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If a newsletter only exists virtually, does it exist at all?

Philosophers rest, that age-old question can now be answered. Reference Notes is online-only and, as you can see by the issue you're looking at now, it certainly exists. Remember, if you aren't alerted of new issues of Reference Notes in some way already, you can sign up to be so alerted via the mtz-ref listserv at <http://lists.minitex.umn.edu/mailman/listinfo/mtz-ref> or at the Reference Outreach and Instruction blog at <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/minitex/reference/>. If existential newsletter questions leave you queasy, do what we do: print this off, read, and be reassured. Thanks for reading!

ARLD Day 2011 Recap

ARLD Day 2011 was held on April 29th at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Library staff from all types of libraries were invited to attend the day-long conference, which was themed "The Everywhere Library." Keynoter Jason Griffey set the stage by highlighting the current and near-future landscape for mobile technologies. Write-ups of breakout sessions presented by local librarians follow.

MCTC Libr@ry's Website: A Portal to Research Success!

Jennifer Hootman

At ARLD Day 2011, I attended an afternoon session presented by Jennifer Sippel and John Daniels of Minneapolis Community & Technical College which gave us an in-depth tour of their library website and the multifaceted outreach measures they are addressing through strategic implementation of web-based tools.

For instance, they have reconceived the library's "About Us" for the web incorporating some new, user-friendly visuals, audios, and interactives. Their "About Us" now includes a nicely-designed, colorful floor map with information about the variety of study spaces available and numbers and locations of computers. They have also created a 3.5 minute audio tour that can be heard on a mobile device, downloaded as an mp3, or read via the transcript. An accompanying QR code also points the students to the audio tour. The Ask a Librarian e-mail reference service is also prominently displayed and accessible.

Additional outreach measures addressed through the website include more than 30 tutorials created using Camtasia, a customized Assignment Calculator, and a virtual book display that connects to the library catalog. Another cool angle to their website is the use of polls and suggestions. They have a poll for library patrons that changes from time to time and shares the results. And instead of a paper-based suggestion box, they have one online. The online suggestion “box” is terrific as it also shares the suggestions with everyone and the librarian’s response.

Lastly, they have effectively included several social media tools on their homepage: live Facebook and Twitter feeds and a link to their BlogTalkRadio.

Nothing beats seeing it for yourself – I invite you to take a look and tour MCTC’s interactive library website at <http://www.minneapolis.edu/library/>. ■

Minnesota Learning Commons: For 21st Century Learning

Beth Staats

Over the past year or so, I have heard the phrase Minnesota Learning Commons, but I never really knew exactly what it was. That is why I attended a session presented by Todd Digby of MnSCU and Mary Ann Van Cura of State Library Services. The Minnesota Learning Commons (MnLC) is a portal or doorway to an abundance of information for online learning. It’s a meeting or gathering place for online learning resources, not just for students or teachers, but for the entire Minnesota community including parents, advisors, and future students.

MnLC was created in cooperation with the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), and the Minnesota Department of Education. The mission of MnLC is “to provide access to effective and efficient online learning provided by Minnesota public education partners.” MnLC provides access to online courses and programs, digital resources and tools, teacher and staff training, online support for the Minnesota learning community, best practices, and group licensing. The soaring growth in online learning was a driving force in the creation of MnLC, as well as the for-profit competition of online-only institutions like Capella and Walden. With all of the cuts in education, it makes sense to collaborate and share resources and best practices.

MnLC offers digital tools and resources and uses Equella as the back-end software. Equella allows for keyword,

content type, and metadata field searching, as well as institution-defined hierarchical browsing. Federated searching across outside repositories, the Internet, and libraries is available too. Users can put materials in MnLC that they want to share and they can be easily updated. This can ultimately be a great time-saver for educators who don’t want to reinvent the wheel.

