2012 Library Technology Conference

There were many excellent concurrent sessions and keynote presentations at the 2012 Library Technology Conference held on the beautiful Macalester campus, March 14-15. Read on for reports from just a sampling of those.

**Library Data and Student Success**
*Matt Lee*

One of the first break-out sessions was given by a group of librarians from the University of Minnesota (Kate Peterson, Kristen Mastel, Jan Fransen, and Shane Nackerud) with several of their colleagues from the University’s Office of Institutional Research (Krista Soria and David Peterson). The session reported the results of a just-completed semester-long study of library use and academic performance.

The U of MN Libraries staff tracked how individual students used the Libraries in a number of different ways: the number of books they checked out, the number of ILL requests, off-campus database access, online reference transactions, instruction attendance, and several additional data points. The Libraries staff then took this data to their colleagues in the University’s Office of Institutional Research to combine it with student demographic and academic performance data.

Here’s what they found:

- 77% of undergraduate students used the University Libraries system in the fall semester of 2011.
- 85% of graduate students used the Libraries during that same semester.
- For first year students, "using the library one time was associated with a .23 increase in student GPA" (e.g., moving from a 3.0 to a 3.23).
- First year students who used the library at least once were 1.54 times more likely to re-enroll in classes the following semester than those who didn’t.
- Students who took the Libraries’ online introductory research course “Intro to Libraries 2” were 7.58 times more likely to re-enroll.
The presenters reported many more interesting findings from their work, including stats on library use by college department and correlations between GPA and specific types of library use. Find their PowerPoint with all the statistics at http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/libtech_conf/2012/sessions/28/. This data is very new, so the presenters are considering various options for continuing this work and using what they’ve found.

Books on the Floor: Teaching Information Literacy
Carla Pfahl

Of the sessions I attended, I thought I would share some notes from Mary Beth Sancomb-Moran’s session about her experience working with freshmen at the University of Minnesota – Rochester campus. The library is more of a learning commons area because they do not have a physical collection. Mary Beth works very closely with faculty to provide information literacy sessions for freshmen and to meet other informational needs of the campus.

Sancomb-Moran surveyed sophomore students to see what they still retained (what stuck) with them from their freshman information literacy sessions the previous year. She found two things that sophomores took away from those sessions:

- Navigation of the library web page
- Identification of credible sources

Taking a look at the ACRL Information Literacy Standards, Sancomb-Moran identified two standards that effectively spoke to the issues her (freshman) students were having with identifying credible sources: They don’t know how to perform an effective search and are unable to complete an evaluation of sources.

In her sessions with freshman, she explains the search functionality of Google – tailoring searches based on previous searches to produce results associated with a compiled profile rather than solely the individual terms used. The students were unaware of the functionality. To explain searching and search terms, Sancomb-Moran showed the students a physical bottle of Diet Coke and had them list all the terms of what that “thing” was. She then pointed out that those were search terms – the descriptors of that item. Next, she showed students some sample searches in a database v. Google for different terms, noting that sometimes Google is a better tool for some things, but other types of databases are good for different subjects.

When speaking to freshmen about the evaluation of sources, she introduced them to the CRAP test: Currency, Reliability, Authority, and Purpose/Point of View, and took them to some genuine and some fake websites and had them determine which were good and which were fake or biased. Two fake websites used in her example were DHMO (http://dhmo.org/) and City of Mankato (http://city-mankato.us/). A genuine website used in her example was Medpedia (http://www.medpedia.com/). Students thought the Medpedia site was actually bad because they thought it was a Wikipedia site and they have been told to never use Wikipedia.

It was interesting to hear about concepts that worked with freshmen and carried over to their sophomore year. The information shared would be useful to other librarians in academic, K-12, and public settings to assist patrons in having a better understanding of search terms and evaluation of sources.

