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from the editor
By Catherine A. Lemmer

The “E”s of 2015

ew year’s resolutions don’t usually enter my mind until February 1, in part because I am still closing out the previous year with an annual performance review that is due on January 31. Now, in the midst of the shortest month of the year, the pressure is on to evaluate and settle on concrete goals for 2015.

There are a lot of “e” words floating around in the year-end management and financial planning literature. My 2015 goal exercise starts at the juncture of expectations and economics. Our users, whether they are clients, attorneys, students, faculty, researchers, or the woman on the street, don’t sit still. Despite our declining resources, our users keep coming to us with demands for new, different, and better solutions for their business and legal needs. In such circumstances it is often simply easier to prefer economics over expectations.

So how do we ensure our users’ expectations remain the priority? Efficiency is the other “e” word one hears most about on the economics side of the expectations/economics relationship. Efficiency means doing something right. In today’s environment, efficiency translates into doing something right with less funding. However, a focus on efficiency oft ignores another very important “e” word—effectiveness. Being effective is about doing the right thing, which is a long way from doing something right. Being effective means meeting our users’ expectations. We need to remind our stakeholders that doing the right thing is ultimately more efficient and fiscally responsible.

How do we convince our stakeholders that a focus on expectations is, in the end, about economics? It is first necessary to understand that meeting expectations is not blind adherence to current materials, practices, procedures, or even staffing. Part of my 2015 focus on expectations over economics will be systematically reviewing the library’s processes, procedures, and staffing to make sure that each is still meaningful, that it is effective as it relates to our users. A willingness to evaluate and, if necessary, cease certain materials and actions buys you good faith with your stakeholders. It shows that you are indeed focused on doing what is most effective to meet your users’ expectations and not holding ground for the sake of holding ground.

It is also important to understand that meeting expectations will involve difficult conversations about managing users. Now is the time to develop knowledgeable alternatives, educate your users, and, in some cases, simply be candid about what can and cannot be done. Ironically, this will often be harder than evaluating current practices and procedures. In the end, I hope to conclude 2015 with satisfied and knowledgeable users who value our law library.

Expertise is another relevant “e” word for 2015. Responding effectively to users’ expectations will likely have you retooling your team to respond to new and different needs. In addition, no one person in the library can be the resident expert on every aspect of the library. However, each individual must be knowledgeable about current and future trends to be an effective part of the library team. The 2015 AALL Annual Conference in Philadelphia is a perfect opportunity, whether your library team needs new skills or a refresher on current and emerging trends. I am already eyeing the conference offerings with these thoughts in mind.

Energy is yet another “e” word for 2015—as in being positive in the face of constant change and as in the stamina to both continue to value user expectations over economics and to develop new skills to meet those expectations when it might be easier to do otherwise. As law librarians and information professionals, we are lucky that our shared professional energy is both supportive and, when needed, the push to get one moving forward. It is why I believe that energy is ultimately our most important “e” for 2015.
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Correction: In the December 2014 issue of Spectrum, “Acquiring Metadata for Your Library Resources” mistakenly states: “The Task Force on Vendor-Supplied Bibliographic Records Creation and Distribution Models has been reconstituted as the TS-SIS Vendor-Supplied Records Advisory Working Group (VRAG).” In fact, VRAG was created in 2006. In the intervening years, its name has undergone several modifications, but the group itself still has its original core membership and has been doing work with vendor records for years. The article also links to a PowerPoint presentation by Yael Mandelstam. She has since updated her slides; the updated version, along with a PDF, is available at bit.ly/1tToJIO.

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Interested in writing for Spectrum or the Spectrum Blog? Join the Spectrum Volunteer Pool, where you will receive announcements seeking authors for possible article topics, as well as book titles that are available for review on the blog.
Several American states now permit physician-assisted suicide. Oregon, for example, figured prominently in the Brittany Maynard case, which hit the news late in 2014. In Canada, debates surrounding physician-assisted suicide laws have figured prominently in the news as of late, as well. No jurisdiction in the country currently allows terminally ill people the right to die at a time of their choosing, whether aided by a physician or not. However, the issue is back before the Supreme Court of Canada.
I still remember when organizational consultant and brand strategist Karen McCullough, the 2012 AALL Annual Meeting Luncheon speaker, uttered these words: “Change is hard. You go first.” It elicited a hearty laugh from many of those in attendance, me included—no doubt because we all have felt this way at one time or another. (Some of us may still feel this way, depending on the day or situation.) Sure, change is hard, but the payoffs can be huge. When we are able to overcome our fears and think as leaders—in our jobs, our organizations, or our professional associations—we can see that change is crucial to our future success and advancement. Those of us who can embrace and implement change successfully will continue to remain relevant and thrive.

The AALL Executive Board retreat was held in fall 2014 and, building on McCullough’s challenge to us, the board and AALL staff read Road to Relevance, a handbook for developing more vital associations. The authors, Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers, offer a roadmap for (1) acting strategically, (2) becoming competitive, and (3) remaining relevant. Using their approaches and ideas, the board was able to make some important decisions and plans for AALL’s future, focusing on serving the current needs of our members. I want to share some of this envisioned future with you here, as well as the Road to Relevance tenets that guided us. Although the book, like the board’s work, is association-focused, the concepts and strategies apply universally.

**Build on Your Strengths**

To get ourselves on the “Road to Relevance,” we must build on our strengths—a principle that might appear elementary at first glance but that often turns out to be counterintuitive. Just think back to when you were in school and how you gravitated toward a favorite class. All of us probably had certain subjects for which we had an affinity and propensity, but what did many of our teachers focus on? The subjects that were not our strengths, assigning extra homework or pointing us toward tutors. The tendency to focus on weaknesses, however, proves not to be the best path to success. As the authors of Road to Relevance write, quoting the words of career success expert Marcus Buckingham: “Your strengths are a multiplier.” Focus on your strengths, and you will see exponential growth and success. There is, of course, something to be said for focusing on our weaknesses—to think holistically and become more complete individuals—but chances are we will never become the best at what does not come naturally. In fact, by focusing on your strengths, your weaknesses will often take care of themselves. In other words, major in your majors and minor in your minors.

As iron sharpens iron, associations operating from strength create more strength.

— Road to Relevance

As the board moved through our retreat, we kept coming back again and again to education. Education has been, and continues to be, a core AALL strength. Our survey results bear this out; members always rate education, whether it be in the form of our Annual Meeting or webinars, as an AALL benefit that they highly value and the one that most helps them in their day-to-day job responsibilities. Before the retreat even took place, a task force had already been established to work on developing the curriculum and to identify faculty for a stand-alone business skills education course for members. Looking forward, AALL will also be evaluating all educational offerings in an effort to make sure that the Association is building on this strength for future success.

**The Fight Against BSOS**

Once you recognize the importance of building on your strengths, you have to stay the course. This takes discipline and practice to sustain. And, frankly, it can be a little dull. Sticking to what you know best sometimes means passing over newer, more exciting ideas. The Road to Relevance authors urge us to resist what they call BSOS—bright, shiny object syndrome. The key here is avoiding the trend du jour, a mirage that risks misdirecting us. Instead, when sticking to our strengths, we should seek to balance them only with great new ideas that are purposeful, deliberate, and strategic.

Each year, a new AALL member is elected and takes over as AALL president. With that comes a certain number of ideas and initiatives that each new leader may want to pursue. Since the first iteration of the AALL Strategic Directions in 2010, the Association, through the work of the Executive Board, has made a concerted effort to be strategic in the kinds of programs and offerings we develop. The question that is always top of mind when thinking about something new is whether it aligns with our Strategic Directions. This process has allowed for increased consistency and continuity from year to year while still empowering individual AALL presidents to share their unique talents and points of view.

