FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Anne Houston, ahouston@tulane.edu

This has been a busy fall for me, as I am sure it has for many of you. I moved to a new city; started a new job; and lived through my first hurricane - all in the space of a few weeks. Things have calmed down now so it is time to think about LIRT and our agenda for the next few months. As I mentioned in the last *LIRT News*, we are planning a retreat for the 2004 Midwinter conference; recruiting new committee members, especially "virtual" members; and evaluating our current committee structure. Our treasurer, Trisha Medeiros, is looking at some exciting ways to make LIRT more financially sound and we will hear more about her plans in the near future.

At the upcoming ALA Midwinter conference, we will be doing a few things differently. LIRT has always sponsored a lively and well-attended discussion forum on Sunday afternoon. We will be offering a second discussion forum on Sunday morning at the upcoming Mid-Winter conference. The Transition from High School to College committee will sponsor the afternoon forum and the Teaching, Learning, and Technology committee will sponsor the morning forum. This committee sponsorship is something new, and means that the forums will be focused on those topic areas. This should lead to some stimulating discussion, so please plan to attend.

We are also continuing to work with the LIRT meeting times to find the best arrangement for committees and officers, and specifically to create more meeting time for the Steering Committee. Be assured that we are not trying to confuse everyone by making the meeting times different at each conference! We are looking for an arrangement that we can settle into permanently. Be sure to consult the LIRT Web site for exact meeting times and places, as we get closer to conference time.

Another pressing item is on our agenda. Our longtime *LIRT News* production editor, Jana Ronan, would like to step down from that post, so we will need to find a replacement. Can anyone fill Jana's shoes? It's a big task and she's done a wonderful job. If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for this appointed position, please let me know.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Philadelphia!

Anne Houston, LIRT President and Head of Reference, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA ■

Common Ground

By Marcia King-Blandford, mkingbl~utoledo.edu

After the conferences are over and the enthusiasm fades and you are back at your desk, it is time to think of all the working librarians like yourself that go back, pick up the pieces and start all over again. The challenges of creating information literate students begin anew with every class we teach and with every information requestor that approaches the information desk or sends us an email. We must be ready when the students are!

On the days I struggle, one of those dedicated individuals who often come to mind is Dr. Julie Beth Todaro, Dean of Library Services of the Austin Community College in Austin, Texas. She is "common ground" in its truest form because every waking moment is about immerging libraries into everyone's lives. Dr. Todaro is a librarian 24/7. There is not a library issue or trend or debate that she is not hold passionately near to her heart. Dr. Todaro is a librarian.

INSIDE

The Times, They Are Achanging

Like the words to Bob Dylan's song, the times have been changing. How many of you thought all those years ago that computers would be an integral part of library instruction or that books would be read online or that you could have an entire article at the click of a mouse? Another great truth is that the more we change, the more we stay the same. This may also be the case in librarianship. The more we are networked and connected with wireless technology, the more important become the connections we form with our colleagues. The past two years as editor of the LIRT newsletter have taught me the importance of networking and connecting with other librarians. The connections I have formed with those I have met at seminars and conferences are particularly valuable to me. I hold these contacts especially close and treasure each idea or bit of encouragement that I received from each. As time goes on and things continue to change, this one idea should remain constant in our profession. The importance of the contacts and relationships that we build with our colleagues in library instruction is one thing we should never lose. We are each other's source of ideas, resources and encouragement. As I leave as editor of the newsletter, this is the one thought I would like to leave with everyone. Each of you is the strength of our organization.
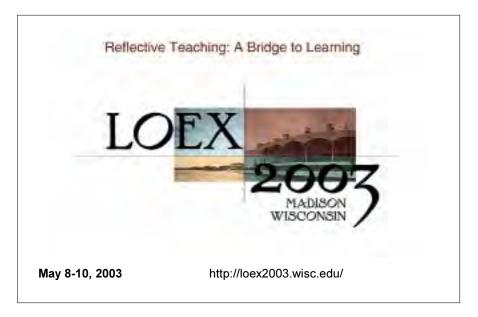
Indeed, the times are changing. Computers and technology have become such an integral part of our lives that it is hard to remember how we existed without them. During my career as a librarian (we won't say how long),

computers have progressed from massive mainframes to units that fit in the palm of your hand. Information is available within a few keystrokes or clicks of a mouse. This ease of access has added an additional challenge to role as librarians, particularly in instruction. Not only do we have to provide instruction on using the appropriate search engine or database to find information, but we also have to **stress** the importance of evaluating retrieved information. I think this is one of the greatest challenges that I face when working with students. As Carol stated, our connections to each other are important and the strength of our organization. The ideas that we share

in the *LIRT News* can only contribute to our successes as we develop information literacy and library instruction programs on our campuses and in our libraries.