Available via MnLC are two resources worthy of mention, HippoCampus and MERLOT. “HippoCampus was designed as part of Open Education Resources (OER), a worldwide effort to improve access to quality education for everyone.” Its content, created by colleges and universities around the world, has been contributed to the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC). HippoCampus is oftentimes used in classroom teaching and as a homework help tool. In some places it is even replacing textbooks. MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching) offers free and open access to links with online learning materials including peer reviews and assignments. MERLOT was designed for higher education faculty and students. “MERLOT’s strategic goal is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by increasing the quantity and quality of peer reviewed online learning materials that can be easily incorporated into faculty designed courses.”

<http://mnlearningcommons.org/>



I came away from this session thinking what an amazing resource for teachers, students, librarians, and everyone involved in education in the state. Need a few more credits to get your degree? Contact MnLC and find out which schools offer an online course to help you finally graduate. Looking for a rubric for creating online course? Use the Quality Matters Rubric to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses. The resources available via MnLC open up a world of learning and educational tools to all Minnesotans. For more information on MnLC, go to <http://www.mnlearningcommons.org>. ■

Seamless Library Instruction for E-Learning

Carla Pfahl

At Globe University, an all-online school, instructors work with librarians to incorporate library instruction as part of the online class. Elaine Settergren is one of those librarians. The process came about through evaluations of several online classes which showed that students had poor research skills even after completing the required library instruction course. The previous structure for library instruction included two webinars on using the library and a quiz that were separate from a student's online courses. Their goal was to make library instruction part of the classroom experience.

Elaine began with the Composition course and demonstrated how she and instructors went about creating the new course. I should also mention that all communication and design of the course was done virtually between her and two of the instructors that teach Composition. Elaine commented that she based the course design work off the instruction process model ADDIE: Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate.

With help from instructors, they Analyzed the needs and learning gaps in the current Composition course. They used Google Docs and PowerPoint to collaborate and Design the new course, and Elaine used Captivate to create the tutorials that would be used for the library instruction pieces. For the tutorials, she Developed a format all subsequent tutorials would follow. When it came time to Implement the newly designed course, Elaine published the tutorials and added links to them within the appropriate week's work in Blackboard. They are currently going through the Evaluation stage using SurveyMonkey for students and an email poll for instructors.

Elaine learned a lot through this entire process and offered some tips to get started with your own library instruction project. Her first tip was to take the reins, don't be afraid. She admitted it was a little daunting at first to work so closely with instructors on designing a new course structure that included library instruction as part of the framework, but it proved to be a positive experience and one that will help her with future projects. Another tip was to create an environment of teamwork. Working with instructors and course designers was key to creating the right content. She also found it helpful to get support by having others evaluate the course design and tutorials as they went along. Having people who are not involved in the process can shed new light on different aspects of certain pieces that may be overlooked by the people involved in the creation process.

Finally, Elaine gave some tips to help keep the project moving along. The first was to use an instruction-process model, like ADDIE. She found it invaluable in helping organize steps and keeping the team on track. Keeping in communication with everyone involved, especially when you never meet face-to-face, was crucial to making sure everyone was going in the same direction.

To view the tutorials integrated in the Composition course, go to <http://www.globeeducationnetwork.com/library/online-students/composition/>. ■

QR Codes in Libraries: Beyond Signage

Rita Baladad, Minitex Cooperative Purchasing and Electronic Resources

This session was presented by Megan Kocher and Jenny Veile of the University of MN Libraries. Megan started out the presentation with a caveat: QR codes are on their way out. Before the audience could leave the room, she explained that although QR codes are on the wane, she and Jenny Veile still find the purpose for the codes to be relevant. Megan and Jenny were interested in how QR codes augment reality, what purpose the codes serve, how students are using them, and what this all means for libraries.

QR stands for quick response and was started in 1994 to track shipping. The code can contain URLs, text, SMS text messages, contact information, events, social media links, and videos. A few concerns about QC codes are:

- Exclusivity: Not everybody owns a smartphone.