**The Importance of Intangibles**

To build on our strengths, we have to first be clear about what they are. One way is to organize them into four buckets: assets, resources, capabilities, and intangibles. Although all these areas are important to quantify and gauge, the last bucket—intangibles—is perhaps the most intriguing and the hardest to ascertain. By definition, intangibles are devoid of a physical presence, incapable of being touched or grasped. An intangible strength could be your brand, the power of community, momentum, a high-profile position within an industry or profession, reputation, and, what might be the most valuable of all, a collective base of knowledge.

You are that base. Our members represent the best in the profession and are leaders in the legal communities and organizations in which they work. As every volunteer knows, however, the pressure on their time is forever growing fiercer, which, in turn, makes it more challenging for associations to tap this resource effectively. At the 2014 Fall Executive Board meeting, we adopted the report and recommendations of the Committee Review Task Force and, after the meeting, started working on their implementation. The new volunteer model that informed those recommendations focuses on creating project-specific, time-limited task forces and special committees. AALL recognizes that our members have to show their return on investment within their organizations, and, with that in mind, AALL needs to meet the increasing expectations for return on investment of volunteer time from our members.

**All-Star Member Value Proposition**

The goal of all of these steps is to both give and get exceptional value to and

(continued on page 20)
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New Year, New Challenges, New Opportunities: Advocacy in 2015

Welcome back, advocates: a new year of advocacy is upon us, and AALL has been busy preparing for the opportunities and challenges of the year ahead. The AALL Government Relations Office (GRO) has been busy preparing for the opportunities and challenges of the year ahead. We’re finalizing plans for online and in-person advocacy trainings (save the date for our March 18 Lobby Day on Capitol Hill!), strategizing ways to engage new lawmakers, and putting the finishing touches on our Public Policy Priorities. Here we offer a look at the advocacy landscape of the year ahead.

The New Congress
The 114th Congress convenes on January 6, 2015, and, for the first time in eight years, Republicans hold a majority in both chambers. With two years remaining in President Obama’s term, the division of party control between Congress and the White House will bring new challenges and opportunities. In the House of Representatives, 61 new members have been elected to serve, and the GOP will lead the chamber 247-188. In the Senate, 12 new freshmen will take their seats. Republicans hold 54 seats to the Democrats’ 46, including two nominal independents. Indeed, the new Congress is very new; a whopping 47 percent of senators—including the majority of Republican senators—have served fewer than the six years of a full term.

This political landscape offers Republicans new powers to challenge Obama’s agenda, with the added ability to launch investigations and hold hearings from both chambers, stall key appointments, and pass legislation the party favors, if only to meet the president’s veto. However, division of power may yield areas of agreement, as well, and new Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has pledged his desire to restore the Senate to regular order—a process both parties would welcome. If he is successful in doing so, legislation could go through the bipartisan, consultative committee process before coming to the floor, a free and open amendment process would be restored, the chambers would confer on passed legislation—and senators might even work on Fridays.

With successful advocacy built on strong relationships, one of the greatest advocacy challenges of a new Congress is the need to form relationships with new members of Congress, new leadership, and even new staffers. For instance, several committees key to AALL’s federal advocacy work have elected new leadership and will appoint new members in the 114th Congress, including the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (which handles transparency, open government, and access to information issues), the Legislative Branch Subcommittee of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee (which handles funding for the Government Publishing Office and Library of Congress), and the Senate Judiciary Committee (which handles the Freedom of Information Act, privacy and surveillance, and copyright). Just as the changed political dynamic of the 114th Congress will unearth new potential for advocacy engagement, new personalities will present different possibilities as we work to identify champions and challengers to our key issues.

We expect Congress to engage on several key issues of interest to AALL this year. Chairperson Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) of the House Judiciary Committee has signaled that his committee will continue its review of copyright law. During the 113th Congress, the committee held more than 15 hearings on the many aspects of copyright, including fair use, digital first sale, and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Representative Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) has been selected to chair the Subcommittee on Courts, Internet, and Intellectual Property of the House Judiciary Committee. Privacy and surveillance issues will also present new opportunities for law librarian advocacy in the new Congress, beginning with the reauthorization of several key provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act in June, including Section 215, which has been used to authorize the bulk collection of Americans’ data. Though efforts to reform or end the National Security Agency’s collection of domestic communications failed in the last Congress, privacy advocates are hopeful the sunset date may provide an opportunity for reform. As the Federal Communications Commission readies to release its new net neutrality rules, we’re likely to see the issue heat up in Congress. We also expect to see action on what may be termed, rightly or wrongly, ‘good government’ legislation. Because of Republicans’ support for smaller government, we will need to be vigilant on efforts to eliminate print government information under the guise of “modernization,” ‘cost-cutting,’ or efficiency. On the other hand, House Republicans in particular have been supportive of efforts to increase transparency of government operations, and we’ll likely see more legislative efforts to achieve this goal. It’ll be a busy year ahead for AALL and our members as we’ll require the assistance of law librarian advocates to reach our goals. AALL will also work with our allies, including other library associations and open government groups, to advance our policy priorities.

AALL in the States
Across the country, state legislatures will begin new sessions in the first several months of 2015. With 12 enactments to date, the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) continues to be a primary focus of our state-level advocacy. We expect introductions in at least 10 states, and we have advocates ready to organize coalitions, testify, and lobby in support of UELMA. In fact, 19 chapters have expressed formal support for UELMA through letters, testimony, statements, or resolutions. We’re very pleased that, of those 19 chapters, nine have adopted AALL’s UELMA resolution or a resolution of their own.

AALL will also continue to support state, court, and county law libraries as they confront funding challenges and promote access to justice. Thanks to the close working relationship between AALL and its chapters and members at the state level, we often hear about funding issues as they arise and can help AALL members and chapters proactively advocate and react to problems before they turn into crises.

AALL has a busy year ahead! We look forward to working with you to advance policies that support law librarianship.
from the secretary

Highlights from the Fall Executive Board Meeting

For AALL’s fall Executive Board meeting, the board convened at the Union League Club in Chicago November 6-November 8, 2014. In addition to the formal board meeting, other activities included a meeting of the Finance and Budget Committee as well as a fall Executive Board retreat. President Holly M. Riccio presided over the Executive Board meeting, welcoming Vice President Keith Ann Stivers; Past President Steven P. Anderson; Secretary Katherine K. Coolidge; Treasurer Gail Warren; and board members John W. Adkins, Femi Cadmus, Amy Eaton, Kenneth Hirsh, Donna Nixon, and Suzanne Thorpe. Also in attendance were Council of Chapter Presidents Jean L. Willis and Special Interest Section (SIS) Council Chair Camilla Tubbs. Headquarters staff members in attendance included Kate Hagan, executive director; Paula Davidson, director of finance and administration; Emily Felten, director of government relations; Pam Reisinger, director of meetings; Kim Rundle, executive assistant to the executive director; Cara Schillinger, director of membership, marketing, and communications; Celeste Smith, director of education; and Chris Siwa, director of information technology.

Board Retreat
The first portion of the retreat included a presentation from AALL Legal Counsel Paula Cozzi Goedert, Barnes & Thornburg, LLP, titled “Tales from the Front: Hear What Other Boards Did Wrong So You Can Avoid the Same Mistakes.”