I was honored when Carol asked me to become editor of the *LIRT News*. I look forward to working with her during this transition period and to continuing to provide a communication forum for all those interested in library instruction. I also look forward to establishing strong connections with the members of LIRT. I would like to thank Carol for her leadership as chair of the Newsletter committee and as editor of *LIRT News.*

--Outgoing Editor Carol Schuetz and incoming Editor Caryl Gray

Reflective Teaching: A Bridge to Learning

LOEX 2003 MADISON WISCONSIN

May 8-10, 2003   http://loex2003.wisc.edu/

Discovering America: Teaching Electronic Resources to American Studies Classes

By D. Brett Spencer, dbspence@bama.ua.edu

Many colleges and high schools now feature courses in American Studies, an innovative new field that combines history, literature, sociology, and the arts in a quest to capture the spirit of the American people. For librarians, teaching research skills to American Studies classes presents challenges arising from the field's interdisciplinary nature, intensive use of primary sources, novel topics, new methods of inquiry, and themes defined by a time period. Students may be researching such diverse topics as the images of African-Americans in Depression-era movies, personal accounts of factory work, or the rise of amusement parks. Here are a few tips for instruction librarians teaching American Studies classes how to research these kinds of topics:

■ **Showcase general databases during the instruction session.**
Point out resources such as *Accessible Archives* and *JSTOR* that search across disciplines and encompass a variety of topics. You may also wish to demonstrate the simultaneous searching offered by many vendors. A student examining American prison life may benefit by searching Webspirs databases like *Criminal Justice Abstracts, PsycInfo,* and *Sociological Abstracts* all at the same time.

■ **Illustrate the comprehensiveness of keyword searching.**
While showcasing electronic resources, reveal how keyword searching empowers students to easily explore novel topics since electronic resources are not limited by human indexing. In the *American Memory* digital collection <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>, a student can type in "Coney Island" and find documents from Work Progress Administration files, family papers, and nineteenth century periodicals. Many of these individual collections' print indexes (if they even have indexes) may not list unconventional topics like fun parks, leaving students to scan thousands of pages. A keyword search of these collections' full-texts can allow students to probe this topic with relative ease by catching every mention of Coney Island, instead of being confined to the terms selected for a subject index or thesaurus. Hubert Humphrey said that America is "all the richer for the many different and distinctive strands of which it is woven." Keyword searching can unravel strands of America virtually impenetrable in the age of print!
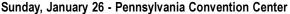
■ **Highlight the availability of movie and television reviews in databases.**
Andy Warhol once quipped that "It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented." Accordingly, American Studies students often seek to chart America's cultural landscape through media studies. A student may be analyzing the American family through television programs like "The Simpsons" and "Everybody Loves Raymond." Therefore, remember to show that Ebscohost, Infotrac, and Proquest offer reviews of movies and TV shows.

■ **Accentuate the limiting features on America: History and Life**
America: History and Life has a unique feature that comes in handy for tracing the themes of a decade. Let's take a student researching fashion trends in the 1960s. Go into "Advanced Search" and click the magnifying glass next to "time period". Checkmark "1960s" and click "paste terms" at the top of the screen. Type "fashion" in the keyword field and you can retrieve citations about fashion in the 1960s. While many databases can limit by publication date, few can zero in on works *about* a decade as *America* can.

LIRT MEETINGS
ALA MIDWINTER CONFERENCE 2003

PHILADELPHIA

Saturday, January 25 - Hampton Inn, Grand Ballroom

8:00 a.m	Executive Board I
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Steering Committee I
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	All Committee Meetings I

Sunday, January 26 - Pennsylvania Convention Center

9:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Discussion Forum I, Teaching, Learning, and Technology, Room 201A
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Discussion Forum II, Transitions to College, Room 204c

Monday, January 27 - Hampton Inn, Grand Ballroom

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	All Committee Meeting II
9:30 a.m. - Noon	Steering Committee II
Noon	Steering Committee Lunch

Tuesday, January 28 - Pennsylvania Convention Center

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Executive Board II, Room 300

The *LIRT News* is online at:

http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/instruct/LIRT/lirt.html

From The Ground Up: Starting A Successful Library Instruction Program In An Academic Branch Library

By Patrick Reakes, pjr@mail.uflib.ufl.edu

When approached about writing an article describing how we started a library instruction program in my branch, I jokingly remarked that the pent up demand from the faculty in our college almost guaranteed success. Overhearing my remark, another colleague commented that if I had been the type of person content to stay in my office, the program would never have been as successful. As I sat down to write about our experiences instituting the program, the significance of that observation became clear. A good dose of enthusiasm and the motivation to make a difference in the level of instruction supplied to our students in the college were important ingredients in the recipe for our success!

After coming on board as the Journalism and Mass Communications Librarian for the University of Florida, one of our highest priorities became the establishment of a library instruction program in the College of Journalism. We also wanted to change this small branch library located in the college from a "reading room" to a "library." Since there had never been a librarian on-site, students and faculty perceived the library primarily as a study room, or a place to access course reserve materials. In retrospect, one of the most effective ways to accomplish this change was through the establishment of the instruction program. However, I won't claim to have had the foresight to realize just how important it would turn out to be.

The first step in establishing the program was to make the faculty aware of the new librarian available in the college, who could come into the classroom and do library instruction sessions. This was done in a number of ways, including email contact, office visits and, probably most importantly, attending the faculty retreat that the college holds each year prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The retreat was a prime opportunity to meet faculty members I didn't know yet, to lay out my vision of the instructional program, and to explain how the

program would benefit them and their students. I'd like to say my tremendous sales skills won them over, but I think I was "preaching to the choir." Whatever the reason, the initial response from the faculty was enthusiastic and the program has continued to grow and flourish.

