

PLP PERSPECTIVES

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THE LIBRARY AUTOMATION THREE-STEP

by Margaret Lundahl

Lundahl Enterprises, Chicago, IL

I think it's outrageous how difficult it is to automate a small library. After all, automation and libraries have been dancing together for more than 20 years! Surely scaling products down to meet the needs of fewer users and smaller collections shouldn't be so difficult? After ten years of doing at least part of the process for firms of various sizes, I have realized that none of these projects has been accomplished as easily as it could have been. Since I feel a certain responsibility for this, I wondered if there was some way to distill my dissatisfaction into sound advice to help others avoid the same fate. I have come up with three steps.

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND STICK TO YOUR GUNS.

Be clear and specific with yourself about what you expect your automated system to do for you *before* you look at what's available. I have seen time and again that a general idea isn't good enough — you get bogged down in the details once you start looking at what's actually out there. Get everyone who works with the current system together to discuss what they like and dislike about it. Include some of your users if at all possible. A library automated system is basically a database. The first rule of database design is "How are you going to *use* the data?" so pay particular attention to what kind of output you need—reports, statistics, label sets, whatever.

Be prepared to deal with the questions: "Why do we need a catalog? Isn't everything we need on the Internet?" I can hear you all groaning now, but we have all heard variations on this argument about canceling hard copy (or microforms, or even CD-ROM titles) and using online resources instead. My response is that we need the

catalog more than ever under these circumstances. Where else are users going to be told ALL the various places you now "keep" the things they need? Book dummies? It seems strange to create cross-references that can be seen only by going *into* the library in an age when people want desktop access to things.

Break the resulting list of expectations into three parts: the essential, the useful and the Oh Wow! Then DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES purchase a system that doesn't do well on your essentials and most of your usefuls, thinking it will grow into what you need. This is like marrying someone while expecting to change them afterwards — it's not impossible, just highly unlikely, and living through the process can be extremely unpleasant. Finally, you end up having to migrate to another system, which simply compounds the problem!

We seem to have an almost religious reverence for the computer and its ability to do things that is largely misplaced in library automation. Roughly this becomes the idea that computers can do anything if you just want them to badly enough. This expectation can be compared to the idea of the apocryphal English travelers of days gone by who were sure that anyone could understand them if they just spoke English slowly and loudly enough. All it does is irritate the natives; it doesn't solve the problem.

For example, on my first job as an independent consultant, the firm wanted a book catalog and offered me Wang list processing to create this marvel. I asked several times whether the list processing could handle the sorting needed for producing the necessary

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FROM THE CHAIR

by Anne V. Ellis
Holland & Hart, Denver, CO

I am once again on a plane, flying from Denver to Phoenix, to represent PLL at Lexis/Nexis' TRIPLL conference. Last year, I represented PLL at West Group's Information Innovators Institute and at the Association of Legal Administrators conference. Traveling for PLL and AALL has been a rewarding experience. Being PLL Chair provides many benefits such as travel as well as requiring a large dose of time and organization. Is it worth it? Absolutely!

When candidates for PLL office have called to ask how hard it is to be PLL Chair and work at my "real job," I try to be honest about the duties. First, being PLL Chair means getting to know more private law librarians than I would ever have guessed. Although you and I may not know what color hair the other has, we share ideas, questions, plans and aspirations. We network in person, by phone and voicemail, via e-mail and fax. I wonder at how we got anything done even a few years ago without electronic communication.

Second, being PLL Chair means that I have become the AALL contact for all questions pertaining to private law librarianship. I have become a referral source for consultants, information provider for other law and non-law librarians, liaison to vendors and, I hope, a leader.

Third, I represent PLL, the most active of AALL's Special Interest Sections. I write articles for *Spectrum*, a column for *PLL Perspectives*, speak at library functions, including SLA this year, and present private law librarians' needs to AALL committees and AALL Headquarters.