Keeping Up With Patrons’ Demands
Beth Staats

I attended a session that offered some practical and useful information for librarians who struggle to keep up with patron’s technological demands. Ambri Refer, of Cedar Falls Public Library, presented a session titled, “How Do I Learn All of This Stuff? Keeping Up With Patrons’ Demands.” The session focused on technology assistance with public library
patrons. Ambri suggested some ways to keep up on technology trends:

1) Read / browse magazines like *PC World* and *Library Journal*;
2) Browse Sunday newspaper sales and advertisements to see what devices are on sale;
3) Read blogs and listservs;
4) Make personal observations while shopping, i.e., play / experiment with kindles and ereaders;
5) Attend conferences;
6) Stay current on social media like Facebook and Twitter.

Cedar Falls Public Library is incorporating patron demands and trends by offering the following services:

1) Overdrive;
2) Freegal (service to download and offer free songs);
3) Downloading stations (1 computer solely dedicated; patrons can download iTunes, eBooks, etc.);
4) Viewing stations (computers dedicated to DVD viewing as they have a high demand for DVDs in their library);
5) 20-24 Netbooks available for checkout (these have a GPS tracking device in case of theft).

The reference desk staff (which consists of just four librarians) get overwhelmed as they are the first place patrons go to for tech questions like the constant query about how to connect to the library’s wifi.

To better help patrons with technical needs, the librarians took a step back in order to:

1) Determine what tech products to support;
2) Determine how and when they will refer patrons elsewhere;
3) Determine which staff should know what (i.e., John knows Kindles, Ellen knows Nooks, etc.).

Finally, know what products your library supports by knowing how to troubleshoot your databases and services and always try to ensure a quick and effective answer.

**Users Don’t Know What Libraries Are Talking About**

*Carla Pfahl*

On February 29, a research article by John Kupersmith of the UC Berkeley Library titled “Library Terms That Users Understand” was added to the University of California’s eScholarship repository. The report compiles 51 usability studies, most of which were conducted by university libraries, and reviews those studies to determine “test methods and best practices for reducing cognitive barriers caused by terminology.”

The report is an extensive look at the terminology of library websites and recommendations of ways to demystify what librarians are talking about. It is an eye-opener into commonly misunderstood terms and subsequent success rates of finding information. The most commonly misunderstood terms reported by users were: acronyms and brand names, “database,” “library catalog,” “e-journals,” “index,” “interlibrary loan,” “periodical or serial,” “reference,” “resource,” and subject categories such as Humanities or Social Sciences. Based on 20 tests at 14 libraries, the average user’s success rate for finding journal articles or article databases is only 52%. Website terminology is the major factor cited for failure.

Included in the 51 usability studies were two studies from Minnesota. One was from Minnesota State Library Standards Review Task Force: “Library Website Terminology; Interim Minnesota Guidelines” (https://wiki.minitex.umn.edu/StandardsTaskForce/LibraryWebsiteTerminology). The other is from a Minnesota State University, Mankato study by Joan Roca and Roland Nord: “Usability Study of the MnLink Gateway,” *OCLC Systems & Services*, 17:1 (2001).

The author aggregated and formatted information from the usability studies into columns for “What did work” and “What didn’t work.” For the Minnesota State Library Standards Review Task Force, an online survey was given on more than 50 library websites. The recommended terms that *did* work were:
• Library Catalogs
• Databases
• Basic search
• Advanced search
• Help

Some of the best practices recommended by Kupersmith include using natural language equivalents on top-level pages, avoiding frequently misunderstood terms, conducting internal usability tests, explaining possibly confusing terms, and providing multiple paths to information. Minitex worked with the Riley Hayes marketing firm during the redesign of the Minitex (http://www.minitex.umn.edu) and MnKnows (http://www.mnknows.org) websites to incorporate many of the tips reported by the Minnesota studies and aggregated by Kupersmith.

Along with Kupersmith’s extensive data collection, the “Library Terms That Users Understand” report also offers several test method options for conducting a usability test. The publication can be accessed here: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3qq499w7.

Mary Wagner Receives 2012 Beta Phi Mu Award
Matt Lee

Congratulations to Mary Wagner, professor and past director of the University of St. Catherine’s MLIS program, on recently being awarded ALA’s Beta Phi Mu Award. The award is presented for excellence in library education and I dare say that colleagues, past MLIS students, and the Minnesota library community alike would all agree that the honor is very well deserved.

