



Innovative Ideas for

Web sites that offer a wealth of advice for diversifying your library's revenue streams

by David Zopfi-Jordan

As public tax funding for libraries decreases, library budgets get tighter. Fortunately other options exist to help libraries monetarily support their goals: combining collections; changing financial strategies; seeking grant funding; obtaining money from the sale of library cards, digital projects, and other services; locating donors; and even opening a coffee shop. Today, taxes cannot and do not cover all expenses; other resources are needed to provide programs and projects in your library.

Grant Opportunities

Every year millions of dollars in foundation grants are awarded to libraries. Not only are grants a good way to secure funding for your library, they also offer encouragement to create programs that connect your library with the community, provide important information science research, and recruit new librarians to the profession.

The **Institute of Museum and Library Services'** (IMLS) Web site (www.imls.gov) offers information on applying for grants to promote services in special libraries. The site also includes resources on ideas that other libraries have implemented with their grants (click on "Publications, Conferences & Resources" and "Grants in Your State"). Some of these projects include the Boston Public Library's plan to develop a sustainable partnership with the Museum of Afro-American History. Using the upcoming 200th anniversary of the birth of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (2005) and the bicentennial of the African Meeting House in Boston (2006) as focal points, the library and museum will team up to create exhibits.

The Brooklyn Public Library will collaborate with Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science to develop a pilot training project called PULSE (The Public Urban Library Service Education) Project, in which MLS students will experience the many career opportunities at major urban public libraries.

Emory University and Virginia Tech will research user quality metrics for metasearch retrieval. By conducting a series of studies that use production digital library services, the universities will determine what criteria underlie the preferences and assumptions of different groups of users regarding metasearch systems.

And 2004 National Award for Library Service winner Flint Public Library in Flint, Michigan, partnered with a teen parenting and pregnancy prevention organization to create an award-winning program to help young people take charge of their lives. In thousands of community interactions, the Flint Public Library serves as a vital catalyst for civic engagement and enrichment.

Alternative Revenue Streams for Law Libraries

Apply for a grant to promote the library's services.

Open a gift shop in the library.

Form a "Friends of the Library" membership group.

Host a themed event, such as a celebration of the anniversary of a landmark court case.

Package digital projects, such as journal publications, tutorial lessons, and access to research databases, and market them to the public.

Library Fundraising

The IMLS site will help in locating plans that may work for your library. Mary Chute, deputy directory of IMLS, mentioned one such idea: combining the public library with the law library to save costs.

Plural Funding Projects (www.pluralfunding.org) is a clearinghouse for information on grants and innovative ideas for funding library collections. Some ideas include opening a gift shop in the library or marketing for sponsorship. For example, libraries can form “Friends of the Library” membership groups. Patron memberships not only ensure libraries of a relatively stable and predictable source of funds that increases as the customer base increases, they also provide a donor pool that can be used to identify prospects for larger gifts and bequests.

Another way to raise money, suggested by Plural Funding Projects, is to host themed events, such as cultural or sports-related festivities or celebrations of the anniversaries of landmark court cases. This Web site provides a wealth of practical advice for diversifying your library’s revenue streams.

Library HQ (www.libraryhq.com/funding.html) is a Web site that presents a comprehensive list of resources for funding and grants, as well as proposal writing basics, and the top 10 foundation grants given for libraries and library science.

Success Stories

A number of libraries and other institutions have proven that these ideas can be successful. **MOSI** is a Florida museum dedicated to advancing public interest, knowledge, and understanding of science, industry, and technology. Wit Ostrenko was instrumental in changing MOSI (www.mosi.org), a public institution, into a private one. By doing so he created many opportunities and opened new services to the community. MOSI currently offers day camps, day care, teaching and educational

programs, and food service. By reaching out to the community, MOSI is able to provide many new services that would not be possible without vision and creative ideas. Knowing the demographics of your area will help you develop outreach programs for your library.

Sarah Thomas, the Carl A. Kroch University Librarian at **Cornell University Libraries** (<http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/about/UniversityLibrarian.html>), raised funds at Cornell by packaging its digital projects and marketing them to the public. Thomas tapped into the market of selling services, such as journal publications, tutorial lessons, and limited access to research databases for alumni. The library even opened a successful gift shop.

Many more innovative ideas exist, including sponsoring silent auctions, carnivals, guest speakers, dinner cruises, and book signings by notable authors. To personalize fundraising from donations, faculty members may be paired with potential donors of similar interests or personality. This relationship can demonstrate to the donor the value that the faculty or other involved individuals place on the donor’s support. Even after the donation is made, keeping in contact with the donor is valuable and encouraged. Libraries may also seek funds from endowments, trusts, and other types of gifts. Recognize the gifts by naming conference rooms and other areas after donors and by placing plaques on furnishings that are purchased with donated funds.

Envisioning the methods for raising funds is the hard task; implementing them is much easier once the vision is in place. With knowledge of potential funding resources, the financial outlook for your library can become stronger. ■

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Photography 101: Film, Flash, and Equipment

To get ready for the upcoming “**A Day in the Life of the Law Library Community**” photo contest (April 10-16, 2005), the AALL Public Relations Committee presents some tips on taking good photographs. This month’s “Photography 101” focuses on film, flash, and equipment. Tips are provided by photographer Elizabeth Farina.

1. To get the best colors, and to accommodate the widest variety of lighting conditions, use 400 speed film.
2. Shooting with an SLR (single lens reflex) camera, such as a Canon Rebel or a Nikon N65, is preferable—these are cameras with detachable lenses. They allow you maximum control of your composition and lighting.
3. If you use a point-and-shoot camera (no detachable lens), remember that what you see in the viewfinder is not exactly what’s in front of the lens. Leave some room around the edge when you compose your shot to accommodate for this. For more information about this phenomenon, look up *parallax*.
4. Always make sure the light source is behind the photographer.
5. If in doubt about lighting conditions, take one photo with a flash and one without a flash. It is much easier to take two photos initially, rather than be disappointed or have to re-shoot later.
6. Avoid including reflective surfaces, e.g. windows or mirrors, in your photo—especially when using a flash.

The AALL Public Relations Committee welcomes any feedback about this contest. Please send any questions or comments to Chair Erika Wayne at ewwayne@stanford.edu.