Why did I consider assuming these roles with a busy work schedule and some semblance of a personal life? The answer has a lot to do with my core philosophy of what matters in life. I won't bore you with my personal history. Suffice it to say that I get involved. Two beliefs stand out as meaningful in my decision to volunteer. I am, first, a firm believer in taking charge of your own life. If you have ever read Gail Sheehy's book, *New Passages*, you will remember that she speaks about "life accidents." These are those inconveniences that get in the way of your being able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. They are life-centering experiences that are caused by and affect your health, work, relationships and your world. You learn from them that it is how we react to external forces that shapes our positive or negative view of the world.

When I first moved to Colorado, I became a member of the Colorado Library Marketing Council. This group of librarians from all types of institutions has brought meaningful educational opportunities to librarians all over Colorado. "Redefining Librarianship" and "Creating Change in Challenging Times" are two such experiences. The two-day "Creating Change" workshop focuses on teaching librar-

ians to take charge of their personal and professional lives. AALL Past President, Mark Estes, and I will become co-chairs of this council this year. We hope to receive Federal funds to take the workshop on the road all over Colorado. The first part of the workshop introduces "locus of control," which means that you react to the pleasures and stresses of your workplace or your personal life as either an externally or internally controlled person. Only by understanding your own locus and how you react can you make a difference to your clients, your firm and your world. The second part of this workshop explores marketing both yourself and your library and improving customer service. When the program was presented last fall in Denver and Beaver Creek, Colorado to library media specialists, the reaction was unanimously positive. The program will soon be opened up to other groups of librarians, including law librarians.

So, what does this have to do with volunteering for PLL and AALL? Well, it means that volunteers can affect the quality of work and personal life for all librarians. You can make a difference in helping librarians be more productive, valued and, even, content in their work worlds. You can pass on your valuable skills and experience to your colleagues.

The second reason I wanted to be a PLL volunteer is that it was a logical step in my professional life. Somewhere along the way, I knew that I needed a little bit more "umph" to my career. After 14 years as a private law firm librarian, I have faced and conquered, just as you have, many challenges from the attorneys and firms for which we work. I have also realized that my professional life has been enhanced immeasurably by my colleagues. Volunteering became a natural way of networking for me. After this year as PLL Chair is over, I look forward to tackling new PLL and AALL projects. I guess I'm just a life-long volunteer. I hope that you will be too.

I would like to thank all the PLL members who have volunteered for committees, inspired me and come to my rescue on occasion. You are the brightest and most dedicated librarians I have known. I especially thank the PLL Executive Board, Mike Saint-Onge, Past Chair (a.k.a. The Idea Man), Glen Gustafson, Vice Chair, Jean O'Grady, Secretary, Clair Engel, Treasurer, Karl Gruben, and Lori Weiss, Executive Board Members, for their great assistance. Thank you to Jan Brown, Editor of our wonderful newsletter, *PLL Perspectives*. To my friend, Mary Forman, thanks for getting me involved in PLL way back in our Florida days. To you, the PLL members, the real strength of the SIS, thanks for giving me this most fulfilling opportunity.

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printouts and was told "Sure, sure." I now know that this roughly translates as "I haven't the faintest idea, but it's a *computer* so it can do anything, right?" They ended up using binders filled with the worksheets I had created from the inventory I did of their blessedly small collection, and I learned an important lesson — never assume!

Despite the progress made in recent years in automated products, nothing will be a perfect match for all your needs and wants. "Libraries are libraries" is bunk, and one size does NOT fit all, unless you are willing to wear someone else's solutions to problems that may not be yours at all. I distinctly remember returning from the San Francisco AALL meeting (1992) and telling my clients that there were some wonderful ideas for automation out there which would be swell if they were ever finished. I'm not sure how much has really changed about that, so be sure that any vendors you are dealing with have working systems of the type they are trying to sell you unless you really crave being a pioneer. If at all possible, visit someone who already has the system. At a minimum, try to have a nice, candid, off-the-record conversation with that person. The Online Bibliographic Services SIS has a directory of which firms have which systems. The list is currently under revision but is a good source of contacts if the vendor doesn't supply references (or perhaps even if they do!).