Here’s the full ALA press release: http://www.ala.org/news/pr?id=9512.

YouTube – Channel for Teachers
Jennifer Hootman

YouTube has recently launched a channel just for teachers and students (http://www.youtube.com/user/teachers). With the tagline “spend more time teaching, less time searching,” YouTube partnered with a group of teachers to create playlists of partner videos aligned to common core standards. The playlists are categorized into the four broad disciplines of language arts, math, science, and social studies. Teachers are also encouraged to create their own custom playlists as well as submit their own video lessons. In keeping with one of the newest trends in education, the “flipped classroom,” producers of YouTube Teachers claim that strategic inclusion of these videos within lesson plans can:

• Increase student engagement;
• Reach every type of learner;
• Reach a larger audience; and
• Enhance in-class time by having students view videos on their own in preparation for class.

While there are teachers that may be ready to use YouTube videos in conjunction with their lessons, actually incorporating them into the classroom proves challenging for many schools. Introducing new web resources typically requires revisiting the school’s Internet policies. As the needs to access more online resources like YouTube Teachers increases, the more urgent it will be for school district faculty and staff to create responsive Internet policies. Understandably, it’s likely a very challenging process, but well worth it when considering the rapidly growing needs for curriculum-supportive content and changes in teaching.

Library Teleconference Series in Hiatus
Mary Parker

Minitex has subscribed to College of DuPage Press/Multimedia Services’ Library Teleconference series on behalf of libraries and schools throughout the three states since its earliest days. We’ve been eagerly awaiting news of the 2012 series. However, we received an email on April 1 saying the series is being
discontinued. Here is the body of the email.

“Since 1995, College of DuPage Press has coproduced the Library Teleconference series with Multimedia Services. The program featured expert presenters in the Library Sciences and sought to bring together a national Learning Resource community to proactively address evolving library processes, policies and technology.

“Over the years, it has been our pleasure to take this journey with you. However, financial support for this program has declined significantly despite increased interest from library systems across the country. We have continued to explore cost saving measures that would allow COD Press to continue to offer this program, but regrettably, we must discontinue the Library Futures program series at this time due to rising costs and dwindling professional development funds among end users.

“We will continue to make past programs available and will consider resuming the program in the future should the requisite underwriting materialize. It has been our pleasure to be a part of the exploration and learning that has been Library Futures.”

This was a popular series in the Minitex region. You may view past College of DuPage teleconferences sponsored by Minitex. To do so, browse the complete list of past teleconferences (2001-2011) and check out copies to borrow here: https://www.minitex.umn.edu/events/teleconferences/checkout.aspx. You will receive them in just a few business days.


Edited from OCLC

It’s no secret that libraries everywhere are making difficult choices due to the current economy. Newer programs, like virtual reference, are often the first to face the chopping block. Making the case for funding virtual reference might be easier than you think.

Susan McGlamery works with libraries on a regular basis as they secure funding for OCLC’s QuestionPoint service. In addition you’ll hear from Cathy Crosby, Statewide Coordinator for Ask a Librarian Delaware; Liz Barksdale of Ask New Texas; and Jaclyn McKewan of AskUs247 and Western New York Library Resources Council. Hear what has an impact on funders and learn what features of a virtual reference service are most valuable to your community.

“Virtual Reference in Tough Times” is the next in the Best Practices in Virtual Reference series. Each session is a free, hour-long webinar available to all and highlighting some of the benefits of working collectively with others in your group.

Despite the best advocacy, paying for virtual reference still may not make the cut. Explore what free options you have and hear how they’ve worked for those already using the service. Know what you really need to have in a virtual reference service to make it work for your community.

Virtual Reference in Tough Times
April 24, 2012
12:00pm – 1:00pm Central
To attend from your location register here: http://bit.ly/ybtMkd

Or if you’d like to attend our in-person viewing party in the Minitex conference room register here: http://minitex.umn.edu/Training/Details.aspx?SessionID=397

*For more information on future installments or for recordings of past webinars in this series visit http://community.oclc.org/groups/virtual-reference-series.html
AskMN

We Get Questions: AskMN Numbers Rise
Carla Pfahl

AskMN added two more libraries in February and one in March. Lake Superior College, College of St. Scholastica, and Concordia University (St. Paul) are the newest libraries to participate in the AskMN service, bringing the total number of participating libraries up to 23.