One of my basic tenets in life is to try and simplify things, so the nuts and bolts of the program consist of a few simple, common sense components. First, prior to the sessions, I try to have as much interaction as possible with the professors/instructors who are teaching the courses. This can often be one of the more difficult parts of the process with the busy schedules we all keep, but it is vital to have as much information as possible. Knowing the specific course objectives and project requirements enables the customization of the instruction sessions in order to emphasize specific resources. Using the information from the faculty and, whenever possible, the course syllabi, the sessions are prepared using a "three-tiered approach." Each tier is progressively more focused and customized, based on the specifics of the course, input from the professor, and the level of the class. They are generally comprised of:

1. A brief PowerPoint presentation covering some general rules of research, based loosely on the basic concepts of information literacy (i.e. determine what information is needed, know how to use the resources, evaluation, etc.)

2. An overview of the main library web site, including navigation, general tools such as the E-journal locator, basic/advanced catalog searching, locating and using databases, subject guides, etc.

3. Specific print materials, databases, indexes, web sites or other information resources which are relevant for the specific projects or papers required by the course. I include some specific search query examples to highlight the differences in the functionality of the various databases and what kind of data is available in each.

I also often supply a written research guide or pathfinder customized to the specific research needs of the course. Since the journalism and mass communication fields are very multi-disciplinary, they include information on how to contact other subject specialist librarians in relevant areas.

The last phase of the program is the individual and/or group follow-up after the in-class training, which often seems to be the most important part of the learning process for many students. Additional questions and problems often come up only after they try to apply what was presented in the session, so I stress the fact that I am available for follow-up help either in person or via email. This has had an extremely positive effect on library usage and on the number of reference/research questions we receive. While many of the other libraries on campus have shown decreasing use in many areas our branch has had an increase of over 10% in number of people entering, an increase of almost 45% in total reference/research questions, and an increase of almost 10% in the in-house use of materials. I have also become the most popular guy in the building when those advertising campaign projects are due!

Volunteer to serve on a LIRT Committee!!!

The Changing Face of Public Library Instruction

By Eva Greenberg, aa2196@lcfn.org

There was a time, not too many years ago, when instruction given to public library patrons consisted of a few basic steps. One was showing them how to use the card catalog and describing the various elements of the catalog and another was showing them how to use *Reader's Guide*. Other types of instruction included locating and using various reference tools, indices, and operating the microfilm reader/printer. The ultimate purpose, of course, was to enable patrons to find the item or items they needed.

The early eighties brought various electronic enhancements beginning with Computer Output Microfilm (COM). These automated readers containing the library's entire collection on microfilm and replaced the card catalog in many public libraries. The information they provided was essentially the same as what had been available in the card catalog, but these COMs had the advantage, - or in some cases - the disadvantage, of being updated every three months or so. At about the same time, the Information Access Company developed an automated index to periodicals, called Infotrac, which was initially on a COM reader. In addition to showing patrons how to use *Reader's Guide*, librarians now had to let them know that articles could also be found through Infotrac and of course they had to provide instruction. Several years later, vendors converted many of their print sources to electronic formats and CD-ROMS became popular in public libraries. Again it was up to librarians to teach patrons to use these new formats.

The Internet has revolutionized library instruction. Many public libraries have established regular workshop schedules to teach patrons the basics of Internet searching. Focusing on specialized aspects, they have sessions on such matters as finding a job, looking for financial aid, and tracing family histories. As everyone knows, the Internet itself is constantly changing. Web sites come and go; they can move or disappear from one day to the next and even the most conscientious and up-to-date librarian cannot keep up with these changes. In addition, some vendors are now charging for their databases and many libraries subscribe to these resources. As always, it is the librarian's job to teach patrons how to effectively use these various services. The good thing about it? It's Job Security!

Eva Greenberg, Head of Reference & Adult Services, Oberlin Public Library, Oberlin, OH ■

From the Ground Up

continued from page 4...

Summarizing my experiences, I would emphasize the following points:
• In the academic branch library environment, it is of utmost importance that the librarian interact as much as possible with the faculty in their college.

• Success requires plenty of enthusiasm and energy, since the staff in a branch library is usually quite small and often wear many different hats.

• Last, but definitely not least, the teaching process needs to extend well beyond the class sessions and be a continuous, ongoing communication process between the librarians, the faculty, and the students.

Patrick Reakes is the Journalism Librarian at the University of Florida, Gainesville. ■

LIRT Discussion Forums

ALA Midwinter Conference
Sunday, January 26, 2003

Teaching, Learning, and Technology Discussion Forum
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
There are many technologies that have helped librarians enhance teaching and learning over the past few years. One area where technology has played a key role is in instruction to our remote users. Some technologies include digital cameras, courseware, chat, webcasting, and videoconferencing. While some technologies have helped to facilitate learning, others have created additional barriers. Join us in a lively discussion on the topics that arise when technology is used to enhance instruction to our remote user populations.