In dealing with vendors, be particularly aware of another major cause of difficulties: the language barrier. Just because everyone is using English doesn't mean we are speaking of the same things. English is a slippery language anyway, and various professions use words for things that sound like what the rest of us mean, but don't. Smaller libraries in particular are vulnerable to the difference in levels of expertise and lack of terminology, since they are rarely able to dedicate one person to the process of automation or even have someone with the necessary technical background. All the systems I have been involved with have tried very hard to deal with this problem, but the truth is that selling systems to small libraries involves much more support than is required for large libraries. Unfortunately, greater support is unlikely to come about due to the smaller profit margins!

This difficulty first manifested itself to me when I ordered a tape from OCLC for the first system I automated. It never even occurred to me to ask whether the "last touch" tape was actually a last touch tape, or whether it was a "last touch for everything but the holding library field, which is concatenated to include every time you have touched this record from the beginning of time" tape. Parts is definitely NOT parts! It is those questions you don't think to ask that will cause you problems. Perhaps all automation should be done by five-year olds, since they never tire of asking questions?

This lack of understanding can be further exacerbated by a limit to the technical understanding on both sides. The people planning the automated system do not totally understand the data that they have (or that they will need to create) and the system vendors may or may not be willing (or able) to explain to you what your choices will do. It is very easy to make mistakes. I had one client who fervently insisted that I create every bit of their OCLC data for them over ten years and then didn't include me in planning their public catalog displays. The first hint I had that they were being creative was when I viewed their data after it had been loaded and then asked why everything said "Unknown location." It turned out they had developed a marvelous scheme to track which department of the firm had ordered materials. The only problem was, that piece of information wasn't anywhere in the data, triggering the default setting, which was "Unknown." Not a pretty sight! None of the people involved had bothered asking the question "Where does this piece of information come from?", so it didn't occur to any of them that the answer was "nowhere"!

Much of this angst can be avoided if you have a good idea of what you want to do beforehand and you don't settle for less than you need.

2. PLAN ON TAKING AS MUCH TIME AS YOU THINK THE PROCESS WILL NEED AND THEN DOUBLE IT.

Remember that bit of advice from space planning? It works with project planning as well. Murphy's law works overtime on these kinds of events, so having the time to deal intelligently with what comes up will improve the final product immensely, not to mention cutting down your need for good mental health care coverage.

Beforehand is the point to think about all the things you need to do to get from where you are to that glorious future where you are going to be. Every hour you spend planning your route (and checking details such as whether there really is an on-off ramp where you need one) will save you hours (or even days) of detours and delays along the way.

Taking time will also allow all of your users, staff and administrators to work through the entire process of change which automating involves, including building the willingness to discard practices predicated on limitations of whatever "system" you're using now.

This rule is true for those who are migrating to another system as well as those automating for the first time. (I'm working on another article on this subject alone; its working title is "Does Migration Come from the Same Root as Migraine?") In some ways, when changing systems you need the time more than anyone else since people who have not automated intuitively understand that data creation is going to take time. Many who already have a system seem

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to think that you just have to wave a magic wand to reload those records into a totally different system using a totally different system of organization. Portability of data is something that no one really can deliver until someone actually tries it, as careful as they may be to promise it. One of those trite but true things is that basic bibliographic data does have a standard format (MARC), but each system uses its own techniques for creating the item information, vendor and patron information, routing information and serials check-in information. There is no guarantee that these parts of one system will be compatible with the next system, assuming you can even retrieve the pieces in usable form in the first place. Computers are relentlessly concrete. They will do only what they have **exact** instructions to do. There is no intuition to tell the computer that you couldn't possibly have meant **that** and make it stop to ask a question which may forestall disaster.

