



# Smart Libraries™

Formerly Library Systems Newsletter™

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## Wiki Tikki Tavi

*“The motto of all the mongoose family is ‘Run and find out’; and Rikki-tikki was a true mongoose.”—Rudyard Kipling, from The Jungle Book*

**W**ikis are quickly gaining momentum and popularity, if not widespread respect. This may be appropriate and expected, because the concept of a wiki—where an entire community of users is encouraged to collaboratively write, rewrite, and update a body of content—is based on the Hawaiian phrase “wiki wiki” meaning “quick.”

The Wikipedia may be the most widely known and used wiki-thingy out there. The edition containing articles written in English is by far the largest, with more than 625,000 articles as of July 2005. German-language articles comprise the next largest group, with more than 250,000 articles. The French and Japanese are in a close but distant race for third.

The power of any wiki is the power of a collaborative grassroots effort. It appears to be part of a broader social movement that allows readers more input into and control over the information and knowledge systems they use. Other examples of this movement include e-reader software programs that allow readers to add annotations to books; online booksellers that allow readers to rate books and write reviews; and the personalization options prevalent in many library and information technology systems.

## Wiki Wherewithal

Wikis are popping up all over the knowledge map. Librarianship now boasts at least two wikis. LIS Wiki was launched in July 2005, as was Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki. There even is an unofficial wiki for the ALA conference in Chicago in June as well as at least one wiki bibliography. (See “Contact” below for URLs.)

Wikis are proving useful not only as a collaborative way to amass and share knowledge that is relatively stable, but also to codify and organize group experiences and impressions about breaking news. For example, a wiki about the recent terrorist bombings in the London transit system evolved and expanded rapidly.

One of the more interesting practical wikis is “WikiHow” from eHow, which contains how-to articles about do-it-yourself projects. The range of articles is evident from these two side-by-side articles in the home-improvement section: “Deal with a Stripped Screw” and “Design Your Own Home.” —*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WikiPedia>  
[www.liswiki.com](http://www.liswiki.com)  
[www.libsuccess.org](http://www.libsuccess.org)  
[www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2005-06-21-wikitorial\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2005-06-21-wikitorial_x.htm)  
 Unofficial ALA 2005 Conference Wiki: [http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)  
[www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/WikiBib.htm](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/WikiBib.htm)  
<http://wiki.ehow.com/>

## IN THIS ISSUE

Wiki Tikki Tavi  
PAGE 1

The ILS Scoop by Marshall Breeding

A Sage Offering: InfoCentre for K-12 ILS  
PAGE 2

OCLC Back in the ILS Biz?  
PAGE 4

The Public Library & the Internet:  
A Must-Read Report  
PAGE 5

Google Temporarily Halts Book Scan Project  
PAGE 5

Playaway at Will  
PAGE 6

Color My Digital World  
E-Paper Apps for Ads . . . and Libraries?  
PAGE 7

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# THE ILS SCOOP BY MARSHALL BREEDING

## A Sage Offering: InfoCentre for K–12 ILS

*Sagebrush Corp., one of the largest companies specializing in school library automation, has released its new integrated library system (ILS). “Sagebrush InfoCentre” is a next-generation system that builds on the strengths of Sagebrush’s existing library automation products: Winnebago Spectrum, Sagebrush Athena, and Accent.*

InfoCentre is positioned as the upgrade path for libraries currently using Sagebrush Spectrum, Sagebrush Athena, and those still running the older DOS-based Winnebago CircCat system. InfoCentre, available for both Windows and Macintosh computers, follows a distributed architecture, meaning that copies of the software are running in each library. (Sagebrush continues to offer Accent—which is based on Sirsi’s Unicorn software—for centralized, district-wide automation.)

The server component of Sagebrush InfoCentre runs on Windows, Mac OS X, or Novell NetWare servers, and clients are available for Windows and Macintosh computers.

This next-generation system draws the best features and technologies from the company’s existing products. Sagebrush InfoCentre includes all the features expected in a library management system for school libraries. Modules built into the system include circulation, cataloging, inventory, reports, and administration.

In addition to the basic modules, InfoCentre delivers features previously considered add-ons such as: an integrated Z39.50 server; the Visual Search interface; the WebServer component to deliver the Web Catalog interface; and multiuser licensing. A utility called “PatronPorter” loads user data into InfoCentre from other databases. The search interface can be configured to display results from a single library, a group of libraries, or all libraries in the organization.