As reported in the January issue of Reference Notes, AskMN usage was up 30% in a comparison of the first six months of FY12 (July – December) to FY11 (July – December). However, January and February were very active months with many K-12 students utilizing the AskMN service for research assistance on their History Day projects. Comparing FY12 July – February with the same dates in FY11, AskMN saw a 43% increase in traffic.

With comments such as these, AskMN has clearly made an impact on students as well as citizens across Minnesota:

“This website has always been my go to website when I needed help! I actually found this website because my teacher told us it was very helpful. You guys have helped my get through my first year of middle school! Thank You all so much!!!!”

“It was super helpful how she gave links to websites that also answered my question!”

“I love this source! It has helped me a ton with my National History Day project.”

“This website has helped me several times with several projects in 5th and 6th grade”

“What a marvelous service! Being able to turn to AskMN for fast, excellent reference help saves me time and money.”

“Exceptional service with a positive outcome. Grace went out of her way to help.”

Participation by more libraries in AskMN will help provide well-rounded quality assistance to Minnesota residents and students. For more information about AskMN and how participation works, please contact Carla Pfahl (pfahl001@umn.edu).
ELM Spotlight

ELM Renewal Process Underway
Mary Parker

It’s been almost three years since we entered into vendor agreements with EBSCO, Gale, OCLC, ProQuest, and Encyclopaedia Britannica for the suite of statewide databases known as Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM).

We contracted for three years with options to renew for two additional one-year terms. We are working through our usual process to extend our agreements for the next year (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013).

Watch the ELM Spotlight in Reference Notes and postings to mtx-elm@lists.minitex.umn.edu for updates.

Encyclopedia Britannica Ceases Print Publication
Matt Lee

As you’ve no doubt heard, the 2010 edition of Encyclopedia Britannica will be the last one printed. The company will continue its long-standing focus on the electronic version of its encyclopedia, which is available in ELM. The online version includes interactive games and lessons, primary source material, and tons of multimedia. The New York Times blog Media Decoder has a nice review of the history of Britannica, as well as quotes from the company and from librarians: http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/after-244-years-encyclopaedia-britannica-stops-the-presses/. (Note: Nytimes.com has recently narrowed free access to articles on their site to ten per month. If you’re counting, this counts as one.)

National Poetry Month
Jennifer Hootman

April is National Poetry Month! What better way to celebrate it than participating in Poem in Your Pocket Day on April 26th? As explained on The Academy of American Poets’ website, simply select a poem you love, carry it with you on the 26th, and share it with your co-workers, family, and friends. Or share your poem on Twitter #pocketpoem.

For more ideas on celebrating poetry month, visit http://www.poets.org/page.php/prmiID/406.


Looking for poetry in ELM? Try a number of ELM databases on our Language Arts & Literature page: http://www.elm4you.org/databases/topics/languagelit.

CPERS Column

Site Visits
Northwestern College

Northwestern College has a beautiful campus: the land is a peninsula surrounded on one side by Lake Johanna and on the other side by Little Lake Johanna. This campus is relatively new; they moved to it in the 1970s; the two original structures on the campus housed a Catholic boy’s school (see photo of stairs below). The library opened in 1992 after the ceiling in the cramped old library crumbled, thus bumping the building of a new library up on the projects list by several years. They’re currently switching in new shelving little by little. The collection has many scores and children’s books as music and education are large departments at Northwestern College.

Concordia University

CPERS met all staff who were working that day: Charlotte Knoche, Nathan Rinne, Greg Argo, Jeanine Gatzke, and Zack Moss. Greg, Jeanine, and Zack gave us a tour of the relatively new building built in 2003. Special collections include German genealogy; German theology and hymnals donated by a Macalester professor; and the Hmong Resource Center collection. Half of the library’s first floor is dominated by an education/curriculum collection; because of stipulations from a donor, the library also has a large section of space dedicated to a children’s storytime space.
Minitex is offering a group discount for the new EBSCO eBook Academic Subscription Collection (yearly subscription, not a purchase). This collection offers an easy, cost-effective way for libraries to provide users with extensive, full-text eBook coverage to support their research needs. This eBook collection represents a broad range of academic subject matter from business and science, to engineering and the humanities.