The remainder of the retreat was facilitated by Karen Cates, adjunct professor of executive education at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. In advance of the retreat, the board and AALL staff read Road to Relevance, a handbook for developing more vital associations. The book offers a roadmap for acting strategically, becoming competitive, and remaining relevant. Using the approaches and ideas detailed in the book, the board was able to make some important decisions and plans for AALL’s future.

Board Meeting
The board meeting commenced immediately following the retreat. The board made a number of important decisions, which follow.

Action Items
Action items are agenda items for which a vote of the board is required. The following action items were among those approved and adopted by the board during the meeting:

- The Economic Value of Law Libraries Special Committee Report and Recommendations
- A proposal that the Executive Board approve Washington, D.C., as the site for the 2019 Annual Meeting and Conference, pending a site visit, favorable contract negotiations, and written support from the local AALL chapter, with final approval given at the 2015 spring Executive Board meeting
- The minutes of the Executive Board meeting on July 10, 2014, and the Business Meeting minutes from July 14, 2014
- An AALL meetings and events code of conduct
- The Committee Review Task Force final report and recommendations

Consent Items
Consent items are considered agreed to by the board simply by their submission and presence on the agenda. The consent items submitted to the board include:

- A request that AALL become a signatory to the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development
- A request that the GenX GenY SIS change its name to the Professional Engagement, Growth, and Advancement SIS (PEGA-SIS)

Additionally, the board asked the AALL Committee on Relations with Information Vendors to meet with the AALL vendor liaison to develop a plan for sharing the Technical Services Special Interest Section Task Force Report on Vendor-Supplied Bibliographic Records Creation and Distribution Models, March 2014, with electronic resource providers.

Reports
In her President’s Report, Riccio discussed her ongoing activities for the year: travel and outreach, chapter visits, advocacy, committee and task force involvement, and 2015 Annual Meeting planning, among other activities.

Upon returning from the AALL Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Riccio was asked to speak to a reporter from the Daily Journal in relation to an article he was writing about H.R. 4195, the Federal Register Modernization Act. The article was published on July 23 and included quotes from Riccio and other AALL members. Subsequently, she also spoke with Greg Munno from the FOIA Project blog about the removal of certain court information from PACER, and quotes from this conversation were included in his blog post, “PACER Upgrade Leaves Electronic Warehouse of Court Records Incomplete.”

In advance of the Legal Services Corporation’s 40th anniversary celebration, the AALL white paper titled “Law Libraries and Access to Justice: A Report of the American Association of Law Libraries Special Committee on Access to Justice” was sent to various stakeholders via email. As a result of this, Riccio received a reply from the Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives at the American Bar Association (ABA), expressing interest in possible collaboration between AALL and the ABA on this topic. Hagan will be having an initial meeting with the Resource Center to discuss this further.

Additionally, the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) made a request of various associations, of which AALL was one, for assistance with a new strategic planning project that was launched by the NCBE Board of Trustees. Riccio and Hagan are working with Darcy Kirk to answer the survey questions. The NCBE Board of Trustees expects to develop its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan next spring.

Reports were also received from the vice president, treasurer, secretary, executive director, director of meetings, director of education, government relations director, SIS Council Chair, Chapter Council Chair, and vendor liaison discussing their various activities during the past year.

The minutes of the Executive Board meetings are available on AALLNET. If you have any questions about any of these board actions, feel free to contact me or any Executive Board member.
I have been immersed in the issue of diversity since I started working for the University of Florida in 2012. I am currently serving on the University of Florida’s Levin College of Law Diversity Task Force and on the greater University of Florida’s George A. Smathers Libraries’ Committee on Diversity. I have learned a great deal through my service, and I want to share some of that knowledge in the hopes that it will help promote diversity in your respective institutions and in our profession.

The Diversity Task Force

When I began working at UF Law in 2012, it was a crucial time for increasing diversity. There were only 10 African American students out of 287 students in the incoming 2012 class. The dean created the diversity task force to address the issue. When administrators started recruiting volunteers, I applied because I thought I had a unique perspective as one of nine African American faculty members and the first and only African American law librarian. We were charged with identifying strategies that the law school can use to improve the broad diversity of the applicant pool and the 2013 entering class. We undertook two efforts that I would like to share: website development and outreach.

Website Development

Applying for law school can be a scary process for minority students and their families, particularly if they are the first in their family to attend a professional school. The first place that students go when they begin to consider what law school they want to attend is the school’s website. Students are looking at the student life and the various extracurricular activities offered to help prepare them for the profession. For a minority student, it is important to see how other minority students are flourishing in the law school. If all of the pictures are of white students, minority students may assume that diversity is not important to the law school or, worse, that minority students do not make “the cut” to be successful at that particular law school. That is definitely not the case at the University of Florida, so one of our goals was to create an environment that was welcoming for our diverse students by enhancing the law school’s website.

We updated our website in two ways. First, we selected and uploaded photographs that included minority students participating in student life. Now when applicants visit our website, they can identify with students who look like them and imagine themselves here. Also, family members are likely to be more supportive, knowing that their loved ones will not be alone. Second, we created a diversity page that reiterates the importance of diversity in the current student body and highlights former minority students who have become leaders in the field.

Outreach

I was the first person in my family to attend college and apply to law school. Entering law school without a mentor was daunting. I did not have anyone to help me navigate the competitive environment or explore my unexpressed expectations of law school. For example, I remember receiving a C on my first midterm and calling my mother, devastated. While my mother was a sympathetic ear, she could not explain that everyone who goes to law school has these setbacks and that these setbacks do not predict failure in the profession. I had nowhere else to go. A mentor could have reassured me, which is why mentors for minority students are important.

Therefore, as a part of our charge, we created an outreach program called “Team UF.” Using this outreach model, a majority of the African-American students admitted to the law school were matched with a team consisting of a current student, a faculty member, and
a prominent alumnus. The team works with the student throughout his or her law school experience and ideally beyond graduation as the student embarks on his or her legal career. I believe that these efforts, in addition to some of our more traditional recruitment efforts (attending law school fairs), helped us yield 34 African Americans and four additional students who each identified as African American and another ethnicity for the 2013 entering class (out of 318 students).

As a minority, I walked into my first diversity training thinking that I already knew about cultural sensitivities. . . .

The Diversity Committee

One day, as I was talking with my tenure and promotion mentor about my interest in the topic of diversity, she strongly recommended that I consider joining the Diversity Committee. The committee is a fairly new committee comprised of 10 faculty and staff members from various university libraries and two student representatives. The Diversity Committee’s mission is to promote intercultural understanding and acceptance among library users and library staff by educating, empowering, and creating self-awareness in the context of a global society. There are two primary efforts that we undertake: diversity training workshops and diversity potlucks.

Training Workshops

Cultural awareness is essential for our profession because, on any given day, we serve patrons from all ethnicities. It is important that we are educated about cultural differences so that we can be more sensitive to people’s needs. This sensitivity is not limited to those we serve but also applies to the people we work with. So our committee decided to host a series of diversity training workshops each semester for all university library staff. We did not coordinate these trainings alone. The University of Florida’s Department of Multicultural and Diversity Affairs, its LGBT Affairs Office, and its President Council on Diversity were great resources for finding speakers to invite to our trainings.

Last year, we hosted four diversity trainings for all library faculty and staff, which focused on how to serve our Islamic and Muslim students; how to increase awareness and understanding of current LGBTQ issues and LGBT history; how to communicate and manage multigenerational relationships; and the importance of learning how diverse our campus is and what we can do to make it inclusive and affirming for students and faculty.