Time spent in learning this extremely technical stuff on both ends will be well-spent. If you don't know for sure, don't assume that things will work out. Experience teaches me that is seldom the case. That means you must learn **exactly** how you have the information now, whether it is machine-readable or on the Kardex cards, and **exactly** what you need to create the pieces in the automated system. You also need to find out whether you actually have the information readily available. If you don't, who is going to create it and how are they going to do it?

Will you need to do some cleanup before loading? This is particularly true if you have been creating machine-readable records for years without having a specific system in mind. Decisions that make beautiful catalog cards do not necessarily create beautiful automated catalogs! Manual records are often incomplete in ways that automated systems cannot tolerate—"required" fields can be a real stumbling block to being up and ready. I know one firm that thought it had excellent manual check-in records until they started creating computer records. Six months of extra help checking the shelves were necessary before they could discard the manual process as backup and be truly online!

The only way to keep unrealistic expectations from derailing your project is to have realistic expectations by planning carefully. You don't want your management sounding like your children on a trip, plaintively asking from the back seat "Are we there yet?"

3. KEEP COMMUNICATIONS FLOWING BOTH WAYS.

As the job moves along, be sure to keep all the participants in the process informed of major decisions, any changes in decisions already made and any problems that have cropped up—and problems will crop up! If at all possible, have key players involved in discussing

ongoing issues as they come up, before decisions are made. You don't want to get to the end and have someone ask "Why does your door do that?" or make some other earth-shattering observation that means you have to redo major chunks of what's gone before. Having the big picture is well and good, but no one can understand all the potential consequences, even a one-person library. It makes sense to get a second opinion, so to speak. You might also consider running your ideas or problems past some colleagues who have been through the process—it's flattering to them and may keep you from making **BIG** mistakes.

If you are using consultants on any part of the project, use their expertise as much as you can. The consultant wants your job to be successful, so you will recommend him or her to all your friends. Consultants know the pitfalls, they've run into them before, and are happy to spare you all the pain and suffering they can. At the very least, keep them in the communication loop you've created for the project as it unfolds. This is particularly true if you have someone creating data for you who isn't on staff. I recently had one major project where the project librarian changed all the collection location codes after I had started creating the data — and didn't bother to tell me about it (much less ask me whether it was a good idea, which it wasn't!). They are now undoing this operation with some deprogramming, but about 10% of the titles must be redone, and major cleanup is required on some of the others since the first "operation" that was done on the codes I had been using wasn't particularly successful.

Be sure to keep management informed along the way as well. Automating a library is a major expense with real benefits down the line. You've sold that concept to the firm already, but you need to keep them sold. When things go wrong—and trust me, *something* will go wrong—you will have done what you can to keep their support!

Good communication will keep everyone on the same page throughout the project, so that when it is all done (and these projects do all get finished eventually!), you can all be where you wanted and expected to be.

Perhaps all this advice won't be much help, but I offer it for what it is worth. Remember: "Change is inevitable—suffering is optional."

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SHIFTING CURRENTS: FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB TO YOUR OWN INTRANET

SUMMARY OF JULY 1997 AALL PROGRAM

By Nancy M. Nelson
Lewis & Roca, Phoenix, AZ

The following article was originally submitted for publication in the Fall, 1997 issue of PLL Perspectives as part of the summary of the Baltimore meeting. Due to space limitations, it was not printed at that time. Instead, we present it now as a reminder of last year's meeting and as a prelude to the Anaheim meeting.

What is an intranet? How can one sell the idea of implementing an intranet to management? What are some advantageous design features of intranets? How does deployment of Inter/intranets enhance communication for attorneys? What are the legal and security issues surrounding intranets? These questions were answered at the AALL Annual Meeting in Baltimore by Carol A. Bannen, Manager of Information Resources at Reinhart, Boerner, Van Deuren, Norris & Rieselbach; Julio Chico, Legal Information Manager at General Electric Corporation; and Lou Kauffman, Technical Analyst at Chubb & Sons. Their major points are summarized in this article.