So that libraries need not worry about any sort of conversion project to upgrade to this system, InfoCentre works with the same barcode schemes supported by its preceding products.

Sagebrush’s add-on products are fully compatible with InfoCentre. Sagebrush Pinpoint—the metasearch interface based on technology from iXmatch Inc.—can be used with InfoCentre to enable students to simultaneously search multiple information resources. Libraries using InfoCentre can take advantage of Sagebrush’s MARC Source cataloging utility to obtain high-quality records of K–12 materials. Users too can benefit from the Sagebrush EnrichMARC service that enhances the library’s MARC records with valuable data from Accelerated Reader, Scholastic Reading Counts, or Lexile measure information.



Authority control processing and retrospective conversion services are also available. Hardware products such as the SLIP printers and barcode scanners are fully compatible with Info-

Centre. Sagebrush also offers Sagebrush In-Hand, a hand-held barcode scanner for inventory, remote circulation, and tracking in-library use of materials or libraries using InfoCentre.

InfoCentre does not include a serials control module, but Sagebrush offers an add-on product called “Serials Manager” for libraries that require this capability. Unlike academic libraries, serials control tends to be a module less frequently needed in K–12 school libraries.

According to Director of Technology Marketing & Corporate Communications Mark Wilkes, Sagebrush will continue to provide support for Athena and Spectrum for as long as necessary. Both of these systems enjoy an extremely large installed base; more than 33,500 libraries use one or the other of these systems.

The InfoCentre announcement does not imply the need for libraries running Sagebrush’s existing products to make an immediate change; instead it makes available a more modern system when libraries are ready to upgrade.

## The Sagebrush K–12 Landscape

For Sagebrush, InfoCentre allows the company to focus its development efforts on a single system. The company had been developing both Sagebrush Spectrum and Sagebrush Accent, products it obtained through business acquisitions.

Based in Minneapolis, Sagebrush first became involved in the library automation industry when it acquired Dallas-based Nichols Advanced Technologies in October 1998 in a transaction handled by Growth Capital Partners. (Nichols, founded in 1983, became a major player in the school library market with its DOS-based MOLLI automation system. It launched Athena, one of the first automation systems with a graphical user interface, in October 1994.)

For the first year following Sagebrush’s acquisition, Nichols Advanced Technologies operated as an independent subsidiary. But by August 1999 the company was more fully integrated, ultimately changing its name to “Sagebrush Technologies.”

In January 2000, Sagebrush acquired Winnebago Software Company, the second-largest provider of library automation software to K–12 school libraries (second to Follett Software Company).

With headquarters in Caledonia, Minnesota, Winnebago Software Company was founded in 1982 by George B. “Jeb” Griffith, and it was one of the pioneering companies in producing PC-based software for libraries. Winnebago’s DOS-based CircCat

product, released in 1982, was installed in thousands of libraries. The company released its Winnebago Spectrum automation system in May 1999.

Prior to its acquisitions of library automation companies, Sagebrush had acquired Econo-Clad Books, American Library Publishers, and Catalog Card Company, all companies focused on K–12 education and libraries.

Sagebrush Corporation is privately owned; Jim Zicarelli serves as CEO.

With the release of InfoCentre, Sagebrush has consolidated its flagship automation systems from three down to two. The company’s library automation offerings now focus on Accent, designed for centralized automation of school districts, and InfoCentre, a distributed system that can be implemented either for a single library or for a district.

This path has been a gentle one for libraries that use any of Sagebrush’s automation products. Seven years have elapsed since the company acquired Athena and five years since it acquired Winnebago Spectrum. A transition period of this length to consolidate product lines reflects a strategy that respects the loyalty of

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libraries to the products that they purchased. Yet, over time a company must eventually consolidate overlapping products.

The launch of InfoCentre takes place in the context of a major market trend away from systems designed for automation of individual libraries toward one of centralized district-wide automation. In the last three years, the school library automation market has experienced a dramatic shift. Sales of automation systems for individual libraries have dropped dramatically.