As a minority, I walked into my first diversity training thinking that I already knew about cultural sensitivities and did not have much more to learn. I assumed that my experiences were identical to the experiences of every other minority. Boy, was I wrong. I learned that the experience of being a minority is individualized. For example, an African American woman would not automatically know about the customs, way of life, and experience of an African American Muslim woman. Additionally, these trainings benefited me as a professor, reminding me to be sensitive to students from cultures different from my own. In the future, we plan to rotate our topics and add new ones based on need.

Potlucks

Everyone loves food, right? Food plays a central role in cultures around the world. It is often a reason for people to come together and share fellowship with each other, so we thought a potluck would be a great way to get library staff to move toward those goals. We hosted our first diversity potluck in November 2013. We asked everyone to bring a dish that represents their cultural heritage to share with their library colleagues. Attendance was very good, and we enjoyed Chinese, Irish, Cuban, and Mexican dishes. Let’s just say we were stuffed. Not only was it an opportunity to meet new people and catch up with colleagues, but we also were able to share recipes and childhood memories of making the dishes with our families. In the future, we plan to have at least one potluck per semester.

Recommendations

If you are looking for ways to promote or simply recognize diversity in your institution, here are a few tips I offer from my own experience:

• Create a diversity statement to accompany your library’s mission and vision statements. These statements (especially when posted on your website or included in the introductory paragraph of a job description) communicate the library’s commitment to staff, faculty, potential employees, and the community you serve.

• Reach out to your local library school or alma mater and offer to mentor minority students who have an interest in law librarianship. It is a great opportunity to pay it forward and provide support and guidance to those students throughout their schooling and into their new careers.

• Showcase diversity in your library by purposefully taking photographs of students from all ethnicities while they attend library events or use library resources. Post these photographs on your library webpage and social media accounts as a visual reminder that the library welcomes everyone. AALL does a great job of uploading photographs to AALLNET that illustrate the richness of diversity in our profession.

• Collaborate with your university’s multicultural affairs office to host diversity trainings for your library faculty and staff. These trainings are a great way to promote diversity and build professional development.

• Host a diversity potluck at your library, and encourage your staff to bring a dish from their childhood/heritage. You may even pick up a recipe or two.

. . . I assumed that my experiences were identical to the experiences of every other minority. Boy, was I wrong.

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Fredric G. Levin College of Law, Gainesville. Shamika is vice chair of AALL’s Diversity Committee.
Legal education is now starting to recognize the hazardous gap that law school graduates face as they begin their journey into the legal profession. The widening gap between legal education and real-world legal practice skills, lately dubbed “practice-ready” competencies, is a real danger, but it is a gap that can be narrowed with the help of the law librarian.

In its January 2014 Report and Recommendations, the American Bar Association (ABA) Task Force on the Future of Legal Education details this looming situation and offers some surprisingly no-nonsense suggestions to academia and beyond. Law schools are considering the ABA’s recommendations and trying to come up with practical ways to prepare their graduates for the day when a real client or billable transaction lands on their desk.

There are ways to share the burden and address the issues, and it is encouraging to find that academic librarians and law schools, vendors, and firm librarians are lining up to do their part to prevent law school graduates from falling through the dreaded gap.

Defining the Issues

Acquiring real-world practice skills is not a novel concept, and the age-old attitude of “you’ll learn it on the job” is implicitly enshrined in the summer clerkship model. In fact, it was the status quo for years when formal apprenticeships were an integral component of legal training. In the many decades since, however, law school-provided lectures, Socratic question-and-answer sessions, and written assignments have replaced practical training and have become standard procedure in legal education. However, the ABA’s 2014 report implies that the requirements of future lawyers forces legal education to start providing graduates with practice-worthy skills, as well. Employers, such as law firms and in-house legal departments, would likely agree.

A variety of factors have contributed to this tipping point in the legal education/employment complex. First and foremost, the sliding economy since September 2008 seems to have permanently instilled the “new normal” in every industry, including legal services. Economic globalization; outsourcing of legal services to off-shore firms; and “flexible-staffing” in the style of paraprofessionals, part-time, and contracted legal staff have bedeviled the legal employment outlook, making it more difficult for new law school graduates to find previously reliable entry-level positions in law practices, government agencies, and private companies. Technology tools, including Legal Zoom and its progeny, have taken...
basic legal work from lawyers, recent graduates in particular. Client pushback at all levels is driving a rebellion from the AmLaw 100 to smaller firms. Law firms are finding that clients refuse to pay for the work of anyone but a senior lawyer or partner, rendering the work of newer lawyers uncollectable. The clients’ reason? They do not want to pay to “train” new graduates to become practice-ready. This mindset has taken hold at law firms and is demonstrated by a decline among recruitment efforts, such as long-established summer associate programs, many of which have been slashed or have disappeared since the summer of 2009. Firms are making more lateral hires, looking for already seasoned lawyers with a book of business and experience under their belt.

ABA Task Force Report on Legal Education
The ABA 2014 Task Force Report articulates changes to the way legal education should be structured for the foreseeable future, addressing aspects not only related to curriculum but to other factors, as well, including management of the costs of legal education and communication of employment opportunities to current and prospective students. In its report, the ABA is clearly responding to market and societal trends by recommending that changes be implemented in several cohorts, including the state supreme courts and bar associations, universities, law schools, and the legal profession as a whole.

When considering curriculum changes in the law school, an area in which law librarians can be influential, Section VII. of the report, “Themes Addressed to All Parties,” discusses the points that are most relevant to preparing practice-ready graduates. Section VII.E. is described as “There Should be Clear Recognition that Law Schools Exist to Develop Competencies Relating to the Delivery of Legal and Related Services.” In pertinent part, this section states: “The educational programs of a law school should be designed so that graduates will have (a) some competencies in delivering (b) some legal services. A graduate’s having some set of competencies in the delivery of law and related services, and not just some body of knowledge, is an essential outcome for any program of legal education.”

This section goes further to state that the law school’s judgment in determining which set of competencies are desired “should be shaped in reference to: (a) the fact that most students attend law school desiring to practice law; (b) available studies of competencies sought by employers or considered broadly valuable for long-term professional success; and (c) the mission and strengths of the particular school.”

Resolving these issues is complicated and will take time, but already strides are being made to help groom law students into practice-ready professionals. Some state bar examinations already require examinees to find solutions (or answer questions related) to practical legal problems. Law librarians should stress the need for this bar-exam proficiency to both faculty and students and could possibly work with bar exam preparation courses to remove candidates of its importance in the examination and state licensing process.

Role of Legal Education and Academic Law Libraries
Academic law librarians shepherd law students through their research and writing courses, and law school deans are no stranger to the importance of the academic law library. Many are grappling with the same issues of declining enrollment and budget shortfalls while balancing these with the legacy of large physical library space and growing electronic collections, technology preferences by students, and remote learning opportunities. Many large academic law library spaces are being divided and repurposed, creating a less formal look in libraries. Soft seating areas for students and more collaborative study spaces are popping up in law school libraries everywhere.

Along with these physical changes, however, law school deans collectively recognize the value that the library can bring to the practice-ready movement already enveloping legal education at large. Some have incorporated librarians into teaching practical applications and exercises in doctrinal courses, while other deans want all librarians front and center, engaging in outreach to the law school in every possible way. The law library director is frequently included as a member of the dean’s strategic team. A Hot Topic program at the 2014 AALL Annual Meeting, Deans and Directors Roundtable: Reinventing Law School Libraries for a Digital Age, cited “creativity and nimbleness” as the “watchwords of the future.”