Transitions to College Discussion Forum
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Students transitioning from high school or community colleges to four-year institutions are especially vulnerable to academic frustration, as they are often overwhelmed by larger campuses and their libraries. Service hour reductions due to financial constraints and distance learning programs are just a couple of the reasons public, school, and academic librarians are sharing the same audiences now more than ever before. This discussion forum is a chance to brainstorm ideas, share concerns, and perhaps create strategies to support our common goal of information literacy support for all of our patrons. Join us for what promises to be an array of diverse and engaging discussions!

☑ CHECK THESE OUT!

By Cynthia Akers, akerscyn@emporia.edu

Greetings as we approach the end of 2002. I hope your year of instructional opportunities has been productive and rewarding. The theme of this column is "collaboration." Too often, we instructional librarians are so focused upon the daily activity of scheduling sessions and teaching that we forget to keep in contact with outside entities. We should remember, though, that faculty, staff, and other patrons can offer us new perspectives, insights, and ideas for making sense of our complex information environment. I have also included an article on teaching and learning issues with information technologies. Enjoy!

Bowlby, Raynna, and Maureen Sullivan. "Living the Future4, Collaboratively Speaking: A Library Conference on Organizational Renewal." College and University Libraries News 63.7 (2002): 511+.

This article features a summary of the Living the Future4 conference held at the University of Arizona Library on April 24-27, 2002. The conference covered a variety of library-department collaborations. A sample of offered sessions included "Librarians as Partners: Services to Help Faculty and Departments Develop and Assess Information Literacy Skills." The presentations are available at http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/conference

Escobar, Hector, Joni Kanzler, G. Margaret Porter, and Cheryl Smith. "The Value of Campus Partnerships in Redesigning Library Instruction: Administrators, Faculty, and Students Get Involved." College and Research Libraries News 63.5 (2002): 345+.

The authors describe an information-gathering experience at the University Libraries of Notre Dame. From a library instruction session held in spring 2000 with a libraries advisory council, a task force was formed to determine such concepts as students' information-seeking behaviors and searching preferences. Student focus groups revealed, among other matters, that students as a whole were not enthusiastic about Web-based library instruction modules. Based upon these collaborative responses, the librarians are exploring in-depth library instruction sessions with personal connections and time for hands-on practice.

Gordon, Carol. "A Room with a View: Looking at School Library Instruction from a Higher Education Perspective." Knowledge Quest March/April 2002: 16-21.

Gordon notes that "[t]he idea that the K-12 experience prepares our students for what's next (in information literacy) may be comforting but misleading." Her feelings come partially from a survey she conducted in September 2001 of 86 graduate students. In the survey, she asked questions about research skills she believed would have been learned in K-12, and found that a number of the students either had not learned or had not retained basic and advanced information-seeking competencies. She suggests that school library media specialists and college/university instructional librarians need to collaborate upon common expectations for student learning based upon information literacy standards from AASL and the ACRL Instruction Section.

McCarthy, Patrick J. "Instruction Collaboration: Imperative or Imperilment?" Colorado Libraries Summer 2002: 34-5.

McCarthy takes a practical approach to collaboration in this article. He notes that the demands of the Internet with its ensuing information overload have forced classroom teachers to seek the assistance of librarians. However, he cautions that collaboration between teachers and librarians can have its limits. Specifically, he details the need of our profession, library science curriculums, and library administrations to be aware of "the limits of the resources available, including personnel... Enthusiasm is followed by promotion and growth, which is followed by overextension and quality loss, and finally leads to program contraction or collapse."

McNamara, Lisa, and Rachel Matre. "Interdisciplinary Research: The Role of the Reference Librarian." Texas Library Journal Spring 2002: 71-4.

The authors raise two questions at the beginning of this article: "How has interdisciplinary research changed information seeking behaviors and needs? And what can librarians do to better tailor reference services to meet the needs of students conducting this kind of research?" They suggested working with faculty to develop case studies of research topics for students by discipline. In this manner, students can see "problem-centered bibliographic instruction" to help them think of information-seeking skills not bound by a traditional linear approach.

Schmude, Maggie. "The Rewards of Responsive Collaboration." Knowledge Quest November/December 2001: 33-35.

This article examines a number of collaborative efforts among the school library media specialists of the New Trier Township (Illinois) High School and the school's faculty, students, and larger community. Ten full-time and part-time media specialists are assigned to the school's academic departments, enabling librarians and teachers to work together in creating library research assignments that are targeted and focused. The media specialists also serve on a variety of school committees and perform outreach to local public libraries, establishing connections for the implementation of lifelong information competencies.

Common Ground

Instruction librarians will recognize her name because of her work with Information Literacy. A member of the Steering Committee for the Information Literacy Institute, she helped design the national program for research, study and practice for information literacy. She also brainstormed and then Co-Chaired, the Information Literacy Institute Phase III Community Partnerships project which was chosen to be funded by ALA President Nancy Kranish. The vitality of this program inspired all ALA Divisions to choose Dr. Todaro's work in this area as their theme.

