

I asked library staff and members of the Foundation board to take five minutes to answer a survey about the future of the library. I am pleased to report that all 18 respondents believe that Newport Public Library has a future. Among new services and changes that they predicted were items very much like the *Vision 2010* goals: statewide card, diversity in staffing and programs, and many services that implied high-speed equipment, lines, and wireless technology. The number one service to keep was children's storytelling. It's gratifying to see the merging of local vision with statewide action plans.

Conclusion

A recent issue of *Library Futures Quarterly* projects that "Each library will develop

according to a unique population … [with] more emphasis on local character and needs." Newport Public Library is well positioned to build on the local character of the library and Newport's unique population. While implementing new services, we will keep what we do best. Personalized service will trump buying another computer. Staff will continue to learn and grow with the library and bring excellent service to the public. We will use what we have and who we are to create and insure the future.

In Rita Dove's poem *The First Book*, she says of opening a book for the first time, "it's not like it's the end of the world—just the world as you think you know it." This is why libraries are worth saving. In libraries our task is to make it easy for all to open those doors, one after another, to worlds that alter lives, inform vision, and inspire change in the universe.

Progress Along the Road
Continued from page 11

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Serving Every Child
Continued from page 20

Board also has granted LSTA funds to the Salem Public Library for some public opinion survey work that will assist them in planning for a library district election this November. A new Salem area library district would serve an estimated 44,000 unserved children and adults in Marion and Polk counties, in addition to the City of Salem residents who are already served.

I am encouraged that the Oregon library community's commitment to "serve every child" is higher than I have ever seen it in my 18 years at the State Library. It's not just librarians, but hundreds of dedicated citizens, in organizations like the Lane Library League, the Linn Library League, the Friends of the Fossil Public Library, and "Yes for Libraries" in the Salem area, who are devoted to achieving this goal.

As the State Library looks ahead to our centennial in 2005, I can think of no better commemoration than to be on our way to finally finishing the work that began 100 years ago, a goal that we wholeheartedly share with the Oregon Library Association.