The ABA 2014 Task Force Report exposes targeted areas of concern where law librarians can become transformative contributors for achieving common goals. Teaching rigorous advanced legal research courses; partnering with alumni practitioners; working with any experiential learning courses in the law school, including legal clinics; and embedding coursework and exercises in student doctrinal classes are ways that librarians can penetrate the curriculum and provide much-needed pragmatism to otherwise non-practice-oriented coursework. Using technology in inventive ways to create interest and generate hands-on experience is another way to prepare students and close the gap between learning and practicing.

ABA has started a cooperative group in AALLNET’s My Communities composed of both academic and private law librarians to act as a clearinghouse of practical documents. Calling itself Research Ready Law Students (RRLS), this group of like-minded librarians collects and contributes resources and materials to the community, which can be accessed at bit.ly/1I28H1H, for use by all who are interested. Proactive solutions like this are familiar territory for librarians, which again points to the value of law school administrators and faculty, including librarians, in formatting curriculum enhancements to close the gap.

Connecting the Dots: Law Students and Law Firm Tasks
In another program from the 2014 AALL Annual Meeting, Finding Common Ground: Linking Law Student Learning with Law Firm Research Needs, we learned that some academic law librarians, in talking with practicing attorneys, discovered that new law school graduates had difficulty reading a real case file. Typical documents in case files are medical reports, police reports, employment evaluations, expert witness materials, patent applications, real estate agreements, and the like. It was reported that new lawyers were unable to identify key facts and issues from the documentation in the file and then translate them into framing a legal issue and solution. To resolve this problem, alumni were contacted and asked to provide an actual, redacted case file for law students to use as a practice exercise. This was an inventive way to drill down to a performance-specific difficulty among students and to start working on it while still in law school. It served the dual purpose of giving law students real-world experience while providing alumni with a tangible and fulfilling way to give back to their alma mater.

Flipped Classrooms
The “flipped classroom” has gained popularity in all types of formal education, not only in law schools. The concept is simple enough: switch lecture topics to homework and spend class time in discussion, argument, interaction, and problem-solving. This holds much promise for legal education.

Many law schools have been experimenting with the flipped classroom and academic librarians are getting in on the action. Collaboration is
has been by writing sample exercises that academic law librarians have become all of the academic law librarians continue to forge ahead in their efforts in legal education and to bring teaching doctrinal courses could partner with librarians to se the success of this paradigm, and “team-based learning” is one way to achieve it. According to a 2014 AALL Annual Meeting Deep Dive: Inventing the New Classroom, in some flipped classrooms, groups are assigned at the beginning of the year and stay together, engendering a team-based learning and success model. In others, a “problem-based learning” prototype is used, wherein complex theoretical situations are used as a basis to create knowledge. Using a combination of traditional teaching methods with clicker question-and-answer sessions and social media tools such as Google Hangouts, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube videos have proven to be highly engaging with law students. The flipped classroom is one of a growing number of innovative teaching approaches with real connections to the way attorneys interact in the outside world of legal practice.

Embedded Research and Exercises
As an example of how important practical legal skills are now viewed, one can look at the most recent research exercises into the core law school curriculum: “[Curriculum planning] topics included the innovative re-fashioning of the first-year curriculum, the integration of interdisciplinary education and skills training in the JD program generally and in the first-year curriculum specifically . . . The faculty also studied and then adopted policies encouraging the integration of skills training in every course, and discussed ways that faculty teaching doctrinal courses could partner with practitioners to incorporate real-world perspectives and skills training.” There is also a generalized law faculty movement afoot to help lead reform efforts in legal education and to bring about more real-life instruction to the law school experience. The Alliance for Experiential Learning is a faculty group dedicated to this effort. Some academic law librarians are working with the alliance by seeking to ensure that there is law librarian representation and participation among its ranks. One way that academic law librarians have become involved within this established group has been by writing sample exercises for doctrinal and capstone law school courses. As an example, jury instruction exercises have been used as a vehicle for this purpose by some entrepreneurial academic law librarians, according to the aforementioned Finding Common Ground education session.

Other courses that could benefit from experiential learning through practical examples are litigation courses beginning with the basic first-year civil procedure requirement through such specialized exercises as writing complaints and drafting motions. The Torts curriculum could include work on a typical product liability case, with some students taking the role of plaintiffs and the others, defendants. Learning the importance of researching products, chemicals, and equipment would give the students an interdisciplinary research approach to assessing a potential case. Faculty could take an hour of class time to examine a typical commercial general liability insurance policy or real estate investment trust. Administrative law courses could include evaluation of a state or federal government agency ruling and a subsequent enforcement action from the EPA or SEC. These are but a few examples of real assignments that new attorneys will be asked to perform when they start to practice law and for which they learned from the law firm librarian for advice. Law school librarians could be instrumental in starting the learning process for their students, thereby alleviating some of the trepidation and stress felt by so many first-year practicing lawyers whose employers expect them to already possess this focused knowledge and skill.

Technology: Skills-Based Course Offerings
According to Teaching Legal Technology Courses, a session held at the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries Annual Meeting and Conference in 2014, some proactive academic law librarians are already involved in improving law student technology skills for entry into the practice of law. This is a trend that has momentum, especially in law schools where a “skills” course is required for graduation, such as UC Irvine and Valparaiso University School of Law. If a law school curriculum already has such a requirement, this is a ripe opportunity for academic law librarians to seize. It may still require some pitching to the curriculum committee. Several law school librarians have had success by stressing the abundance of evidence in surveys, workplaces, and now the ABA supporting the need to prepare law graduates on a practical and technological level. These effective academics have demonstrated to their curriculum committees that the law librarians are well-suited to teach these skills to law students.

Structuring such a course may require some trial and error, but the rapidly changing technology products and services that now dominate the practice of law present an ever-increasing array of hands-on teachable moments to law students. From the law firm or practitioner’s perspective, court initiatives such as e-filing and e-discovery make this a saleable skill for new graduates. Many firms have practice technology departments that push out product after product to lawyers that are designed to create efficiencies in the practice of law. Some of these “practice solutions” include case-management tools that encourage collaboration among lawyers in the same office or around the globe, software for contract documents or patent prosecutions, and commercial document template products that can be saved and shared through a case-management system. The proliferation of these technologies is staggering in actual legal practice, which almost compels the need for exposure during law school.

Some enterprising law librarians have taken this even further, creating Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using some enterprising law librarians have created Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using some enterprising law librarians have created Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using some enterprising law librarians have created Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using

Planning for Success
None of these programs would be possible without good communication and collaboration with law school faculty and administration during the planning process. Including the librarian in the most important legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using some enterprising law librarians have created Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using some enterprising law librarians have created Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on legal education topics. Imagine the possibilities of legal technology education extended to massive audiences with the simple addition of a “practice solution” that could be made available online. This could be created using

