

PLL PERSPECTIVES

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SURVEY OF WEB SUBSCRIPTIONS IN TWIN CITIES LAW FIRM LIBRARIES

by Janice Leichter, Maslon, Edelman, Borman & Brand, Minneapolis, MN

“Downtowners” is an ad hoc group of law library professionals which meets monthly to discuss issues and concerns facing library and research personnel in Twin Cities (Minnesota) law firms. Our January 1999 presentation dealt with Web products and the reasons law firms subscribe to particular ones. The survey resulted, in part, from a panel discussion given by legal vendors in the fall of 1998. The Program Committee of LibraryFest MidWest¹ submitted questions to representatives of the legal publishing business asking about the advantages of legal publications being placed on the Web. Not surprisingly, the answers and comments were summarized by remarks with customer-based and market-driven examples.

I decided to investigate which Web publications or services law firms are subscribing to in the Twin Cities. After speaking with several librarians and researchers, I e-mailed a simple questionnaire² to some law firms along with a promise of anonymity. The e-mail asked the following questions about each title:

- Who recommended its purchase?
- Who handled any necessary training?
- Who were the intended and actual users?
- Did the subscription replace another source of similar information; was it duplicative or complementary?
- What was the effect on library costs?

A question regarding the currentness of the information and its ease

of use on the Web became confusing because it implied a comparison. People were not certain if the product was being compared to the hard copy, a CD-ROM version, or another Web product of a similar nature. Consequently, this particular question was not followed up during the meeting.

Generally, of the Web, or Internet³, subscriptions discussed, the greatest satisfaction seems to be with those that provide current awareness. *BNA Daily Labor Report*, *Dun & Bradstreet Internet Access*, *LivEdgar*, etc. deliver information that is perceived as being current and timely. Products, such as the latter two, charge only for the information requested. *LivEdgar* is very generous with passwords and charges moderately for its information. The *BNA Daily Labor Report*, available as a site license, allows multiple users access to the same information at once, and gives attorneys the opportunity to alert their clients almost immediately about items of interest. Of the titles based on legal loose-leaf treatises, the most positive comments made were about *RIA CheckPoint: Tax* and *RIA CheckPoint: Pension & Benefits*. Internet access, as opposed to subscribing to the CD-ROM counterpart, forestalls network and upgrade issues that could add pressure to network administrators' responsibilities. One library administrator did note that verifying the currentness of the information on the Internet was just as necessary as when the materials were available in print format. Updates of the content may be easier for the vendor to do, but it does not necessarily follow that they will be done any faster. Products that offer a different point of access to the information

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¹ “Fee-based Web Products”, Panel Presentation. *LibraryFest Midwest* (3rd Annual Midwest Regional Law Library Conference), Milwaukee, WI, October 8, 1998.

² See attached questionnaire on page 8.

³ I am using Web and Internet interchangeably in this article because most casual users see the Internet as the World Wide Web.

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FROM THE CHAIR

by Glen Gustafson, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, Los Angeles, CA

In Tom Fleming's lead article in the last issue of *PLL Perspectives*, he stated an assumption about collection re-balancing to the effect that library staff "personnel costs would not be changed. The increased use of electronic information generally produces a decrease in staff hours. The saved hours that are realized are readily used in the increased training for the electronic information and in evaluating new sources." While I have observed a high level of user comfort with my paper collection, the increased usage of electronic formats has not caused a decrease in staff hours allocated to reference. We have experienced a dramatic increase in our phone and e-mail traffic from attorneys asking the library staff to pull information from a myriad of electronic sources. Beyond training in electronic formats and scouting out new resources, law firm librarians should be experiencing increasing reference hours on electronic formats. Attorneys who last year wanted to see a snapshot of a company requested a D&B report. This year attorneys routinely expect librarians to provide SEC reports from GSI LivEdgar (because the .gov site takes too much time and the format does not handle tables very well). Locating corporate forms and capturing information from a company's Internet site have become basic elements in the company information snapshot. Eventually a large number of attorneys will be able to do this work themselves, but that is the expected learning curve, much as has been the case with our paper collections.