Bannen said that selling the idea of an intranet should be easy. Intranets belong to the organization and are accessible only by the organization's members. Since intranets are private networks that use Internet technologies to provide access to electronically stored information, intranets can reduce man-hours needed to generate and distribute paper as well as to train personnel. One study suggests that the time savings can equate to 12 minutes per day per employee. If time savings are translated to cost savings, management will be convinced of the wisdom of implementing an intranet.

In addition to formulating a proposal for the development of an intranet, Bannen explained the importance of having a policy on who should make content decisions, who should have access to the intranet and what the librarian's role will be. At Reinhart, Boerner the development team included the librarian who made content decisions. After implementation, the librarian continued as information manager since the librarian was a repository of information through using an intranet and aided in disseminating information and in maintaining its currency.

Kauffman further reminded the audience that management must support the intranet's creation and on-going maintenance by having the requisite infrastructure. This requires identifying roles such as the consumers of the product, content coordinator, web designer/developer and webmaster.

Bannen suggested intranet design features for a law firm. These included pictures of directors with their e-mail addresses and links to reference sources such as Martindale-Hubbell, West Legal Directory™, Mapquest, Switchboard, UPS/Federal Express tracking, newsletters, the library on-line catalog, CD-ROM training materials and human resource information. Other useful design ideas included personnel forms which could be completed and/or amended on-line and frequently asked personnel questions and answers.

Chico then examined how the Internet can alter the practice of law. Publishers such as BNA can electronically deliver a summary of a publication to a lawyer's personal computer via the subscriber's e-mail/Internet address. Lawyers can use the Inter/intranet resources not only to retrieve forms, laws, practice area newsletters and attorneys' articles, but also to direct communication to other attorneys, clients and branch offices on a timely basis.

In describing the forefront of change in the practice of law, Chico discussed the development of interactive briefs in which authorities are linked to actual cases, patents and videos of a product or event by submitting a CD to the court. Another technological development that is permeating the marketplace in 1997 is desktop and room size audio/videoconferencing, which can create a virtual meeting between or among people at different locations. By augmenting the audio/videoconferencing functionality with data sharing, two or more lawyers can simultaneously view the same brief and then co-edit the document in real-time.

Chico also addressed the need for protecting all electronic information, e-mail and intranets from unauthorized access. Other legal concerns mentioned were antitrust, fraud, trademark, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and discrimination when some employees are excluded from having access to the company's intranet. General Electric's solution to the discrimination problem was to give entry to some parts of the intranet to all employees while restricting access to other components to attorneys or their authorized agents.

Kauffman closed the program by addressing security on an intranet. To protect confidential information, Kauffman suggested encrypted e-mail, firewalls and secure socket layers with client-side certificates. He concluded by cautioning about maintaining confidentiality of IP addresses and dangers of hosting to outsiders.

INTRANET IDEAS FOR LAW FIRMS

(Reprinted with permission from Carol Bannen, Manager of Information Resources, Reinhart, Boerner, Van Deuren, Norris & Rieselbach in Milwaukee)

Introduction to Staff

Access to Reference Sources

 Martindale-Hubbell

 West Legal Directory

 Zip Code Directory

 Mapquest

 Switchboard

 UPS and Federal Express Tracking

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 Packaged Bookmarks for New Employees

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 Help Desk FAWs

 Training Manuals for Software

 Training Schedules/Classes Offered

 E-mail Sign-up

 Style Manual

 Model Documents

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Benefit Summaries

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Firm Newsletters

Job Descriptions

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New Hire Announcements with pictures

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 Attorney Seniority Listings

Miscellaneous

 Rate Table for Messenger Services

 Postal Rates/Overnight Carrier Rates

 Attorney Resource Directory

 News Releases

 Attorney Biographies/Pictures

 Conference Room Scheduling

 For Sale Items

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Intranet Journal

<http://www.intranetjournal.com>

The Corporate Intranet Book

<http://www.wordmark.com/intranet/book.html>

Intranet Heading on Yahoo

http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Intranet/

[Communications_and_Networking/Intranet/](http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Intranet/Communications_and_Networking/Intranet/)