Role of Legal Research Vendors
Large legal research vendors such as Lexis
and Westlaw have recognized the need for immediate practice skills and have long offered training at law schools. While much of this is dismissed as indoctrination for future consumers of their products, there are ways that these large vendors can help. One of the ways that Westlaw is addressing this issue is through its short “Practice Ready Workshop,” which highlights ways in which its product can help law students step into their new role as practitioners. While this is a technique used to draw business to the Westlaw Next resource, it is worth noting that it has recognized the gap and is showing academic librarians how to approach the problem while students are still in law school. Most of these workshops and webinars are aimed at academic law librarians, but they feature technology tools readily available to firm librarians but not often used by academics. Included are demonstrations of the value of secondary sources (e.g., PLC, Profiler, Form Finder), workflow tools, West’s Knowledge Management product, and Custom Pages. Suggestions from firm librarians often include granting academic law libraries access to QuickView, Westlaw’s online usage report, so that students can check the actual cost of performing research as they would in a work environment, as well as the value of partnering with a law school’s legal clinics. Since cost-effective legal research is skill No. 1 when it comes to new associates being practice-ready, using vendor training creatively under the library’s supervision could stimulate improvement in this much-needed but very basic skill. Although most academic law librarians are already accustomed to having training representatives from the major legal research vendors make regular visits to their institutions, they may not be aware of the exploding number of smaller, niche law-related vendors and electronic database products on the market. Specialized products ranging from securities platforms specific to finding only obscure language in SEC No-Action letters to news and social media tools are worth investigating, even if a law school library does not and will not subscribe. Perhaps a law school or group could sponsor a vendor fair or invite specific vendors individually to perform hands-on product demonstrations to law students. When first-year law graduates enter the workforce much of this is dismissed as they will be asked to perform research using specialized databases and workflow tools. While law firm librarians are quick to rescue flagging researchers, having had some exposure to these databases as a law school student would be most beneficial to a first-year lawyer. It also might be advisable for smaller vendors to offer limited and supported subscriptions to law school libraries. Some of this is already happening, but it should be encouraged on every level so that law students can experiment while still in law school.

Role of Law Firm Librarians

When private law librarians complain that their first- and second-year associates “don’t have a clue,” they may find it to their advantage to contribute to a solution. It would be a positive step for law firm librarians to reach out to their academic librarian colleagues and brainstorm ways to work with students collaboratively on certain research tasks, creating the ultimate win-win situation. Ways that firm/corporate law librarians can help their academic librarian counterparts could include the following:

• Offer to do optional demos and lectures with real-world examples throughout the year. Firm librarians often are invited to talk to law students in April or May, just before a select few are going out into summer associate or clerkship positions. To be effective, this type of partnering should take place on a regularly scheduled basis. It can be done in person, virtually through webinars and podcasts, or in a blended format, but it should be offered consistently throughout the academic year.

• Private law librarians, both firm and corporate, might invite interested law students to their workplace (only if permitted by their employer) on a one-off basis to see what happens in a real-world legal research environment. For many students, it might be their first time in a firm seeing these tasks being performed in a work setting.

• Private law librarians might work with academic librarians to present a proposal for a component of an advanced legal research course to include an ‘internship’ of a specified block of time for credit (e.g., six hours, 10 hours) of work in an actual law firm, courthouse, government, or corporate law library or legal research department.

• An area that is burgeoning in law firms as well as in business and industry is project management. Legal project management (LPM) is gaining popularity among clients, and a law school graduate who has training or prior experience in any kind of project management likely will be sought out. More companies want to hire in-house counsel not only with legal knowledge but with managerial skills, so tapping into and developing a student’s management aptitude also increases options for employment. Firm librarians, who by now have had some exposure to LPM, might want to work with academic law librarians to introduce this concept through the law school library either as an individual workshop or a lecture.

Partner Within Your Firm or Company

Many law firms now have mentoring structures in place to develop associate competencies for new hires. Typically, a director of professional development is tasked with administering competency-based models of progress as a counter to the previously ubiquitous “lock-step” associate advancement track based primarily on seniority. Law firm library directors can be instrumental in furthering the goals and objectives for the associate competency curriculum related to research and writing.

In some firms, lawyers and partners are also responsible for teaching recent hires how to write and handle other matters that newer attorneys are asked to perform. The firm librarian could work with the lawyers in this type of arrangement as well, for it is the librarian who could best speak to the specific resources and cost-effective techniques in completing typical first- to third-year research assignments.

Conclusion

Is it really possible to achieve a completely “practice-ready” law curriculum and produce “client-ready” law school graduates? There are certainly strong opinions on all sides. On a popular law professor blog (law professors.typepad.com), Professor David Barnhizer wrote in 2013 that “Practice Ready is the latest professional scam.” Although Barnhizer’s remarks were clarified later to state that he believes “We need to design ways to ‘do it better,’” he also states that “the organized legal profession and state supreme courts need to quit ‘palming off’ their responsibilities on law schools and pretending they have taken care of the situation.” Further, despite every effort by legal education and every promise by a firm’s partners, clients may still balk at the notion of paying for a new associate’s work on the grounds that he or she still is not ready, causing extra time, work review, and additional costs by more senior lawyers assigned to the client’s work. The pressure for practice-ready law graduates, however, has already been felt. Fewer entry-level jobs, lower law school enrollments, the topsy-turvy economy as a whole, and the ABA’s 2014 Report of (continued on page 25)
Thinking You Know vs. Really Knowing

New data tools offer empirical insights into the workings of the federal judiciary

By Greg Munno

The promise of data in legal research is that librarians, scholars, lawyers, and policymakers can go beyond well-researched hunches. Yet capturing and structuring data from an institution as opaque, decentralized, and idiosyncratic as the U.S. courts is no easy task.

At the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a nonpartisan data research center of Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Public Communications and Whitman School of Management, we specialize in data projects and for 25 years have been producing reports and data tools structured from the government’s own administrative databases obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We focus on federal enforcement and have data offerings on topics ranging from IRS audits to immigration.

The federal courts were a logical next venue for investigation, but we faced unique challenges in realizing this goal. For starters, the courts are not subject to FOIA. We can access documents through Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER), but the process is clunky and expensive, and the very nature of court records makes extracting data from them difficult. We’ve been chipping away at this problem for some time—for example, by obtaining records from the Justice Department through FOIA that relate to court actions and by exploring ways to efficiently and effectively mine PACER for the type of data we would need to produce findings that meet the standards of an academic research center.

In October 2014, we launched a new tool that empirically examines the civil caseloads and case processing times for every active and senior federal district court judge in the nation—950 as of our last update—which includes breakdowns of processing times by nature of suit (bit.ly/1vJFI51). We added this to what we call the Judge Information Center (traced.syr.edu/judges/interp), which also includes a criminal sentencing tool that launched in 2012 that examines the number and length of sentences imposed by district court judges.

Law librarians can now use these tools to answer such questions as:

• How many cases are currently on any given judge’s docket?
• How long does it typically take for a judge to resolve the type of case a client has before that judge?
• How experienced is the judge in handling different types of suits?
• What’s the sentencing range a judge employs for a certain type of crime?
• In what venue are lawyers choosing to file different types of actions?

“Every trial lawyer develops his or her own impression regarding how particular judges perform,” says Thomas M. Susman, a retired partner at Ropes & Gray and now the director of government affairs for the American Bar Association (ABA). Susman, speaking from his experience as a trial lawyer and not on behalf of the ABA, adds that “These anecdotal judgments … can be very different from what TRAC’s analysis of the judge’s own case-by-case data show. The data may well hold some surprises; they certainly will provide the basis for better-informed judgments.”

Using the Tools

TRAC has been using the new judge tools to answer some questions of our own and have thus far issued two reports, one that looks at caseload variation at the district level and another that focuses on the busiest individual judges in the country. These reports are available for free on TRAC’s website, trac.syr.edu.

What emerges is a picture of an overburdened system. In the past two decades, caseloads have jumped 28 percent while the number of federal judges has increased by only 4 percent. A consequence: the time from when a civil matter is filed to when it is scheduled for trial has grown by 63 percent in the last 20 years.