The collection includes: nearly 70,000 titles; seamless integration with other EBSCOhost content; a stable collection that grows over time at no additional cost; and unlimited access.

The title list (choose the North American title list) can be found here:

http://www.ebscohost.com/ebooks/ebooks-subscription-listings

The group subscription will run July - June, so the deadline for orders is June 15, 2012. Discounts increase as the number of participating institutions increases. Please contact us at cpers@minitex.umn.edu for a price quote.

Gale’s New National Geographic Magazine Archive, 1888-1994

Featuring the complete archive of the magazine to the mid-1990s, National Geographic Magazine Archive, 1888-1994 includes every page and every photograph, all fully searchable through an intuitive interface. See more details at: http://z.umn.edu/71m

Minitex is pleased to offer special discounted pricing on this new archive for purchases made by June 30, 2012. Please download our brochure at http://z.umn.edu/71m or contact CPERS at cpers@minitex.umn.edu for pricing and further information.

CPERS Spring Trials 2012

Keep an eye out for our upcoming Spring Trials in April; we usually advertise the trials in our CPERS Blog (http://blog.lib.umn.edu/minitex/cpers/) and on our listservs. The Spring Trials showcase new vendors or new resources; resources and platforms that have been revamped; or resources for which libraries have expressed interest.

Spring 2012 Products Catalog

Check out the newly updated Spring 2012 Catalog, now available via a handy-dandy .pdf

http://www.minitex.umn.edu/Products/Catalog2012.pdf

Questions about library products can be sent to Tim: tim@cpers.umn.edu.

Duplicate barcodes craftily repurposed as animal art (Nate Farley’s office).
WebJunction MN

WebJunction Minnesota Gets New Look – More Great Webinars
Cec Boone, Minitex

Check out the new WebJunction Minnesota homepage (http://www.webjunction.org/partners/minnesota.html) to see the new user interface and check out this month's batch of interesting webinars. WebJunction staff continues to tweak the new homepage, but the events calendar includes information about webinars scheduled in April and May. All library staff are invited to sign up for these free webinars offered by WebJunction and WebJunction Minnesota. (WebJunction Minnesota is available to all Minnesota library staff, see the homepage for details. These webinars are just part of the WJMN package!)

- **Skills for the Everyday Leader**
  Wednesday, April 4, noon, 60 min
  Registration: https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=717908240

- **Virtual Connections**
  Tuesday, April 10, noon, 60 min
  Registration: https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=711626360

- **Libraries and the Era of the Learner: A Vision for the Future**
  Wednesday, May 16, noon, 60 min
  Registration: https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=713247453

- **Understanding Compassion Fatigue in Your Library**
  Thursday, May 31, noon, 90 min
  Early Registration: https://oclc.webex.com/oclc/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=714852202

MN Digital Library

Digital Delights: Researching the Legislature
*Edited from MDL list serv post*

For this month’s Digital Delight feature on the Minnesota Digital Library’s Minnesota Reflections, please visit http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/digitaldelights.aspx.

We are trying something a little differently this month for Digital Delights.

Robbie LaFleur, Director of the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, put her web authoring skills to work and created a marvelous website on researching the MN Legislature for your enjoyment.

You can also find past issues of Digital Delights newly archived here: http://www.mndigital.org/educators/digitalDelights/.
**Bonus(!) Digital Delights: Baseball**

*Matt Lee, Minitex*

For some, the first sign of spring is a robin digging for worms. For others, it’s little rhubarb nubs peeking up from long dormant gardens. For a certain kind of person, spring doesn’t truly arrive until the faraway sound of a baseball bat hitting a ball is heard for the first time. Just imagine that wonderful sound! It brings both a giddy promise of summer to come, and a reminder of summers, and games, gone by. Baseball occupies an enduring place in our national history and can connect us in a very personal way to those who have played before.