Dr. Todaro stays on the forefront of library issues because of her hard work. In addition to running her own library operation, the common ground she walks for all of us is her dedication to what librarians and libraries contribute to humanity. She devotes her time and energy to moving our library profession forward. The common ground she inspires is her deep belief in the importance of information literacy for today and for the next generation. She is working hard to make sure the reality of information literacy today is part of the fabric of information literacy in the 21st century workplace. This is not small feat.

The other trademark trait that makes Dr. Todaro a role model for all of us working "in the trenches' with information literacy initiatives in our own respective libraries is her perseverance. No obstacle will stop her. Yes, her perseverance is strongly supported by a sense of humor, but her perseverance is a vision steeled on what information literacy holds for the future. Her vision never wavers; she does not doubt the importance of information literacy in today's society.

Community colleges from Texas to Ohio to California to North Carolina and all states in-between serve as a link to creating an education workforce for the 21st century. The community college learning library is for most post-secondary students their first introduction to the world of information.

As the traditional student gives way to the diverse adult learner, the community college library is the stepping-stone to future workforces. On those days when I have explained the importance of information literacy until I am blue in the face or when I have been told for the tenth time "everyone know how to use a library," I think of the strong professional leaders in our field that are fighting the good fight each and every day. If you get a chance to hear Dr. Todaro speak or to read her numerous publications, treat yourself to this opportunity. And then, the next time, you feel like the struggle is too much, think of the 25 plus years that Dr. Todaro has lived the vision that libraries are our future. The common ground for all instruction librarians is the generations of instruction librarians who fought the good fight to get us where we are today! I am proud to follow in their footsteps!

Dr. Todaro's article on library instruction was chosen one of LIRT's Top Twenty articles in 1993.

Marcia A. King-Blandford is a professor and administrator at Carlson Library, The University of Toledo Toledo, OH ∎

TECH TALK

"Information Commons Advisory Task Force Proposal – May 19, 2000" [Kansas State University] <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/infocommons/final.html>

"Leid Library: Information Commons [Mission & Goals]". <http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/jchurch/ltf4/ICmission.pdf>

"Miller Nichols Library Information Commons". [University of Missouri, Kansas City] <http://www.umkc.edu/lib/MNL/About/info-commons.htm>

"Report of the Information Commons Report Group". [Oregon State University] <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~collab/institutions/oregon_state/report98.pdf>

Check These Out!

White, Peggy, and Shauna Rutherford. "The Wired Classroom: Dream and Reality." <u>College and Research Libraries News</u> 63.9 (2002): 642-45. Leading from the guidelines outlined in <u>Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education</u> (1991), the authors draw parallels to library instruction in the electronic classroom. They present the realities of teaching database searching concepts in a technological environment susceptible to server problems and students' variant experiences with retrieving and evaluating information effectively. They note that "A well-designed [electronic classroom] space enables the instructor to tailor his or her teaching style to advance learning....What remains is the ability of the instructor to adapt to something that is more flexible and less controlled."

Cynthia Akers, University Libraries and Archives, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS ∎

Slauenwhite, Janice. "Dalhousie University Information Commons: Transforming Learning; An Initial Formal Draft of a Concept, June 18, 1999-September 23, 1999". <http://www.library.dal.ca/libraries/documents/concept.htm>

Tramdack, Philip J. "Reaction to Beagle: Aims of the Information Commons in an Academic Library; reply to D. Beagle." <u>Journal of Academic Librarianship</u>. (March 1999): 92-93.

As always, send questions and comments to:

Snail Mail: Tech Talk
              Billie Peterson-Lugo
              Moody Memorial Library
              P. O. Box 97143
              Waco, TX 76798-7143

E-Mail: Billie_Peterson@baylor.edu

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION ROUND TABLE
STANDING COMMITTEES

Adult Learners
Assists library professionals to understand, find information or promote ideas on learning styles, teaching methods, and training resources most often associated with adult learners.

Conference Program
Plans the LIRT program for the ALA Annual Conference. Makes arrangements for speakers, room, handouts, and activities during the program.

Continuing Education
Conducts research and develops plans, actual materials, and directories to further the education and help meet the information needs of librarians engaged in user education.

Liaison
Attends and reports to LIRT Steering Committee and members about committees within ALA involved in library instruction activities. Distributes to conference attendees a listing of instruction-related programs and meetings at ALA Conferences.

Long Range Planning
Develops short and long range plans for LIRT. Implements planning and operations for the activities of LIRT. Chaired by the president-elect.

Newsletter
Solicits articles, prepares and distributes the LIRT newsletter. The Executive Board of LIRT serves as the Editorial Board for the LIRT newsletter.

Nominations, Organization & Bylaws
Reviews, revises, and updates the organization manual of LIRT. Recommends to the Executive Board, and through it to LIRT members, the establishment, functions, and discontinuance of committees and task forces. Maintains the Constitution and Bylaws of LIRT and recommends amendments to those documents. Prepares a slate of candidates for LIRT offices and maintains records on procedures, candidates, and election results. Solicits volunteers for LIRT committees and maintains files of prospective committee appointees.