Yet the workloads are unevenly distributed, which makes sense given that court administrators can’t create new judgeships, nor can they permanently move Article III judges. The average district in our analysis received 388 new weighted criminal and civil cases per full-time judge for the year ending June 30, 2014. The rural Eastern District of Texas had the most new filings at 1,510 weighted filings per judge, compared with 145 for Alaska, which ranked at the bottom. For a full sortable list of how every district ranks, visit trac.syr.edu/tracreports/judge/364/table2.html.

The analysis uses the case weights devised by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC). But there are key differences between our rankings and those of the AOUSC, which uses authorized judgeships as its denominator regardless of whether those posts are filled. We instead developed a count of the number of full-time and full-time-equivalent judges actually working in the districts, and we update that number quarterly when we also update the caseload statistics.

Another key difference is the handling of multidistrict litigation (MDL) cases, which involve the bundling of cases (sometimes in the tens of thousands) so that a single judge can consider the common issues of fact and law that underlie the cases. The AOUSC counts each case bundled into an MDL as its own case. We do the same when looking at individual judge caseloads, but when aggregating to the district level, we set the MDL cases aside.

West Virginia South illustrates why we made that choice. The AOUSC ranks
it as the busiest district in the country as a result of including the 66,885 cases that have been bundled into seven MDL cases all being handled by one of the district’s judges, according to a November 17, 2014, report from the Panel on Multidistrict Litigation. In our analysis, West Virginia South ranks 61st. Which one is right? Clearly, the workload of Judge Joseph R. Goodwin, the judge handling the MDLs, is part of what the district must manage. If, as a researcher, you are specifically interested in Goodwin, our tool allows you to generate custom reports on him that fully reflect his MDL caseload. However, including him and those MDLs in the analysis at the district level badly skews the results and obscures the typical workload of the other judges in the district.

Tellingly, the Judicial Conference’s recommendations on where new judgeships are needed most do not list West Virginia South, despite its high ranking. Those recommendations are based in part on the AOUSC analysis and in part on more direct knowledge about conditions in each of the districts.

Our rankings match up well with those recommendations. The top 10 districts in terms of new weighted filings for 2013 in our analysis were all recommended for new judgeships. Nineteen of the 25 districts where new permanent judgeships are being sought had higher than average caseloads in 2013 by our measures, and all of them were above the median. The 19 above-average districts also account for 53 of the 65 permanent judgeships being requested.

The importance for controlling for MDLs and applying the AOUSC case weights also becomes apparent when looking at individual judges. West Virginia’s Goodwin, not surprisingly, has the most pending cases in the country, and more cases get added to those MDLs every day, according to his clerk.

The same is true of closures, with the four highest-ranking judges all assigned to MDLs. However, when the case-weights are applied, a non-MDL judge emerges as having closed more cases than any other in the country—Texas East’s James “Rodney” Gilstrap with 4,418 closures in the year prior to June 30, 2014.

Since our tool allows users to parse these statistics by nature of suit, we can also see that Gilstrap has the most pending cases of any judge when the nature of suit is property rights, with 814. That circles us back to the finding that East Texas is the busiest district in the country, as its workload is clearly driven in part by its popularity among plaintiffs as a place to litigate patent suits. In the year prior to June 30, 2014, 1,388 new property right claims were filed in East Texas, just edging out California Central (1,385) and Delaware (1,137). Those three districts accounted for 33 percent of all property right suits filed in the country for the time period.

**TRAC Resources**

TRAC would be happy to answer any questions about the data behind our Judge Information Center and the types of research questions it can be used to address. The center contains a wealth of free public materials. For instance, all of TRAC’s reports are free, as are the main interfaces of both the criminal and civil tools, which allow for many types of filtering and ranking of the judges. Subscribers get additional access, including drill-down reports on each judge, from which even more specific reports can be generated.

TRAC receives support from many foundations, including the Four Freedoms Fund, the CS Fund/Warsh-Mott Legacy, the Rockefeller Family Fund, and the Knight Foundation, which has a video overview of the Judge Information Center tool on its website (kng.hx/1zJKl8n). There’s also a PDF overview of both the civil and criminal tools on TRAC’s website, along with data write-ups, the free data tools, and sample subscriber reports. All of these can be accessed from the Judge Information Center homepage.

**Greg Munno**

Assistant Research Professor, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, Newhouse School, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York
Good Posting Practices
Social media posting tips for law library accounts

Ellen Q. Jaquette

Many law libraries use social media platforms, such as Twitter or Facebook, to promote their services and share information with patrons. While these platforms can be a great way to promote your library, administering social media accounts can be time consuming and overwhelming. If your law library uses social media or is considering starting a social media account, make sure your hard work pays off and your messages successfully get out to your patrons by following some best practices for social media postings.

Algorithms Matter
Librarians are well aware that algorithms can alter what users see in their search results, and social media algorithms present similar challenges. Although most social media platforms display posts in a relatively chronological order, Facebook utilizes an algorithm to select “Top Stories” for inclusion in your newsfeed. While these algorithm suggestions are based on Facebook’s current practices, Google+ is said to be experimenting with a relevancy algorithm, and Twitter has also mentioned the possibility of an algorithmic display in 2015.

Generally speaking, posts that have high levels of social engagement, as well as posts that contain certain content types, are more likely to appear in your Facebook feed. For example, Facebook’s algorithm prefers status updates with images or links. If you are posting from your library account, attach a relevant image to your post to increase the chances that your readers will see this information. However, beware of memes: Facebook scans images to see if they’re shared. If you are linking to another page, be sure to reword your posts so you’re not spamming your readers with the exact same post every time. If you’re not available to post your updates at the suggested times, use a free social media management software program so that you can schedule your posts and plan ahead.

Know Your Users
The issue with general social media advice is that it does not take into account the unique characteristics of law library patrons. Ultimately, the best way to engage users with your social media postings is to try these general suggestions and then consult your social media analytics to see what was successful and what wasn’t. Everything from posting times to content to image preferences may vary based on your users and the time of year, presenting challenges and opportunities to discover even more about your patrons.

Time Your Posts Well
What time you publish your social media posts directly impacts whether users see or engage with it. Recent data on social media use finds that the best time to post on Facebook to get users to click on and read your information is from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. during the week. For Twitter, your best bet is Monday through Thursday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. While these two sites share similar timeframes, ideal times greatly vary by social media platform. See “The Best and Worst Times to Post, Pin & Tweet” link in “More Resources” for additional timing information.

In addition to timing your posts, consider posting the same information multiple times at different times throughout the day to make sure it is seen by a variety of your patrons. Just be sure to reword your posts so you’re not spamming your readers with the exact same post every time. If you’re not available to post your updates at the suggested times, use a free social media management software program so that you can schedule your posts and plan ahead.

Social Engagement Drives Social Engagement
When considering the best practices for writing posts, ask people to like or comment seems like a catch-22. Many writers do ask people to like or comment on their posts because they know that posts with many likes or comments are preferred in Facebook’s algorithm and are seen more frequently in people’s newsfeeds. This is true: if your post gets some “likes,” it’s more likely this post will appear in other users’ newsfeeds for them to like as well.

To get those first “likes,” make sure to attach an image or link as I suggested earlier. Data indicates users on Twitter and Facebook are more likely to engage with posts that include a picture, and pictures are more likely to draw in visits if you are linking to another page. For Google+, research indicates that pictures draw in high levels of engagement, but Google+ users engage with posts containing videos or animated GIFs even more. Tailor what you attach to your content based on such platform preferences. And finally, while you can’t explicitly ask for likes, comments, or shares in your post, you can directly ask Facebook users who are friends of the library to like your posts to help increase visibility. Using this technique in conjunction with good posting practices will help your content be seen and shared.