*See Sagebrush on next page*

## THE ILS SCOOP

**Sagebrush** *from previous page*

Since Winnebago Spectrum and Sagebrush Athena belong to a genre of software that is experiencing much lower sales than previous years, the pressure to modernize and consolidate is intense. Sales of both Winnebago Spectrum and Sagebrush Athena have been declining for the last four years. New sales of Winnebago Spectrum and Sagebrush Athena have declined 65 and 57 percent respectively since 2001. The sharpest decline occurred in 2004, with new sales at about half that of the previous year.

This drop in sales is consistent with that in other products targeted to individual school libraries. As more school districts move toward district-wide automation, sales of library products

for individual schools have precipitously dropped. Sagebrush's archival Follett experienced a similar drop in new sales for its Circulation Plus/Catalog Plus product as did Book Systems's Concourse product.

Sagebrush InfoCentre began shipping in July 2005. Early sales have been strong, with almost 2,000 preorders shipped on the initial release date. In the next few years we can expect InfoCentre to become a major product in the K-12 library automation arena.

**Contact:** [www.sagebrushcorp.com/tech/infocentre.cfm?CFID=4710927&CFTOKEN=82814070](http://www.sagebrushcorp.com/tech/infocentre.cfm?CFID=4710927&CFTOKEN=82814070)  
[www.sagebrushcorp.com/dataservices/enrichmarc.cfm?CFID=1965471&CFTOKEN=1273599](http://www.sagebrushcorp.com/dataservices/enrichmarc.cfm?CFID=1965471&CFTOKEN=1273599)

## OCLC Back in the ILS Biz?

Though not considered a major move back into the integrated library system arena, OCLC PICA, a cooperative of European libraries in the Netherlands, has acquired Sisis Informationssysteme, a small company that produces library automation software.

Based in Oberhaching, Germany, Sisis offers a library management system called SISIS-SunRise, which finds use in about 150 libraries. The company also produces SISIS Elektra, a product designed to help implement a portal for an organization. This acquisition strengthens the OCLC PICA operation, adding to its resources in systems development and support.

This move does not necessarily indicate major OCLC interest in getting involved in the integrated library system market. OCLC already has been in and out of that business. From about 1983 through 1989, OCLC operated a Local Systems Division, offering the LS/2000 and LS/2 library automation systems. OCLC entered the ILS business by acquiring software from the Lister Hill Center of the National Library of Medicine and Online Computer Systems, but it exited this market in 1989 when it sold the rights to all its library automation products to Ameritech Corporation.

Given OCLC's previous history in the ILS arena, the acquisition of Sisis Informationssysteme strikes a chord of interest.

**Contact:** [www.oclc.org/news/releases/200513.htm](http://www.oclc.org/news/releases/200513.htm)



## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY & THE INTERNET: A MUST-READ REPORT

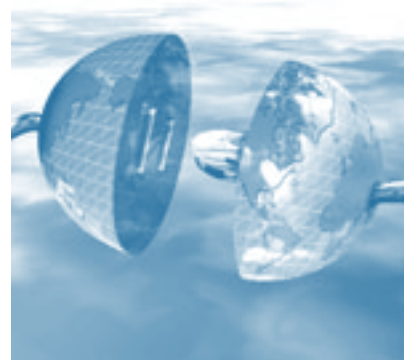
A new library study reveals the current state of Internet connectivity levels in public libraries as well as how public libraries provide services related to the Internet and technology. “Public Libraries and the Internet 2004: Survey Results and Findings” is published by the Information Use Management and Policy Institute of the College of Information at Florida State University and was jointly funded by the American Library Association and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Most of the statistics mentioned in the study are broken down by whether the library is urban, suburban, or rural and by the level of poverty of the area served.

Some of the more interesting results include the statistic that 96.6 percent of all public libraries are connected to the Internet and that 98.9 percent of these offer public access computing of some sort to their users. Statistics are provided on the average level of bandwidth offered according to each type of library. Eighty-five percent of libraries indicate that the number of

workstations that they offer for public computing is less than the number needed. On the wireless front, 18 percent of public libraries offer wireless Internet access and another 21 percent plan to offer it in the next year. On the other hand, 61.2 percent of public libraries have no immediate plans to offer wireless Internet access.