Public Relations/Membership
Publicizes LIRT purposes, activities, and promotes membership in LIRT. Develops brochures and news releases to inform members, prospective members, and the library profession about LIRT activities. Sponsors an exhibit booth at the Annual Conference. Organizes BITES (meals for instruction librarians to meet for food and discussion) at conferences.

Publications
Establishes, maintains, and disseminates LIRT Publication Guidelines. Solicits ideas for publications and advises as to the appropriate means for publication.

Research
Identifies, reviews, and disseminates information about in-depth, state-of-the-art research concerning library instruction for all types of libraries. Pinpoints areas where further investigation about library instruction is needed.

Teaching, Learning, & Technology
Identifies and promotes use of technology in library instruction, with special attention given to technologies that enhance learning and can be easily adapted to a variety of different learning environments.

Transition from High School to College
This committee builds and supports partnerships between school, public, and academic librarians to assist students in their transitions to the academic library environment.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION ROUND TABLE
COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER FORM

If you are interested in serving on a LIRT Committee, please complete this form and mail it to the Vice-President/President Elect of LIRT:

Stephanie Michel, Wilson W. Clark Memorial Library, University of Portland
PO Box 83017, Portland, OR 97283-0017
Work: 503.943.7418 Fax: 503.943.7491 Email: michel@up.edu
<http://www.baylor.edu/LIRT/volform.html>

Name and Title:

Telephone (Work):   (Home):
FAX: E-Mail:

Institutional Address:

Home Address:

Date of Application:

LIRT Committee Preferences: (Use the numbers 1-9 to indicate order of preference, with 1 being the most preferred. If you are willing to serve as recorder for this group, follow your number preference with the letter "R")

_____Adult Learners   _____PR/Membership
_____Conference Program   _____Publications
_____Continuing Education   _____Research
_____Liaison   _____Teaching, Learning, & Technology
_____Long-Range Planning   _____Transition from High School
_____Newsletter   to College
_____Nominations, Organization & Bylaws

Can you regularly attend LIRT meetings at the ALA midwinter and annual conferences?
_____YES   _____NO (but would like to participate through email, and online)

Please attach a separate sheet listing committees or offices (if any) previously held in LIRT, ALA or state/regional associations, with years of service.

Dear Tech Talk—

Recently I've been hearing references to the phrase "information commons". Some times I think this phrase is simply a synonym for "computer lab" and other times I think that it's some-thing more than a computer lab in the library. What's the story here – is an "information commons" a new name for an old service or is it something new and different?

---Initiating IC Inquiry

Dear III—

The easy answer to your question would be, "yes"; but the devil is in the details!! Actually the "information commons" concept has been around for at least ten years. During this time, "information commons" have been incorporated into many libraries (mostly academic but also some public libraries), and those areas have served primarily as computer labs, often separately managed and staffed by people who work for information technology or computer centers. Even though the information commons were found in the library, the tools and services provided were very different and distinct from those provided from other areas of the library.

Although information commons, as described above, still exist, in recent years a new definition of "information commons" has emerged. The current emergence of these information commons, in part, has arisen from the changes in the research and learning environment. Students need to take their research (much of which is done using electronic resources) and write papers, create web pages, develop multimedia presentations, collaborate with others, and more. The model of the past – get the needed information from the library and go home to complete the research and write a paper – no longer holds true. These changed outcomes are prompting libraries to reexamine

the services they are offering, especially technology-based services. Therefore these "new" Information commons go beyond the basic computer lab – they merge and integrate tools and services from traditional computer labs, media production areas, and library information resources, especially electronic resources. This integration can take a variety of forms:

• Library public workstations loaded with production tools (word processing, spread sheet, presentation, graphics, web editor, etc. programs) as well as access to the Internet and other electronic resources;

• Separate physical spaces, either in or outside of the library, where users may find computers with a full complement of production software, lap top computers that can be checked out, comfy, coffee shop like furnishings, and a range of services from research assistance, to word processing support, to assistance in the creation of multimedia presentations;

• Staff from IT or the computer center working closely with library staff on student and faculty research projects;

• Staff from academic technology actually being absorbed into the library organization;

• A blend of these scenarios.

However, even the most modest move towards the information commons model (say, installing production software on public service workstations) comes with a wide set of issues to be addressed. Not surprisingly, the sooner these issues are addressed, the easier and more successful this integration process will be. Below are some basic issues to consider:

• A major issue to be resolved – Does the library pursue this integration of services into an information commons on its own, or does it enlist the support and cooperation of the information technology or computer center staff?

• Who will provide technical support for computers with a full complement of software – software installation and upgrades, machine maintenance, etc.?

• What type of production software will be placed on the machines – basic software like word processing and spreadsheet programs, or more elaborate programs like graphics, database, and presentation software?

• Who will assist people who are having difficulties using the production software? This is generally not an area of expertise for most public service library staff members.

• How is the staff going to become more knowledgeable about the software available on these computers so they can resolve elementary, common problems?

• Will there be multiple service desks (one for computer support and one for research support) or a single service point and how will they be staffed?

• What happens if the majority of computers are taken by people who are writing papers, creating presentations, developing web pages, etc. (all of which take a substantial amount of time), and there are none available for those who want to look for information in electronic resources?