The other side of the coin is that many attorneys choose not to do the work themselves because of the convenience of having an information professional provide this information in a research file. One would hope that the information professional would be the firm's library staff, but that may not always be the case. If your marketing department has researchers that do a better job of providing company intelligence than the library reference staff, library staffing may take a critical turn. Tom was correct when he wrote "Do not comfort yourself with the fact that Baker & McKenzie did not work out." Tom adds that many small firms have outsourced their law libraries. I can only add that librarians need to provide stellar service in all resource formats if we hope to compete successfully with others to continue full-time employment in law firms. The respect that you build within your firm will grow as you provide services that the attorneys need. The bar has been raised significantly. Law librarians still need to do it better, faster, and cheaper than other firm employees do.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES

In the Spring 1990 issue of *PLL Perspectives* I wrote an article on "The Basic Recipe for the Subject Pathfinder." The organization of a pathfinder was not new. Librarians have been publishing subject specific guides for ages. It was not much more than an annotated bibliography of resources. Much like an internal research memo without the legal analysis, the pathfinder served the purpose of getting attorneys up to speed in a subject area faster than a treatise could.

It wasn't long before librarians were adding electronic media to the pathfinder. (Want to see a corporate intelligence snapshot? See Directory of Corporate Affiliations on the CD-ROM in the network research folder. Want to find an attorney? See <http://lawyers.martindale.com/marhub>.) With a weekend of study, html could be integrated into the pathfinder and mounted on the firm's wide area network. Attorneys from all of the law firm's offices could go to the pathfinder to find resources in any of the areas available. Just click and launch. Librarians were moving into electronic desktop publishing. Just around the corner was the law firm intranet. If we look into firm networks across the country, how many of these pathfinders do we find prominently displayed? Gee, not many out there. Did we miss an opportunity to have this skill migrate to the electronic workstation?

In December 1998, Rob Hafiz of West Group asked if I would co-moderate a Breakfast Workshop for Librarians as part of Legal Works '99 in San Francisco. What began as a discussion of what librarians are doing with their law firms and technology soon came to focus on intranet development. Now that every law firm in the United States has an intranet with links to every imaginable free information source, we really need to focus on trashing our paper libraries. I pause here to let that last line sink in and to feel the gathering sense of disagreement rising from librarians reading this column. I can now feel the collective shaking of heads. Many of you are saying that your firm does not have an intranet. Well, I'm sure that the firm next door has one that you can hook into. More shaking of heads. I get a sense that no one on your block has a functioning, literate, and free intranet. Yet if you believe the press coverage on the subject, about 88% of law firms have intranets. Well not exactly. The 1998 National Law Journal Law Technology survey sampled 76 firms and found that 39 use intranets and another 28 are planning to install them. So with all of this 21st century stuff invading our law firms, we read that librarians should be calling for the refuse bins to send

continued on page 5

Letter from the Chair, continued from page 3

our books for a ride. Well, don't place that call just yet. There is a lot of resistance to trashing the paper copies. We are not there yet; and during this period of bridge technology, there are two choices that we can make. One is full immersion. Tower Snow of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison made the statement at Legal Works '99 that mandatory migration to electronic formats followed by mandatory attorney training is what is required to make the move to the new information frontier. The alternative is incremental or phased-in technology. This is by far the more expensive way to go because firms will have to pay for the same information in multiple formats. Sometime along the way, firm management will want to call for the trash bins, and librarians had better be in front of that curve.

OPPORTUNITIES AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Please remember that Maura McBreem, managing partner for Baker & McKenzie, said in July 1995: "[Library outsourcing] wasn't done for only cost-saving reasons...the global firm wanted to streamline library functions and move the library forward into the 21st century." The *ABA Journal* article went on to say that "lawyers will be encouraged to conduct their own research, making use of the firm's in-house database of briefs and motions." Compare that to the Pillsbury statements. Chairwoman Mary Cranston had a mandate to slash overhead. The press release stated: "For some time we have been looking at ways to modernize and upgrade our San Francisco-based library operations and enhance our ability to provide our lawyers and clients with the information they need. To meet our library service goals for 1999 and do this in the most timely and efficient manner, we decided to engage the services of an experienced library management firm." Howard Booth, Pillsbury's executive director, was quoted as having said "We want to have a library in place that's a much more virtual library. We're on a path to create a library that connects the firm and resides above the firm. A lot of what we do is shifting to using CD-ROM and Westlaw and the Internet." So was it a business decision or was it a re-balancing decision? One thing is clear from the Baker experience and from the Pillsbury experience: The library staff looks like it was doing all that was necessary to keep up with technology and provide information services to their firms, but still the axe fell.

To put some perspective on the subject of collection re-balancing, I recently re-visited some old program materials from my first professional workshop. It was given in March 1980, and the focus was primarily on law library management. Frank Houdek conducted a survey of the cataloging practices of 25 firms in the Southern California region. Three

firms had no cataloging function. Only one firm had a combined book and on-line catalog. Only 16 collections were 100% cataloged. Only 13 had a subject authority file. Only 7 of 23 firms used L.C. Classification.