*QR Code with link to
[Reference Notes home page](#)*

- Lasting impact: QR codes may just be a passing technology.
- Staff time: Who's going to create these things?
- Ugliness: The codes aren't really aesthetically appealing. There are ways to spiff them up but that takes time, too.
- Singularity: QR codes can be used only one at a time. What if you want to scan a whole shelf of codes?
- User friendliness: Will users know what it is and what to do with it?
- Utility: Does the library have something interesting or exciting to show? Will the "payoff" of scanning the code be high enough to generate interest?

Jenny and Megan showed the audience a few examples of how libraries are currently using the codes: texting a librarian; finding a library location (<http://tinyurl.com/3lwo3hz>); embedding into a catalog record to make location information handily portable (<http://tinyurl.com/3vea6g6>); providing audio tours of the library (<http://tinyurl.com/3gqgzsb>); linking to chat service on desk "away" or library "closed" signs; and promoting the library's mobile website. Jenny and Megan created a poster for a Science Quiz Bowl that featured a QR code for registration. The Library Success Wiki also lists library uses of QR codes at http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=QR_Codes.

Non-library examples include Calvin Klein's anti-censorship marketing campaign(<http://tinyurl.com/26gb4l6>); New York City's Central Park on Arbor Day event (<http://tinyurl.com/438gcmd>); Sao Paulo's QR-COWde (a cow statue plastered with QR codes that lead to more information about the cows on parade event: <http://vimeo.com/8808212>); and FirstBank touted Free Books by linking to Project Gutenberg ebooks (<http://firstbankfree.com/>). ■

Launching a Mobile App

Carla Pfahl

Has your library considered creating a mobile application for your online catalog or perhaps an app to highlight library events or new book arrivals? With MELSA's purchase of Boopsie, a creator of mobile applications, libraries in the metro area now have the ability to make various pieces of their website and services available to mobile users. One of the reasons Boopsie was chosen was because the company has worked with a lot of other libraries, the app works with other ILS systems, and it works on many devices. John Larson, St. Paul Public Library, and Meg Knodl, Hennepin County Library, talked about their experiences working with Boopsie to create their mobile apps that have just been made available for download.

The mobile apps are pared down versions of specific features, not the whole site. As John mentioned, they looked at Google Analytics to help see what patrons were using the most on their site to determine what features they wanted accessible. Both libraries have their catalog, patron account, locations, events and classes, ask a librarian, new titles, and social networking links as features in the app.

Some things to note about the features and the process:

Working with Boopsie was done completely virtual. They have never met anyone at Boopsie nor have they talked to them (there is no phone number, just email communication). Working virtually, they used Google Docs to keep separate files on each feature, and each library sends Boopsie their files nightly to keep the apps up to date.

The ILS search will yield different results than the website. There isn't much they can do about that because they are basically different search engines. Also, the graphics may not work depending on the phone OS changes. Another unexpected issue was the wait period for getting the app approved in the iTunes App Store. It took longer than they expected, and iTunes did not give them a date when the app would be ready, just a timeframe. Two more things to note about the features is that RSS does not work well and it is difficult to get statistics. They can get monthly reports downloaded, but it is not an easy process.

Besides some of the issues they have had making the apps functional and user-friendly, both St. Paul Public and

Hennepin County Libraries are glad they were able to work with a company that is familiar with library products and needs.

To take a look at both libraries' mobile apps and test them out (via web or download to your phone), you can visit each site at <http://sppl.boopsie.com/> and <http://hclib.boopsie.com/>. ■

Avoiding the Dangers of Personalization

Matt Lee

Thinking as much about Google as librarians do probably exposes a certain anxiety on our part about their position relative to ours in the information world. But librarians are increasingly being joined by regular people in feeling anxious about Google, it seems. Siva Vaidhyanathan is nervous about Google's supposedly "Not Evil" intentions (as noted in March's [Reference Notes](#) write-ups of his keynote at the 2011 Library Technology Conference). And Eli Pariser, author and think tanker, has recently publicly pronounced his anxiety about Google's control over the information we ingest with an interesting TED talk called "Beware online 'filter bubbles'" at http://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles.html.