The full report, authored by John Carlo Bartot, Charles R. McClure, and Paul T. Jaeger, is a must-read for those interested in following trends in public libraries. It’s available from Florida State University at [www.ii.fsu.edu/publications/2004.plinternet.study.pdf](http://www.ii.fsu.edu/publications/2004.plinternet.study.pdf).—*Marshall Breeding*

**Contact:** [www.ii.fsu.edu/publications/2004.plinternet.study.pdf](http://www.ii.fsu.edu/publications/2004.plinternet.study.pdf)



## Google Temporarily Halts Book Scan Project

After much controversy (the brouhaha detailed over the last few months here in the pages of *Smart Libraries Newsletter*), Google has announced it will suspend until November the scanning of copyrighted books from major research libraries.

A press release posted on *American Libraries Online* on August 12 details Google’s decision. “In an August 11 blog entry, Google Print product manager Adam Smith said that the suspension came after discussions with ‘numerous publishers, publishing industry organizations, and authors.’ Smith said Google will now allow copyright holders to tell the company which books they would prefer *not to be* scanned if they’re found in a library.”

The online press release (URL under “Contact”) also states: “The moratorium is intended ‘to allow plenty of time to review these new options.’ [Smith] also announced that publishers can now submit lists of their books that they want automatically added to the Google Print Publisher Project when they’re scanned through the library project.”

Google’s decision to stop scanning copyrighted works until later this year comes after a third publisher association, the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers

(ALPSP), recently expressed extreme concern (see [www.alpsp.org/2005pdfs/Googlestatement.pdf](http://www.alpsp.org/2005pdfs/Googlestatement.pdf)) about Google’s project. (In addition to posting their objections online, the AAUP [American Association of University Presses] and AAP [Association of American Publishers] both remitted strong letters of concern about the project to Google’s legal counsel.) The original plan called for the scanning of library books still in copyright in the collections at Stanford and the University of Michigan.

The moratorium has failed, though, to mollify publishers’ apprehension. According to AAP president Pat Schroeder, the *AL Online* release states, “Google’s procedure shifts the responsibility for preventing infringement to the copyright owner rather than the user, turning every principle of copyright law on its ear.”

One potential outcome of the project and its surrounding controversy is that the legal notion of fair use in the United States (which seemed to be intentionally vague in the four tests of the late states of the print-only era) almost certainly will become tighter in its language and interpretation as we advance into

See **Google** on next page

Google *from previous page*

the digital era—if the legal notion of fair use survives at all. All individuals and organizations that rely on and practice fair use as part of their overall information seeking and use behavior may be affected by the fallout of this impasse between publishers and massive monographic digitization projects such as Google Print.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.alpsp.org/2005pdfs/Googlestatement.pdf](http://www.alpsp.org/2005pdfs/Googlestatement.pdf)  
*Smart Libraries Newsletter*, 25:2 (February 2005),  
“Google Signs on to Digitize Scholarly Books,” pg. 1.  
*Smart Libraries Newsletter*, 25:7 (July 2005), “Google

Book Scan Plan Foments Foes,” p. 6.  
*Smart Libraries Newsletter*, 25:8 (August 2005), “Google Print Rankles ALA Crowd in Chicago,” p. 5.  
*American Libraries Online*: “Google Temporarily Halts Library Project,” [www.ala.org/al\\_onlineTemplate.cfm?Section=alonline&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=101779](http://www.ala.org/al_onlineTemplate.cfm?Section=alonline&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=101779).  
Google Blog Entry, “Making Books Easier to Find,” <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2005/08/making-books-easier-to-find.html>.  
Google’s “Information for Publishers about the Library Project,” [http://print.google.com/googleprint/publisher\\_library.html](http://print.google.com/googleprint/publisher_library.html).

## Playaway at Will

The digital audiobook market for libraries and library users continues to expand and diversify. Early in 2006, the company FindawayWorld LLC will begin marketing “Playaway,” a small portable playback device with a digital audiobook already loaded and ready for use. Powered by one triple-A battery, the unit comes equipped with a jack for headphones, earbuds, or external speakers. In addition, there’s no need for a library or an end-user to connect the device to a computer in order to transfer content. The 3.25 in. (length) x 2 in. (wide) device sports a tapered-thickness design, outfitted with only eight simple keys and a small LCD display.

The file format of the preloaded content is unknown. Because the file is preloaded onto the playback device, however, the issue of file-format compatibility is moot, at least at the device level.