In 1952, Elizabeth Benyon published an article in *45 Law Library Journal* on "Simplified Cataloging." In the 1960s and 1970s there was a flurry of articles on law library classification, yet by 1980 30% of the collections surveyed were not fully cataloged. Evidently some firms were lagging behind the development curve. Bear in mind that at this time most of us were still using kardexes for our serial routing systems, and in part we have come as far as we have in the 1990s because the technological tools have come as far as they have.

In another session of that 1980 workshop, Marie Wallace described how to set up a system of control for research documents. It was a subject that was very important to attorneys. To have more effective use of their internal memoranda files was akin to not having to re-invent the wheel. In a survey of 62 New York firms conducted in 1992 only 61.3% of the firms maintained internal memoranda files. I would be willing to bet that at present less than half of our firms maintain such forms files. Those firms that do maintain such files probably fold the files into the litigation support systems that are not maintained by the library staff. Another opportunity missed.

Sometimes, the library staff has not made the kind of goodwill capital that is essential when law firm management changes. If you go back and read the interview that Sabrina Pacifici conducted with the Baker librarians, you will see that it looks like they were doing everything right, but the perception of the new management was that they had not taken a great enough leap into the future. In the end, however, it is not the hits and misses that are toted up when the management committee decides to downsize or outsource library staff functions. It is something beyond our control. Librarians are not going to win every public relations challenge.

By the way, did I mention that I have a great respect for private law librarians who volunteer their time and talents to speak at seminars and institutes and who take the time to write for professional publications. What a great wealth of knowledge we would have missed if none of the authors cited above had not taken large chunks of time to put their thoughts and opinions on paper. Well done. Thank you for listening. Now, get to work. There are many problems and projects that just need that extra push. ■

Survey of Web Subscriptions, continued from page 1

are also appreciated. *IndexMaster* is a good example of a product that has found a niche and complements the *Legal Information Buyer's Guide* by Kendall Svengalis.

PURCHASE AND INTENDED USERS

From the responses gathered, indications are that both librarians and attorneys initiate the request for Web access. Setting up a Web account to access often requested information can be very practical. In smaller institutions, librarians look for ways to reduce their online bills. The staff of larger libraries also looks at ways to reduce time and costs associated with maintaining multiple sets of loose-leaf treatises sometimes in multiple locations. It is not unusual for libraries to start a subscription speculating that as their clientele changes (new associates comfortable with computers) and/or becomes aware of the product, the subscription will justify its addition to the budget. Attorneys desiring to stay current with their clients' interests, frustrated at not being able to locate the required volume, or listed at the bottom of the route slip will lobby for other formats that give them better access. The sense of the participants at this meeting was that presently users are very few, but potentially usage will increase although no one knows how soon this shift will actually occur.

TRAINING

While the library or research staff is expected to know how to access Web subscriptions, the participants at the meeting believe that the power users are already very computer-literate and comfortable with Internet protocols. This means that some attorneys and paralegals actually do use a subscription consistently. People who have used the CD-ROM version are more likely to be successful switching to the Web version. Others ignore it, if possible; or give a research project to the library staff, to paralegals or to young associates. Training can be an issue. The publishers do support their products with in-house presentations, telephone support, and/or tutorials in one format or another. To the library staff, however, the difference between assertions of user-friendly or intuitive programs and the actual problems encountered are very genuine and often time consuming. Attorneys, and to a lesser extent, librarians, do not want to wait very long for an Internet connection to be established or to spend a lot of time learning yet another new search terminology and strategy. The sophistication and proprietary structure of a product may work against it on the Internet.

DUPLICATION VS. REPLACEMENT

Representatives of the larger law firms were more likely to comment that an Internet subscription replaced another format, often the CD-ROM version or the 2nd or 3rd set of a loose-leaf treatise. Often a

paper edition has to be retained for occasional users. Quantifying any savings in online costs is difficult; no one could say conclusively that there is one. Assumptions were that savings were in staff time because information did not have to be updated or routed manually. There were savings in attorney time through immediate access to information via Internet. Needless to say everyone is aware of bandwidth problems and the vagaries of connecting to the 'Net. Until recently, floor space costs have not been as strong an issue in the Twin Cities as elsewhere⁴.

EFFECT OF COSTS

Midwestern librarians and researchers seem reticent when discussing the details of budgets and licenses. Publishers generally include confidentiality clauses in the subscription agreements. Individuals at the meeting claimed they received a good discount for switching to the Internet product but were realistic and concerned about increases for renewals. The debate on UCC Article 2B continues about the shrink-wrapped license and other electronic licensing issues. The group noted that the cost of a single-user license, a network license, a multi-user license, and other permutations can make it difficult for the person with budget responsibilities to determine and compare the true cost of various subscription formats.