To be fair, Pariser's anxiety extends beyond Google (which is only fair - whose doesn't these days?). But he uses Google as an effective example of his worry about the dangers of personalization in information search and delivery. When one searches Google, 57 separate signals personalize search results - where one is geographically, what kind of operating system or browser one is using, 55 others that I can't imagine - and that's when one isn't signed in to a Google account. If one were signed in, it's likely that the number of signals tracked would be largely magnified and that one's historic use of Google would play largely in delivering personalized results.

So, what's the problem? The more personalized information becomes, the more we'll tend to only see things that reinforce our existing beliefs or apply only to our specific domains and areas of existent interest. Anyone who's ever set up a search alert knows what this is like. You only receive information you've asked for. With a search alert, however, at least you know what filters you've set up. With Google or Facebook (another example used by Pariser), the filters are invisible. You don't know what is being suppressed from your view. You don't know what sites or posts these information-providing organizations believe you're not interested in seeing. And if we don't see surprising or new or challenging information, what does that do to our worldviews?

As Pariser quotes Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook founder and famous foot-in-the-mouth-placer: "A squirrel dying in your front yard may be more relevant to your interests right now than people dying in Africa." Yikes. And that's the guy in charge of personalizing information for us? ■



ELM Spotlight

ELM Curriculum Standards, Coming Summer 2011

Matt Lee

As you're wrapping up the K-12 school year, recovering textbooks and library books from distracted students, and planning some summer distractions of your own, please add one ELM item to your "revisit before fall" to-do list. Over the summer, we'll be releasing a tool called ELM Curriculum Standards that ties Minnesota K-12 academic benchmarks to content from multiple ELM databases. ELM Curriculum Standards will provide a single access point to reliable content for educators to use in support of their standards-conscious teaching.

This fall, we'll promote the tool to schools and would very much appreciate your help. So as you wind up for the school year next fall and begin distributing textbooks and library books to students once again, please keep ELM Curriculum Standards in mind. We'll be in touch with more information. For now, though, have a great summer! ■

EBSCOhost Mobile and New iPhone App

Edited from EBSCO

EBSCOhost Mobile is an excellent way to encourage your users to make the most of your online resources from EBSCO. If you haven't recently promoted it, here is an FAQ with instructions on how to facilitate its use, which includes a link to the most popular FAQs on the topic:

How do I create an EBSCOhost Mobile profile in EBSCOadmin?
http://support.ebsco.com/knowledge_base/detail.php?id=4671

Exciting News! The new iPhone app is now available! EBSCO's new app is free, and offers the convenience and rich functionality that enables users to:

- Choose which databases to search
- Limit results to full text or peer reviewed
- Sort by relevance or date
- Retrieve full text results in HTML and/or PDF formats
- Save results for offline access at a later date
- Email results to self or others
- View cover flow display of results

To get started, simply click on the EBSCOhost iPhone/iPod Touch Application link at the bottom of the EBSCOhost screen and follow the instructions.

Learn more about EBSCOhost Mobile and the new iPhone app here:
<http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/mobile-access>. ■

AskMN: The Librarian Is In!

AskMN: The Librarian Is In!

Mary Parker

During the first ten months of FY11 (July 2010 - April 2011), AskMN fielded 19,044 questions. Between April 2008 - April 2011, over 45,000 questions have been submitted.

To date this fiscal year, the Public Library Queue answered 12,198 questions, and the Academic Library Queue answered 6,846.

Within the Academic Library Queue, 3,538 questions were asked by Minnesota patrons and were answered by participating Minnesota academic libraries. Within the Public Library Queue, 6,365 questions were asked by Minnesota patrons and were answered by participating Minnesota public libraries or public library systems. A participating library is defined as one that contributes staffing to AskMN.