• What about printing? Libraries may be willing to absorb the cost for printing references for research; should they absorb the cost of printing 20 page research papers?

• What about additional costs – cost for software licenses, modifications in facilities, new computers and furniture, additional staff, increased use of supplies, additional service hours, etc.?

• Are there authentication issues?

• Can anyone physically present in the library use these production software and resources or do licensing agreements restrict access?

• And another major issue – where does traditional reference assistance stop and production assistance begin?

The answer to the first question – does the library pursue the development of an information commons unilaterally or in cooperation with the computer center – will, to a large degree, drive the answers to other questions. In some organizations, this level of cooperation may be a very politically sensitive issue. However, unless the relationship between the library and the computer center is particularly adversarial, it is to everyone's advantage – clients, library staff, and computer center staff – to work together. In particular, consider collaborating with computer center staff that (at least in an academic setting) provides academic technology support. This group is service oriented and already provides these specialized services to faculty and, in some instances, to students. They may even be the group responsible for the student computer labs throughout the campus. Their expertise can be used to address issues of technical support, client software support, training library staff on the basics of the software, assisting with print and authentication issues. Likewise the expertise of library staff can be used to help them provide better academic technology support when they are helping faculty to use technology to develop classroom content for course management sys-tems, like Blackboard or WebCT. In some situations, they may even be able to provide financial support by purchasing computers or assisting with some staffing costs, since these costs may be in their budgets already because of existing responsibilities for other computer labs.

Some libraries have highly skilled information technologists already working in the libraries. This group of people may already support standard computer labs and other forms of technology in the library. Under these circumstances, the unilateral development of an information commons may be the best route, enlisting the support of the library's IT staff. In any case, libraries that pursue a unilateral route in develop-ing these new services need to have highly competent information technology people involved with the project.

Whether the library decides to develop an information commons unilaterally or cooperatively another group, it is vital to bring all the interested parties together at the development stage to address specific concerns and directly involve those affected by this new service in the decisions. A major, and justified, concern is the development of the technical skills needed by library staff to provide a minimum level of service with the production tools. Related to this issue is the fact that some library staff may feel that technical support is not appropriate for staff with library science education and training. At Colorado State University (Cowgill), they expended much effort to address this concern. They formed groups to establish minimum competencies and then followed through with training so staff could attain those minimum competencies. They supplemented the training with web pages to which library staff could refer when necessary. A positive side affect for library staff is that they become more competent in production software tools that they, too, can use in their work. Another way of addressing this issue is to use student employees to assist with the tech support issues. Students will also need training, but they are often very knowledgeable about technology and many software programs.

Related to the service issue – where does reference/research assistance end and where does the use of production tools begin – Beagle suggests 3 models to address this issue:

- **Walk-through Consultancy**
The initial contact person (perhaps a reference librarian), walks the client through each step of the process, providing: research assistance, production assistance, and multimedia production assistance. This model, although perhaps very rewarding, requires that the initial contact person develops a high degree of competency in multiple complex areas, which may be expecting too much of one person.

- **Referral Consultancy**
The initial contact person works with the client on those parts of the process with which she is familiar: research and perhaps some limited production assistance, but then refers the client to someone else who has the expertise for more detailed production and multimedia assistance. In this model, the level of expertise needed by the initial contact is not as intense, but there is no opportunity to follow through and see if the final outcome was successful or not.

- **Case Manager**
The initial contact serves as the overall coordinator for the entire process, handling those parts of the process that fall within her expertise and arranging appointments or meetings with others to handle the production and multimedia issues. The initial contact then follows though, making sure that all of the client's needs were met. In this collaborative model, the level of needed expertise is also not as intense, and there is an opportunity for the initial contact to verify the success of the final outcome.

As information commons evolve, other service models are likely to emerge. Clearly, the type of service model used by libraries with information commons will be based on the degree to which research assistance, production tools availability, and multimedia assistance have been integrated. Ultimately staffs in libraries need to reexamine their service goals and decide if the types of services available from an integrated information commons will best meet the needs of their constituency. If this reassessment indicates the need for a shift in services, then move forward to implement an information commons model that meets the needs and offers the services identified by the constituency.

Libraries that have implemented information commons:

California State University, Long Beach
    <http://www.csulb.edu/~lbweblab/>
Colorado State University
    <http://lib.colostate.edu/eic/>
Dalhousie University
    <http://www.library.dal.ca/infocommons/info.htm>
Emory University
    <http://infocommons.emory.edu>
Kansas State University
    <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/infocommons/>
Lake Superior College
    <http://www.lsc.mnscu.edu/lib/infocom/home.htm>
Oregon State University
    <http://osulibrary.orst.edu/computing/>
Toronto Public Library
    <http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/
        spe_lea_information_commons.jsp>

University of Arizona
    <http://www.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/pic/pic.htm>
University of Calgary
    <http://www.ucalgary.ca/informationcommons/>
University of Iowa
    <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/commons/>
University of Missouri, Kansas City
    <http://www.umkc.edu/lib/MNL/About/info-commons.htm>
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
    <http://www.library.unlv.edu/infocommons>
University of New Mexico
    <http://www.unm.edu/~libadmin/infocommons.htm>
University of North Carolina, Charlotte
    <http://libweb.uncc.edu/library/infocom/>
University of Southern California
    <http://www.usc.edu/isd/locations/undergrad/leavey/IC.html>
University of Toronto
    <http://www.utoronto.ca/welcome.html/>

Additional Resources:

Bailey, Russell, and Barbara Tierny. "Information Commons Redux: Concept, Evolution, and Transcending the Tragedy of the Commons". Journal of Academic Librarianship (September 2002): 277-286.