CONCLUSION

Twin Cities librarians and legal researchers are a pragmatic group and understand the benefits of Internet access to some very powerful legal resources for their clientele. The increasingly high cost of serial subscriptions makes electronic searching, access, and delivery of full text more popular than ever. The Downtowners registered satisfaction with some Internet titles, and they realize that the move of some publications to the Web has been successful. What does this mean for librarians and those who provide electronic information in law firms? It means here in the Twin Cities that librarians need to become even more outspoken about which electronic publications should appear on our law office desktop PCs. Some Web products are just not ready for prime time. Abrupt upgrades, uncertainty about location of archives, proprietary search engines, lack of standardization that does not use WWW capabilities, all work against the publisher's best intentions. Publishers need to make the switch to electronic products a lot easier and smoother and do it sooner rather than later. In addition, it would not hurt to hold down the subscription costs. ■

⁴ "Space Planning in Light of Changing Technologies and Patron Services", Panel Discussion. Minnesota Association of Law Libraries. Minneapolis, MN. January 27, 1999.

DOWNTOWNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear _____,

Over a week ago I spoke to you about evaluating your electronic subscription to _____.

I have put together some questions which I hope will not take too much of your time in answering. I would appreciate having the answers returned to me either by mail or e-mail, by Friday, Jan. 8, 1999. Then I can go over the results and put together a program for the Downtowners meeting on Jan. 21. If necessary, there should be enough time to contact you if other issues have been raised or if the results need more explanation.

My goal is to name titles subscribed to via Internet; your names and your law firms' names will not be mentioned. The intended outcome of the questionnaire is to define and acknowledge the decision-making process that went into the selection of a particular title. All of this is a follow-up to the remarks made by various vendor representatives during the "Fee-Based Web Products" presentation at LibraryFest MidWest back in October.

Please identify the product by name and give its URL.

Q1: I've divided electronic information into three types. Specify which type describes your subscription:

- A. Document delivery (by this, my definition refers to requests for specific documents for which you already have a citation).
- B. Pay as you go (i.e., it's not really a subscription; you just get billed when you use it although you may have had to set up a login and password for security).
- C. Regular subscription that covers a fixed time period.
 1. Regular subscription that covers current awareness over a fixed time period.
 2. Regular subscription that provides background information on a subject and may have archival materials, etc. My examples include RIA's CheckPoint.

You are more than welcome to disagree and redefine my initial attempts on the above!

Q2: Does this access replace any publication that your law firm uses?
 Or service?
 Or treatise or multi-volume set?
 Or Westlaw or Lexis-Nexis access?

- A. Do you think this information format is redundant?
- B. Would you feel comfortable providing this format alone in the library, i.e., getting rid of the service or publication it may duplicate?

Q3: Who are the intended users? Who or what group benefits from this format other than the law firm itself?

Q4: On a rating scale of 1-4, with 5 as "not applicable", please rate the following items:

- | Rating # | On its own merits | In comparison with its counterpart |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Currency of the Information | | |
| B. Ease of use on the Internet | | |
| C. Comprehensiveness | | |

Q5: Does anyone other than the library staff use the product? How did you introduce this product and get others to use it?

Q6: The Cost

- A. Do you think some library costs have decreased since using this product? Can you name these, e.g., Lexis costs, or amount of time to do research for a client-related matter?
- B. If you have been using the item for more than one year, has its cost increased and can you give a percentage? (My method of calculation for this is to subtract the previous cost from the current cost and to divide the difference by the previous cost.)

Thanks so much for the time and effort you put into this questionnaire. I hope you don't find it too long! If you have any questions or comments, please let me know. I am looking forward to your responses.

Sincerely yours,

Janice Leichter
 jleichte@email.maslon.com ■

SWITCHING GEARS: FROM A MAJOR LAW FIRM TO THE GROVES OF ACADEME

by Gail F. Zwirner, University of Richmond Law Library, Richmond, VA

Changing jobs can be a daunting experience, especially when you are entering a new branch of your chosen career. Tim Coggins, at the University of Richmond Law Library, contacted me last year about applying for an open reference position there. I was very surprised and flattered by the suggestion, and I reminded him that I did not have a J.D. He said that they were looking for someone who had extensive firm experience that they believed would add value to the reference staff and the legal research instruction for the first year students.

I knew they were doing a national search and thought the likelihood of getting an offer was slim, but I have always believed that the interview process itself is an experience worth the time and effort. The fact that Richmond was looking for someone with firm experience really impressed me. My job at the time was at Hunton & Williams' Richmond office as senior reference librarian. I also did the cataloging and OCLC interlibrary loan requests. The job was very satisfying and challenging, but seemed a bit "old hat." It was a good time in my life for a change.