We anticipate adding 1 academic library and 1 public library system yet this fiscal year. ■

WebJunction MN

WebJunction MN Featured Courses

Check out these great courses available at no charge to WJMN members!

Delivering the Message

When talking to your community, library board, or other funders, it is not enough to have a good case to make for your library. Everything about your delivery creates a critical impression on your audience. Voice, body language, eye contact, and more, determine how effectively you engage and persuade an audience. This important skill set is not one most of us have naturally, **Delivering the Message** can help you learn how to deliver the message of your library's value and impact wherever you need to. <http://mn.webjunction.org/catalog/-/courses/details/31201391> ■

Managing Difficult Patrons with Confidence (LE@D)

Dealing with difficult patrons is a never-ending topic among library staff, especially those working in public libraries.

Every staff member dreads having to deal with a problem patron, but these occurrences in libraries are unavoidable. In reality, the number of problem patron situations is not great, but because they are challenging and often emotionally charged, they loom large in our overall experiences. While never fun, there is a way to prepare staff to handle problem patrons effectively and with confidence.

This course is intended to provide each participant with a basic tool-kit that can be applied to manage a variety of difficult patron situations. <http://mn.webjunction.org/catalog/-/courses/details/690543> ■

There will always be storytellers

Storytelling has always been at the heart of libraries. *"There will always be storytellers"* teaches you how to find the most engaging stories, how to identify your storytelling style, and how to adorn and make your stories personal! <http://mn.webjunction.org/catalog/-/courses/details/103991323> ■

Getting the Right Grant

Just about all libraries could use some extra funding these days, and the right grant can make a huge difference in the programming and resources you can offer your community. But if you've never done it before, the whole process of finding the right one for your situation, navigating the application process and writing a compelling case can be daunting. The Grant Writing Basics course will walk you through all the critical steps from finding a grant source, understanding the commitments required, writing and submitting, and finally beginning to implement. <http://mn.webjunction.org/catalog/-/courses/details/690544>

Remember to check out the WJMN Learning Center (<http://mn.webjunction.org/catalog>) for the full list of WJMN courses. ■

Digital Delights: June is Bustin' out all Over!

Alex L. Ames, Graduate Assistant, Minnesota Digital Library

This is the next installment of "Digital Delights from Minnesota Reflections," a monthly feature of the Minnesota Digital Library Listserv.

If Minnesota spends many months of the year trapped in winter's bitter embrace and slopping through a soggy spring, then our state truly comes into its own in summer time. The glistening waters of our many lakes, the warmth of the sun, and endless opportunities for outdoor adventure add up to idyllic summers for one and all. Are you stuck in the office, even though the woods and water beckon? Then dream the afternoon away with Minnesota Reflections!

Just about everyone loves to get away for the weekend during the summer time, and many Minnesotans strive to own a piece of the wilderness to call their own. The comfort of summer home accommodation varies greatly. Ellie Rosberg did not have to "rough it" in her lakefront getaway:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/whs,3>

Indeed, the bucolic shores of Lake Minnetonka sparkle with the relics of old Twin Cities wealth:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/whs,68>

But most of us strive for simpler vacation homes, with little to separate us from the nature we so admire:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/p15160coll5,182>

For those who lack the luxury of leaving town for the weekend, try a stroll around a local park, small or grand in scale:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/ren,152>

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/msn,1204>

The Lyndale Park Rose Garden exudes a formality befitting its floral inhabitants:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/mpls,165>

Structure and height are important components of an aesthetically pleasing garden, particularly one of substantial size. Gazebos can anchor gardens, providing a solid focal point from which landscape designs can radiate:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/irrc,1700>

These little gardeners seem to enjoy getting their hands dirty:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/stc,594>

Of course, not all gardens are primarily intended as places of pleasure and repose. Though vegetables may lack the stately elegance of scarlet roses, they do a much better job filling the stomach:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/irrc,2177>

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/irrc,2176>

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/irrc,2155>

What is more Minnesotan than a day spent fishing?