Beagle, Donald. "Conceptualizing and Information Commons". Journal of Academic Librarianship (March 1999): 82-89.

Beagle, Donald. "Extending the Information Commons: From Instructional Testbed to Internet2". Journal of Academic Librarianship (September 2002): 287-296.

Church, Jennifer, Jason Faughan, Wendy Starkweather, and Katherine Rankin. "The Information Commons at Lied Library". Library Hi Tech (March 15, 2002):58-70.

Cowgill, Allison, Joan ear, and Lindsey Wess. "Implementing an Information Commons in a University Library". Journal of Academic Librarianship (November 2001): 432-439.

Ferguson, Chris. "'Shaking the Conceptual Foundations,' Too: Integrating Research and Technology Support for the Next Generation of Information Service". College & Research Libraries (July 2000): 300-311.

Gaspari-Bridges, Patricia and Dorothy Pearson. "Information Commons: A Selected Bibliography". <http://gateway.library.uiuc.edu/administration/planningbudget/BES/BES_files/biblio.pdf> or <http://216.239.51.100/search?q=cache:C0rZ0UN_41QC:gateway.library. uiuc.edu/administration/planning budget/BES/BES_files/biblio.pdf+allintitle:+%22information+commons%22+site:edu&hl=en&ie=UTF-8>

Griffen, Richard. "Technology Planning: Oregon State University's Information Commons." <http://www.olaweb.org/quarterly/quar6-3/griffin.shtml>

Halbert, Martin. "Lessons from the Information Commons Frontier". Journal of Academic Librarianship (March 1999): 90-91.

"IC Planning Committee Operating Principles". [University of New Mexico] <http://www.unm.edu/~libadmin/opprinciplesinfocom.htm5 Information Commons Goals and Objectives". [University of North Carolina, Charlotte] <http://libweb.uncc.edu/library/infocom/ic-goals.pdf>

Information Commons Mission". [University of North Carolina, Charlotte] <http://libweb.uncc.edu/library/infocom/ic-mis.pdf>

Information Commons Vision". [University of North Carolina, Charlotte] <http://libweb.uncc.edu/library/infocom/ic-vis.pdf >

"Information Commons Vision". [University of Toronto] <http://www.utoronto.ca/welcome.html/about/vision.html>

Marcum, James W. "From Information Center to Discovery System: Next Step for Libraries?". The Journal of Academic Librarianship (May 2001): 97-106.

ALA MIDWINTER: TWO GREAT LIRT DISCUSSION FORUMS!

Discovering America
continued from page 3...

■ **Demonstrate tactics for finessing the online catalog for primary sources.**

One tactic is to search for a historical figure as an author. Punching in "Franklin D. Roosevelt" as an author will churn up papers and speeches by the New Dealer. Another tactic is to limit your search to items published within a specific timeframe so that, for example, a student researching World War II can restrict their results list to items published between 1939-1945. One other trick is to combine topical keywords with terms signifying a type of primary source such as "diary", "memoranda", "accounts", "papers", "narratives", "documents", or even just "sources." Searching for "women and voting and diaries" will uncover the daily journals written by women during the suffrage movement. This trick is especially effective if the catalogers at your library include primary source descriptors in subject headings.

■ **Mine microform collections using electronic catalogs.**

Aside from the catalog and databases, many collections appear in microform accompanied by cumbersome print indexes. Fortunately, many of these collections are now searchable by keyword through OCLC *WorldCat*. For example, *Early American Imprints*, the definitive collection of American documents of the 1700s and early 1800s, offers a print index that only supports author or title searching. Yet, the savvy library instructor can amaze a class by demonstrating that users can limit a search to "series title" under "advanced search" in WorldCat, type in "Early American Imprints; first series", and then search the imprints by keywords. The OCLC record will supply a citation number that the students can use to pinpoint the document in Early American Imprints. The students will definitely appreciate less time scrolling through microforms!

■ **Develop personalized packets for the students to use after the session.**

While keeping the instruction session general, present each student with a customized packet that he or she can refer to after the session for more assistance. All students will want tip sheets for the general databases, catalog, and America: History and Life. For a student researching violence in American novels, add tip sheets for literary resources to the student's packet. Don't forget to include contact information for a subject-specialized librarian offering research consultations on the student's topic.

With these tips in mind, the library instructor can creatively use electronic resources to help students successfully meet the research challenges of American Studies topics. Using information technologies, students can blaze new paths to our nation's spiritual heartland—but only with the guidance of instruction librarians.

D. Brett Spencer is Reference and Instruction Librarian at the University of Alabama ■