The interview process itself was very thorough. I met individually with the director, the librarians, two groups of technical services staff, a group of faculty members, the faculty member who heads the Library Committee, and the student representative on the Library Committee. Although I had worked with many members of this team through the Virginia Association of Law Libraries, it was helpful to hear about the details of the other jobs and to learn where the director wanted to take the library program. Tim Coggins had been with the university for only a year, so everyone on the staff had new motivations and goals.

To my pleasant surprise, I received an offer. Then I had to make a decision about whether to make a huge life change. There was a lot of comfort in the familiarity of my law firm job, but was that enough to keep me from an exciting new challenge? I decided to take the plunge and accept the offer. The idea of a guilt-free summer vacation and more opportunities to participate in professional association activities admittedly helped tilt the scales.

After six months on the job, I have found my new life very fulfilling. In many ways the hierarchy is similar to that of a firm. The faculty members are like senior partners, and the students have demands similar to those of associates and paralegals. Instead of "business development," I work on faculty course and law review support. The new twist for me

is requests from the public. Although I have been warned that I might tire of these requests, I'm finding the public patrons add to my learning experience in reference services. Obviously ethics rules limit our ability to serve the public, but it is rewarding to be able to help the *pro se* patron find background information on a particular topic. Other public patrons include attorneys with whom I used to work at the firm, so there is still some comfortable familiarity.

Teaching legal research to the first-year students and providing general library instruction in specialty classes are a large part of my job. I've enjoyed tailoring tours for specialty classes to try to have search examples be current. For example, for a tour by a group of police officers who are required to learn how to use the U.S. and Virginia Codes and find case law, I used the "Brady bill" and "search and seizure" as topic examples. We looked up the responsibilities of "sheriffs" in the jurisprudence, and the "Department of Motor Vehicles" in the *Virginia Administrative Code*.

The library tours for paralegal classes have to cover more sources. I start at *Words and Phrases*, *Black's* and *Ballentine's* and ask them to help the U.S. president with clarification on the definition of the word "is." "Age discrimination in employment" is a good topic for many tools, beginning with the encyclopedias. The Family and Medical Leave Act is a statute that still holds some name recognition to keep the tours interesting. Labeling issues in the *C.F.R.* sparks some interest because there are usually graphics provided that many recognize. When I get to loose-leaf services, topics like "moving expenses" for tax topics; "smoking in the workplace" in labor tools; or "credit cards" in consumer titles, all raise some eyebrows. My efforts to keep things current have provided positive feedback to what could otherwise be fairly dull for both the instructor and the student.

Certainly I miss colleagues and familiarity with the collection and the institution in my old position. The cataloging experience I had at the firm has been extremely beneficial to my work at the university for title recognition, as I am learning a collection ten times the size of the law firm. Proficiency in OCLC's interlibrary loan subsystem has saved me some steps in faculty and law review support. Law library associations tend to focus more on the differences in library disciplines. From my job change, I have discovered how similar the institutions are. ■

PLL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Here is a list of the PLL-sponsored workshops and programs at the AALL Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., including the dates and times of each.

WORKSHOPS—SATURDAY, JULY 17

W-3 “All Systems Are Not Created Equal: How to Navigate the World of Integrated Online Library Systems (Advanced)”
Donna Purvis, Coordinator

W-4 “Second Generation: The Advanced Intranet Web Site (Advanced)”
Connie Dickson, Coordinator

PROGRAMS

A-1 “Getting the Client to Value Legal Research”
Sun., July 18, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Kathleen Fletcher, Moderator

B-3 “At the Crossroads: The Year 2000 Millennium Bug”
Sun., July 18, 2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.
Todd Erich Bennett, Coordinator and Moderator

J-4 “Gumshoe Librarians: Using Investigative Sources and Techniques”
Wed., July 21, 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Anne V. Ellis, Moderator

K-1 “The Telecommuting Librarian - The Future is Now!”
Wed., July 21, 10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Rita Kaiser, Coordinator

L-1 “Crossing the Road: Helping Legal Support Staff Understand the Traffic Patterns of Basic Legal Research”
Wed., July 21, 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Joan Pedzich, Coordinator

L-3 “Collaborative Knowledge Sharing: Web-Based Technology Transforms the Workplace”
Wed., July 21, 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Paulette Toth, Coordinator

While you are busily marking your calendars to attend as many of these sessions as you can, be sure to include the PLL Business Meeting which will be held on Sunday, July 18, from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. The PLL Executive Committee will meet on Saturday, July 17 at 4:00 p.m., and the PLL Executive Committee 1999-2000 will meet on Wednesday, July 21 at 7:00 a.m.