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/ros,226>

Minnesota's fishing tradition spans back long before the time of White settlement:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/penn,152>

Summer fun can range from thoroughly refined (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/p15160coll12,71>) to daring and adventurous (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/nsm,47>). However you decide to enjoy the outside, remember that the bucolic splendors of Minnesota summers are particularly memorable when spent with friends and family:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/nico,952>

Enjoy the first days of summer! ■

Federal Government Zeroes Out School Library Funding

Matt Lee

The “Improving Literacy Through School Libraries” program has been de-funded, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Find more information and responses from ALA and AASL at <http://ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pr.cfm?id=7200>. The program has helped provide up-to-date library materials, well-equipped school libraries, and certified school librarians, and has been the “only federal program solely for school libraries.”

As many have noted (including Carla in the article below), there’s a clear correlation between school library funding and student achievement. As various education funding sources diminish, students are the immediate losers – but that loss reverberates throughout our future state and national economy. ■

School Library Impact Studies

Carla Pfahl

Graduate students and their faculty from Mansfield University in Mansfield, PA, pulled together 23 school library impact studies from 22 states and one Canadian province to compare basic findings from all of them. The research was part of a paper, “School Library Research Summarized,” for the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. It was shown in all the studies and highlighted in the Mansfield University report that student achievement was impacted by many different factors associated with school libraries and librarians.

The findings were broken out by type: staffing; collaboration; instruction; scheduling; access; summer reading programs; technology; collections; budget; professional development; and achievement gap. In all areas, states reported measured improvements when resources were focused on school libraries and librarians. Among the findings, a Colorado study in 2010 noted that school librarians at the elementary school level can play an important role in closing the achievement gap. In California, in 2006, it was reflected in higher test scores when school librarians had opportunities to collaborate with teachers instead of focusing on the day-to-day operations of the library. In Wisconsin, a 2006 report showed school librarians helped students with information and technology skills that were not being taught in the classroom.

In the studies, they found that regular increases in areas such as hours of access to libraries and resources, collections including electronic resources, up-to-date technology with Internet connection, larger library budget, and more of an education role for the librarian rather than just managing the collections and operations can result in regular growth in student learning. The studies also took into account socio-economic factors and found that states still scored higher on tests given the socio-economic variable. “Although the effects of poverty still remain a primary force in determining student academic success, state after state showed that such socio-economic conditions could not explain away the impact of school library programs, especially school library staffing, funding, and quality collections.”

The enlightening report points directly to measures of improvements. For instance, in Pennsylvania PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) reading scores could be directly associated with school library staffing, information technology, and information literacy instruction. Librarians that focused more time on teaching information literacy skills as part of classroom curriculum contributed to increased test scores. With socio-economic factors taken into account test scores were still higher for those that had access to information literacy instruction than for students who did not receive that instruction.

To read the full report and major findings, go to <http://library.mansfield.edu/impact.asp>. ■

Share Your Thoughts on Minnesota Libraries in 2025

Kate Bessey, Central Minnesota Libraries Exchange and MN Library Futurist

Are you interested in the future of Minnesota libraries? As the Minnesota Library Futurists continue to do our work we hope to gain even more ideas, thoughts and insight from those interested in libraries through the following survey <http://bit.ly/mnlfi2025survey>. Please don’t be afraid to tell us what you think; no ideas are too crazy or off the wall. If the group rallies behind your idea, we’ll also be sure to give credit where it is due, or you can opt for anonymity as well. So, let’s start this conversation! Want to know more about the MN Library Futurists? Visit our website at <https://sites.google.com/site/mnlfi2025/home> and/or our blog at <http://mnlfi2025.blogspot.com/>! ■

The Minitex office will be closed on Monday, July 4.

Reference Notes

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Office Hours Monday—Friday, 8:00 am—4:30 pm
Reference Intake Form <https://www.minitex.umn.edu/reference/request/>

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