Netscape Server Central-Intranet Deployment Guide

http://home.netscape.com/comprod/server_central/query/idx/index.html

Intranet Resources

<http://www.strom.com/pubwork/intranet.html>

RECORDS MANAGEMENT GROUP

By Jeanne Reynolds
Kemp, Smith, Duncan & Hammond
El Paso, TX

Greetings from the Records Management Group Chair. If you're going to Anaheim, you're probably figuring out what to pack by now. The weather should be nice, and there's so much planned, both programming and entertainment. I do hope you've planned to attend the Records Management Group workshop (W-2) on Saturday, July 11, from 9 to 5. It will be the most comprehensive presentation on records management in several years. Our speakers, Lee Nemchek and Beth Chiaiese, are experienced practitioners with much information to share. In addition, participants will be encouraged to raise issues and problems specific to their organizations. It promises to be a valuable

learning experience both for those already responsible for records and for those who recognize the potential for expanding their careers.

If you are not able to attend the workshop, I hope you will mark your calendar and attend our Records Management Group Business Meeting on Sunday, July 12, from 4 to 5 p.m. The agenda is not formalized at this time; we intend to invite the workshop participants to attend the business meeting to discuss the workshop, ask questions and summarize for those who weren't able to attend. If there are any questions you would like to place on the agenda, do not hesitate to contact me.

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BACK TO SCHOOL: TEACHING A LIBRARY SCIENCE CLASS

By Gail F. Zwirner
Hunton & Williams, Richmond, VA

Law librarian recruitment has broadened its perspective for me this year. I was asked to join The Catholic University of America's (CUA) School of Library and Information Science Alumni Board in Washington, D.C. Responsibilities of the Alumni Board include organizing special lectures and receptions, creating a mentoring program and participating in the ALA Accreditation process.

Through my participation on the Board, I became well acquainted with Dean Elizabeth Aversa who asked me if I would consider teaching the "core" (required) general reference course called "Information Sources and Services in Libraries" at CUA's Virginia campuses. Although located in Washington D.C., Catholic's School of Library and Information Science offers its four required courses as well as 600 level courses such as Cataloging, Collection

Development and Technical Services, at the University of Richmond, George Mason and Old Dominion University.

The proposal seemed so daunting. Not only would it require traveling from Richmond to Fairfax or Norfolk (2 hours each way), but after so many years in law librarianship, it would also require digging deep into my long-term memory and reviewing titles like the *National Union Catalog*, *Besterman*, *Bibliotheca Americana*, the *Bible Concordance*, or *Current Biography*. Most of these titles I had not thought of since my days in library school.

I decided to take on the challenge, and now with two semesters behind me, I'm looking forward to the summer break. The preparation required an enormous time commitment, but I enjoyed leafing through titles I had not seen in many years to prepare "scavenger hunts" and evaluation assignments.

Technology advancements which did not exist when I was in school obviously had a huge impact on the kind of assignments I prepared. Networks, CD-ROM, OPACs, FirstSearch and the World Wide Web are all new since my school experience, and they provide great opportunities for evaluation assignments. Troubleshooting issues such as alphabetization idiosyncracies, indexing quirks, and lack of comprehensive coverage in online sources versus print sources, exist in non-legal as well as legal publications, so I felt close to home.

I wind up the course with a discussion of law librarianship and an assignment in government documents. Some students who worked in paraprofessional capacities in public libraries actually asked how to use *Martindale-Hubbell*, so at least they leave with a greater understanding of how to use the print source, knowledge of the Web site, an awareness of the digests, and how they might be effective in a public library as a reference source.