See you in D.C. ☛

ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS MILLENNIUM ISSUES

by Timothy Coggins, Chair, Annual Meeting Program Selection Committee

Hazel Johnson, Member, Annual Meeting Advisory Task Force

Reflecting the theme, "At the Crossroads: Information Management, Technology, and Policy," the programs at the 1999 Annual Meeting will confront the issues facing law librarians as the 21st century approaches. We are at an important crossroads. We must position ourselves not only to survive but also to thrive in the technology-based world that continues to evolve around us. Within each of the five tracks at the Annual Meeting—*Management; Technology; Information Access & Policy; Foreign, Comparative & International; and Technical Services*—there is a plethora of programming designed to help law librarians address important millennium issues.

The **Technology** track includes exciting ideas and dynamic speakers. "It's All in the Books, Right?: The Ethical Perils of Ignoring Electronic Legal Resources in the Information Age" features Judge Robert E. Payne (E.D. Va.) who wrote one of the first opinions acknowledging that attorneys have a duty to stay "abreast of developments in the law" and that online resources are among the many means available to serve this purpose. "Encryption at the Crossroads" features Marc Rotenberg, compiler of *The Privacy Law Sourcebook*, Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center and one of the organizers of the grassroots campaign against Lotus Marketplace. The program will feature a discussion of PGP, the current industry standard for e-mail encryption, and current and proposed legislation regulating the use and export of strong encryption products. The proliferation of electronic products, the "Hyperlaw" decision and the burgeoning number of legal documents found on the Internet have escalated the need for a uniform citation system. The principal drafters of AALL's new Universal Citation Guide will state their case for adoption of the guide during the program "AALL's Universal Citation Guide on Trial." A panel of judges representing various segments of the legal system will cross-examine the drafters about the potential problems and impact of such a system on the way judges, lawyers, scholars and others work.

Among the **Information Access & Policy** track programs, "Unauthorized Practice of Law 1999" will feature representatives from Nolo Press, which is currently under investigation by a subcommittee of the Supreme Court of Texas for producing materials which assist individuals to do their own legal work. The preservation of the digital records created by federal agencies is one of the greatest challenges of the upcoming millennium. Lawyers, scholars, judges, reporters all should have an interest in how the federal government and the National Archives

and Records Administration plan to meet this challenge. "Federal Information Policy and Agency Recordkeeping at the Crossroads" will feature Scott Armstrong, a noted author and journalist, and Dr. Lewis Belardo of NARA debating the issue. The consolidation in the legal publishing industry affects law librarians every day. The two-part program, "Meeting of the Minds at the Crossroads of Legal Information," offers a panel of law book publishers participating in a roundtable discussion on the state of legal publishing today. Part Two will feature a panel of law librarians reacting to the points made by the publishers.

The **Technical Services** and **Foreign, Comparative & International** tracks feature programs of value to everyone, not just the librarians who specialize in those two fields. "Crosswalks to Information Management: Metadata" focuses on one of the cutting-edge issues of searching the Internet. What is metadata? How can it make storage and retrieval of information more accurate? How will it affect search engines? The emergence of electronic publications has caused librarians to rethink the definition of a serial. The program, "Loose-leaves at the Crossroads: Redefining Seriality" will focus on the ongoing discussions of proposals to re-define seriality and the impact that may have on cataloging and processing traditional materials and their new electronic counterparts. The globalization of the world's economy makes the quest for the law of other countries a daily challenge. "From Russia With Law," "Cuban Legal and Political System" and "Our Neighbors to the North and South" will provide insights into understanding and researching the law of some of the most important of the United States' many trading partners.

A facet of a law firm librarian's life is laboring on research projects and wondering how much of that time will actually make it to a client's bill. The program, "Getting the Client to Value Legal Research," in the **Management** track will offer a number of suggestions about ways to present librarian research time and tools to be used in the client-retention process. The ubiquitousness of technology in today's law libraries often requires that technology professionals be employed in the law library. Ensuring that all employees understand each other's work and that upper level management (and library staff) understand the need for well-compensated technology staff is the focus of "How to Hire the Right Computer People—and Keep Them From Crossing the Road."