One of the device’s really nice features is the variable-speed playback. A FindawayWorld company rep says that four playback speeds will be available: “normal, slower than normal, faster than normal, and really fast.”

Content is still king, or at least the ceremonial head of state. The amount, type, and quality of the content available on Playaway devices remain unknown. The company’s Web site mentions both Harper-Collins and Simon & Schuster as content-providing publishers. A presentation from Playaway in late July also mentioned Time Warner, Brilliance Audio, and Penton Overseas as other content providers.

When the Playaway becomes commercially available early next year, the types of books available in this medium will focus on current popular fiction and instructional materials, such as language learning. Playaway will be sold to the general consumer market, probably primarily through chain bookstores, as well as to libraries and other institutional markets.

At least in theory, the security of this digital content seems to be ironclad, which may be one reason why several major publishers have agreed to supply content for this new venture. But the population segment that feels compelled to try and crack new digital systems has not yet had a go at the Playaway.

In some ways, the “Playaway way” is a retrospective delivery system for digital audio content. As several members of the blogging technorati have noted, it seems silly to return to the print-era paradigm of attaching just one text to each text-bearing device, especially when playback devices with much larger storage capacities make shuffling digital content (books, music, etc.) onto and off of these portable devices a breeze. For some users, however—perhaps even the majority of potential end-users of this type of content—the prospect of downloading digital content from the Internet is daunting economically, technologically, and/or cognitively. Playaway is designed to be simple, self-contained, and inexpensive. For libraries serving user populations not especially into owning and toting MP3 players, a system such as Playaway may help meet a need.—*Tom Peters*

**Contact:** [www.playawaydigital.com](http://www.playawaydigital.com)

## COLOR MY DIGITAL WORLD

### E-Paper Apps for Ads . . . and Libraries?

Fujitsu claims to have created the first color e-paper that has the flexibility (that is, literal flexibility, as in being able to bend the e-paper physically . . . but presumably not crumpling it) of pulp paper and that maintains its color even when the power to the paper is turned off.

Evidently, unlike other display technologies such as LCD panels, the image doesn't distort when the medium is pressed or twisted. The e-paper that Fujitsu is demonstrating is only 0.8 mm thick.

The color image on the e-paper is formed from three separate display layers, one each for red, blue, and green pixels. Because this color e-paper doesn't require power to maintain its image, there's no flicker to cause eyestrain. Fujitsu also claims the colors are more vibrant than in more traditional electronic displays.

Although advertisers may be the first to reap the benefits of color e-paper, the technology almost certainly will trickle into libraries and the systems, services, and devices used by libraries and library users. Information that changes frequently, such as newspaper content, could benefit from this technology. Even library signage could benefit.

According to an article in *The Register*, Fujitsu plans to begin testing its color e-paper in such real-life applications as billboards and menus. Commercial availability of the company's color e-paper product is scheduled for sometime between April 2006 and March 2007.

Don't expect the majority of digital displays to become "e-paperish" anytime soon, though. While crossing the color threshold is a big step, the current state of e-paper technology still has some major limitations. For example, the slow refresh

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**Information that changes frequently, such as newspaper content, could benefit from this technology.**

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rate of e-paper probably means that animation or videos are out of the question—at least for the time being.

In a related late-July development, Hitachi demonstrated an e-paper system

that features an embedded wireless local area network (WLAN) connection for downloading content directly from a server onto e-paper. This prototype display system, which is only black-and-white at this point, also contains a lithium ion battery pack capable of powering a changing display for several months. Hitachi plans to begin marketing this type of e-paper in April 2006.

**Contact:** [www.theregister.co.uk/2005/07/13/fujitsu\\_epaper/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/07/13/fujitsu_epaper/).

[www.publish.com/article2/0,1895,1837227,00.asp](http://www.publish.com/article2/0,1895,1837227,00.asp).

[http://techon.nikkeibp.co.jp/english/NEWS\\_EN/20050721/106936/](http://techon.nikkeibp.co.jp/english/NEWS_EN/20050721/106936/)



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## **September 2005**

### **The Online Jungle: Wikis on the World Wide Web**

#### **Smart Libraries Newsletter**

Smart Libraries Newsletter delivers hard data and innovative insights about the world of library technology, every month.

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