Whether or not I have influenced any students toward law librarianship, I don't know; but several in my class were at least interested in taking the legal reference course, so I consider that I have had some recruitment success. This has been a terrific, albeit exhausting, experience, and I encourage you to contact your library school and ask about the need for adjunct faculty. New technology has created daily instruction responsibilities in my job, and this experience has helped to polish my own skills, in addition to any interest it may have aroused in law librarianship.

PLL PROGRAMS FOR ANAHEIM

As outlined in the last issue of *Perspectives*, there are nine programs and one workshop being presented by PLL in Anaheim. These programs have been put together by the hard-working members of the education committee chaired by Nancy Adams and Tom Duggan. Please note these programs in your convention program and plan to attend as many as possible. The titles are as follows:

- The Challenge of Records Management: New Horizons for Private Law Librarians Workshop W-2
- Evaluating Search Engines for Legal Research (Technology, advanced) B6
- Providing Quality Customer Service: the Tattered Cover Standard of Outstanding, Exceptional Service (Management, intermediate) G3
- Managing Electronic Communications (Management, intermediate) F4
- Securities Filings: Who, What, When, Where (Law, intermediate) G6
- That's Not Legal: Business Information Sources (Information, advanced) E8
- Information Audit: A Tool for Rebalancing Your Information Resources (Management, intermediate) pt.1,F1; pt.2,G1
- Knowledge Management: Change on the Horizon for Law Librarians (Management, intermediate) A3
- Time Management for the One-Person Library: Is There a Light on the Horizon? (Management, intermediate) F2
- See New Horizons from Above the Glass Ceiling: A CEO's Experience in a Predominately Male Publishing Industry (Management, intermediate) B2

LIBRARIAN PROMOTION

By Gail F. Zwirner
Hunton & Williams, Richmond, VA

As editor of *PLL Perspectives* next year, I will be recruiting law firm librarians to write articles for their professional journal. I have always found a lot of value in our publication, and I look forward to seeing how other private librarians are handling librarianship challenges.

I discovered another writing "twist" recently which provided tremendous feedback from my patrons, as opposed to my colleagues. I submitted an article for *Virginia Lawyer*, the monthly journal of the Virginia State Bar, as part of the Virginia Association of Law Libraries program this year to have members write a quarterly column on library-related issues in the bar journal.

The article was intended to promote the fact that VALL spearheaded the lobbying effort and eventual creation of an administrative code in Virginia. Virginia law librarians spent five years working with state agencies to convince the state of the need for a

codification; drafted enabling legislation; created other legislation necessary for the production of a code; contributed to requests for proposal; interviewed vendors; and participated in the selection and indexing process. We wanted the Bar to know that librarians were responsible for the success of the project.

VALL has found that this minimal commitment has created a significant awareness of the value of librarians to our patrons. At least from my personal experience, the numbers were impressive. I stopped counting the e-mails, phone calls, and elevator conversations at over thirty responses from attorneys in my firm. Even more surprising, I received three letters from attorneys outside my firm with whom I had worked over a decade ago.

The marketing results were well worth the effort. Yes, I encourage you to write for your professional journals, and when you get a message from me next year, please say you will write for *Perspectives*, but once you have put "pen to paper," recreate that article with a new "spin" for a bar journal. I know that writing is a stretch for all of us. It is tough to come up with a suitable topic, and even if we do, finding the time to write is another hurdle to cross. I feel comfortable promoting this activity because of my recent writing experience. I guarantee very rewarding results.

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PLL LUNCHEON

Be sure to attend the PLL Luncheon which will be held on Wednesday, July 15. Our speaker will be Walt Crawford of the Research Libraries Group, and his topic will be "Using What's Best: Thinking about the Complex Media Future."

A recent article by Mr. Crawford, "Paper Persists: Why Physical Library Collections still Matter" can be found in the January, 1998 issue of *Online* or on the Web at the following address: www.onlineinc.com/onlinemag/OL1998/crawford1.htm.

The cost of the luncheon is \$16, and registration information can be found in your program packet.

PLL PERSPECTIVES

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