This is just a sampling of the more than 70 programs scheduled for the 1999 Annual Meeting. Want to know more? Watch for "Crossroads Spotlights" postings on the dcedprog and law-lib listservs. ■

IT'S ALL ABOUT PRIORITIES

by Dorothy Hamel McCaughtry

McCaughtry & Associates, Inc., W. Hartford, CT

FROM THE INDEPENDENT'S GROUP

As I contemplate the never-ending "to do" list each morning, I marvel at its ability to self-perpetuate. How can one spend a full day working and still have so many "leftovers" for the next? It's an enigma that has plagued me forever. However, in the process of weathering some significant personal crises in the past two years, I have learned a thing or two, which you might find helpful in your struggle with stress management. This information is shared without pretense of scholarly research, but in the spirit of professional camaraderie.

The first, and hardest, lesson I had to learn was the one called "letting go." I'm a Mom, you see. Moms are supposed to keep everything shipshape, at all times. The "to do" lists are awesome! I'm a wife, too, with marriage and household responsibilities that generate their own calendars and "to do" lists. And then there is the home office, with its never-ending lists and its seductive ease of access—twenty-four hours a day. When one is a good organizer, as most librarians are, it is mighty easy to find oneself in charge of orchestrating too much of one's world. Granted, this is all a great challenge and often the source of considerable personal satisfaction, but it's exhausting!!! What I discovered the hard way, because that seems to be the only way I learn, is that there are many other people who are capable of running the show. In fact, like my teenage daughter, some welcome the opportunity to take charge!

My second lesson was about priorities. Oh, I knew how to set priorities, all right. But my mother's terminal illness truly reinforced for me, the importance of my family as my first priority. What could possibly be more important? Somehow the work gets done—maybe later rather than sooner—but it gets done. Family members, on the other hand, may not always be around. I would rather miss a work deadline than miss the making of an important memory. While we are on the subject of choices, I would like to share some advice from one of my heroes, my dad: "Make the best decisions you can, be happy with them and then move on. Don't look back and wonder about the could have or the should have."

In your top priorities you need to have a special place for "Being nice to me." In our culture with its strong work ethic, this approach to life does not come easily to most of us. But the fact is that in both your personal life and your professional life, you will not be much good to anyone if you have given away all your energy. I was very slow to learn this one, but I can assure you that neglecting your own needs ultimately catches up with you.

Finally, know that attitude is everything. As my dad always says, "Happiness is an inside job." You can be happy, or not. It's your choice. Your life today is the result of your attitudes and choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of the attitudes and choices you make today. Choose wisely. #

PARAPROFESSIONAL FORUM

Monday, July 19, 1999

On Monday, July 19, AALL will present something new as part of the Annual Meeting program. The Paraprofessional Forum will be an all-day program composed of four educational sessions. Two program choices will be offered in each time period. Those attending the Forum will attend the Opening Luncheon and the Exhibit Hall, and the participants will be included in evening activities if they choose to stay. Carolyn P. Ahearn of Wiley Rein & Fielding and Stephen Margeton of the Catholic University of America are coordinating the Forum. Speakers are being drawn from private, academic and government libraries and several began their careers as paraprofessionals.

We all recognize the vital role paraprofessionals play in our libraries, and the forum is being offered for this reason. We are also aware of the stresses and uncertainties created by the rapid changes that are taking place today. Our paraprofessionals come from diverse backgrounds and have different skills and skill levels. The programs are designed to offer practical support and guidance to those who attend and enable them to learn or improve upon methods of operation to enhance their success in dealing with patrons, managers and other staff members. The ability to choose between two programs in each time period will allow each person to choose that which best suits his or her needs.

The first session, following a welcome at 8:30 a.m., will offer a choice between a program entitled "Communication: The Key to Success" and one entitled "Job vs. Career: What's the Commitment." Topics included in the first program include making your point, effective patron interviewing and dealing with difficult people. The other program will deal with distinguishing between a job and a career and will offer practical guidance on career planning. During the second session, participants will choose between "Customer Service: Satisfied Patrons/Satisfied You" and "Time Management." The Customer Service program will define customer service and teach both how to assess patron needs and how to meet expectations. The time management program will feature organizational tips, guidance on doing more with less time and working under pressure.

Sessions three and four will follow the Opening Luncheon and Exhibit Hall visit. "No Avoiding It: Technology and Its Impact on You" and "The World of the Internet in the Library World" are the choices for session three. The technology session will deal with identifying ways to use technology effectively and methods for coping with the changes it brings. The Internet session will focus on learning

how to use the Internet for such tasks as finding publisher sites for ordering and customer service and finding informational sites. The fourth session will offer a choice between "Successful Dealings with Managers/Up the Hierarchy" and "Managing Others." Each program will deal with building working relationships with the different management and skill levels of the people with whom we work.

After the conclusion, when participants are "Ready to Hit the Road," there will be an opportunity for a Dutch treat dinner after which our paraprofessional colleagues will be welcome to join in on AALL evening activities. ■

MEET ME AT THE CROSSROADS

by Joan Pedzich, Harris Beach & Wilcox, LLP,
Rochester, NY

The "At the Crossroads" theme for this year's AALL annual meeting and conference is an evocative one. The words and the logo conjure paths, choices, options and decisions. The preliminary program booklet, which lists the offerings for the July meeting, supports this impression. Clearly our profession is at a crossroad and that image works whether the subject is technology, library classification systems, financial management, collection development, preservation of library collections, the legal publishing industry or training and mentoring library staff.

"Support Staff at the Crossroads: Creating Tools and Rules for the Reference Desk" will be offered Tuesday, July 20, from 3:45 to 4:45 p.m. This presentation applies the crossroads concept to understanding the trend toward using paraprofessionals at the reference desk. Moderator Kathie Sullivan and I will talk about what drives the decisions and choices we make when deploying support staff and how best to prepare our paraprofessional colleagues to assist with reference. We will identify the skills that are required for reference service and we will discuss what kinds of training programs will foster those skills. Attendees will hear about the importance of defining roles, setting limits and training paraprofessionals to know when and how to refer questions to the librarian. Samples of training manuals, reference desk manuals and other policy and procedure documents will be available for inspection.

This will be a practical, how-to-do-it approach to using support staff in the reference function. Please join us for what will surely be a worthwhile hour. ■

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS OF NOTE

by Druet Cameron Klugh*, Holme Roberts & Owen LL, Denver, CO

It's hard keeping up with the plethora of useful websites, and I would like to make that process a little easier for all of us. In each issue of *PLL Perspectives*, I will list five electronic newsletters or webzines of interest to librarians. A brief description will indicate why it's worthy of checking out (and perhaps bookmarking/making a favorite). Feel free to bring your favorites to my attention (klughd@hro.com), and I shall share them with our colleagues.

1. *Inmagic users* will appreciate the newsletter designed to keep them up-to-date at <http://www.inmagic.com/newslinks.htm> (click on PDF file link). Featured stories are also linked.

2. See <http://www.bookwire.com/ljdigital/> to read the *Library Journal digital*, which includes excerpts from the hard-copy ALA publication.

3. The *New York Law Journal* is useful for many things, even to those of us outside the greater New York area. Take a quick look at the monthly technology supplement "Techtrends" at <http://www.nylj.com>

/tech. For those of us who are a bit slow in our professional reading, the articles are archived.

4. Many of us are familiar with Information Today, Inc.'s site at <http://www.infotoday.com>. Here one can retrieve such helpful publications as *Information Today* and *Searcher: The Magazine for Database Professionals* (many articles are available online: some full-text, some abstracted). Remember that conferences are also listed. Take a look at the most recent "Computers in Libraries" conference at <http://www.infotoday.com/cil99/cil99.htm>.

5. The publishers of *Legal Information Alert* maintain a web page at <http://www.alertpub.com>.

While not full-text, it provides a handy, descriptive table of contents for the LIA as well as sister publications *Business Information Alert* and *Research Advisor*. Indices to back issues are also helpful. ■

*Druet Cameron Klugh is a member of the PLL Newsletter Advisory Committee.

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT GROUP

by Jeanne Reynolds, Kemp Smith
El Paso, TX

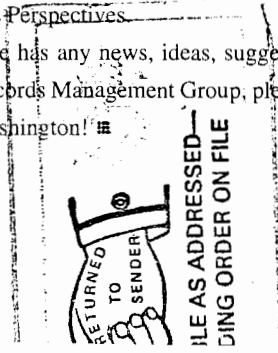
Spring has sprung, and the 1999 AALL Conference in Washington, D.C. can't be too far away. I remember the last time the meeting was in Washington, D.C.; it was 1986. What a hot summer that was! With any luck, the weather will be somewhat cooler; but after looking over the conference offerings, I have concluded that most of us will be spending our time indoors anyway. It is a terrific lineup of programs, meetings, exhibits, speakers and activities. Please note that we do have a Records Group Business Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 20 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

If you aren't already on the legalrec-l listserv, I encourage you to sign up. There has been more activity on it lately, very often supplied by Lee Nemchek. Lee, who is also on our PLL Executive Board, is co-authoring a new text on legal records management, with Beth Chiaiese from Baker Robbins & Co. and Jean Barr, CRM at Sidley & Austin in

Chicago. The text, which is to be published by the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA), is in progress; and I am hoping that Lee will be able to give us an inside look at the contents in the next issue of PLL Perspectives.

As always, if anyone has any news, ideas, suggestions, poems or comments about the Records Management Group, please let me know. I hope to see you in Washington!

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