More Resources


License and Contract Management
Implementing a usable system for your law library

By Ingrid Mattson and Linda-Jean Schneider

Librarians need a way to track agreements, keep contact information, and preserve institutional knowledge about the negotiation process and perspectives. This is particularly crucial for libraries that may have turnover in the negotiator’s role, but it is also an issue for vendors who may turn over. If you do not know what a vendor says, compliance can be difficult. And if there is a dispute, you must be able to find what you agreed to in order to resolve the dispute.

Do you know the full scope of legal obligations to which your law library is contractually committed? Are all of your database licenses, contract amendments, employment agreements, and leases readily available? Could you easily pull up any agreement someone has signed on behalf of the law library? If your answer to these questions is an uncomfortable “no,” take heart in the fact that you are probably not alone. Just when you thought negotiating a “good deal” was enough, we suggest that sound contract management processes are a necessary next step when entering into agreements.

If you have a contract management role in your law library, you likely began your work facing one of two scenarios:

1. You inherited someone else’s process.
2. You inherited someone else’s lack of process.

These scenarios represent two sides of the same coin. With both, you need to get organized. You may not need a sophisticated contract management system. Paper may work just as well for you as something digital. You might even use two or three different systems for different types of agreements. Simply find a system that works for you and will enable you to respond to any question that may arise concerning your agreements. Following are some reasons why organization is critical, how to get started, and a few best practices to consider along the way.

The Stakes: When Might You Revisit an Agreement?

Librarians may revisit agreements for two primary reasons: (1) something within or related directly to the agreement itself (e.g., the database licensed) must be addressed or (2) the agreement may impact other work in the law library.

Issues Directly Related to the Agreement

1. Renew or renegotiate the agreement: Contract renewal is a great time to evaluate whether you still need what the other party is offering and whether you can still provide what they expect from the contract. It is also a chance to assess whether you are getting what you think you bargained for when you initially signed the deal. To facilitate this analysis, make sure all details related to prior negotiations are included in your system.

2. Contract termination: Similarly, those negotiation details may aid your decision to switch to a new vendor if, for example, you are unhappy with the contract terms or the service has not been what you expected (e.g., customer support is inadequate, database access is always problematic).

3. Possible breach of contract (compliance issues): Perhaps you have received a vendor letter alleging that your library has breached the agreement. For example, attorneys in your firm may be sending cases or secondary sources from a database to clients, or authorized database users may be accessing the database from multiple locations or with multiple passwords. In order to know if the allegations have some basis or if you may face consequences for alleged breaches, you will need to review your contract terms.

4. Mergers and Acquisitions: Vendors often merge, though when you contract with a particular vendor, the vendor’s identity (including its stability) may be one reason you are willing to license its product. If that vendor merges with another, your library may want to terminate the agreement or at least be aware of its options under its agreement with the vendor.

Similarly, you may have to revisit your agreements if your library merges with another, which occurs, for example, when two law firms join forces. If you find out that your library will merge with another, a system that easily allows you to pull up all of your agreements can help you determine what renegotiation rights you might have so as to avoid the newly merged library facing multiple deals for the same product with the same vendor. Quite often, the agreements of the larger organization or library will simply prevail, when, in fact, the smaller organization will have clauses in its contracts that legally require both parties (i.e., the organization/database licensee and the vendor) to craft a totally new agreement.

Tip 1
In the event of a breach, look for this type of contract clause concerning a library’s obligations: “Licensee must use reasonable efforts to ensure Authorized Users are made aware of and undertake to abide by the terms and conditions of this license, if Licensee becomes aware of any unauthorized use, Licensee must immediately take steps to ensure such activity ceases and does not recur.”

It is possible you have taken “reasonable efforts” to remedy any breach, but knowing what your contract says can help you and legal counsel evaluate a vendor’s complaint.

Tip 2
Consider flagging resources that your library has acquired in your contract management system: “The firmwide pricing in this license is based on the sizes of practice groups relevant to the information services listed. . . . However, for the purpose of determining whether a ‘material change’ has occurred during the subscription term, the total number of attorneys in the firm will be used. A ‘material change’ shall be defined as a ____ % or greater increase or decrease in the number of attorneys in the firm. If a material change occurs during the Subscription Term, the parties agree to renegotiate in good faith the annual subscription price to reflect such material change. [The firm] represents that as of ____, the total number of attorneys in the firm is not more than _____.

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AALL Spectrum • February 2015
Unfortunately, little notice may be paid to online research contracts beyond the two primary providers’ agreements (i.e., Lexis and Westlaw), but significant liability issues or long-term commitment clauses in agreements with other providers could contribute significant expense if not carefully examined in advance of a merger. Again, every resource your library has acquired should be identified in a contract management system to ensure that all commitments are acknowledged in the event of a merger or acquisition.

**Agreement Impacts on Other Library Operations**

A contract management system can also help you with those conventional library operations for which you should be consulting any agreements into which the library has entered.

1. **Building an institutional repository (IR):** It is almost cliché to say that law libraries are under increased pressure to demonstrate value. Luckily, there are a number of ways to accomplish this. Particularly in academic law libraries, IRs archiving law school history and faculty scholarship are in demand. Unfortunately, many librarians attempting to digitize and preserve faculty scholarship face a copyright conundrum: does the faculty member’s publication agreement permit the law library to add the article to the IR? Unless a faculty dean or someone else with great foresight has been collecting and tracking these agreements since law school faculty began publishing, you may have no way of knowing. Moreover, it is not always possible to identify the copyright terms for publication in student-run law journals, particularly given the inherently transient nature of the journals’ editors and subsequent paper-trail issues that result.

   For those publishing agreements that can be found, if the law library is creating the IR, the law library should have a copy of the agreement on file and incorporate it into the contract management system. Rather than trying to track down the original publishing agreements for each faculty member’s articles, if your library opts to secure permission from all journals for inclusion in the IR, whether or not the original publishing agreement permitted this, any email exchanges authorizing the law library to add the article to the IR (i.e., what may amount to a contract amendment or addendum) should also be included in the contract management system as part of the transactional record related to the article in the IR. Should anyone dispute inclusion of the article in the IR, you can quickly pull up the copyright permission in question.

2. **Interlibrary loan (ILL) issues:** Can you quickly tell your library staff which database licenses permit unfettered ILLs? Which ones permit “limited” ILLs or specifically restrict the page count? If you have the journal in print or electronically, does the database license let you download and share the digital version, or must you copy and send the print?

   Although a number of organizations have recognized and tried to resolve the difficulty libraries face when trying to determine the ILL details in every database license, sometimes a library must simply dig into the licenses to determine what the library agreed to with respect to ILLs.

**Getting Organized: Where to Begin**

To create a systematic contract management system, you must begin systematically. Create an inventory of all agreements into which the law library has entered. Be thorough, and think broadly about those agreements. Software and database licenses are easy agreements to remember and track; they are likely incorporated into your acquisition record-keeping already. But what about other agreements that are not daily considerations? Consider including any employment agreements, leases, service agreements (like FedEx or UPS contracts), or other contracts (e.g., publishing contracts) in your initial inventory. You may not ultimately include all of these agreements in the same system, but having a complete picture concerning your library’s contractual liability will make organizational decisions easier.

**Organizing Your Inventory**

Everyone has an organizational type; if you go against type, it is unlikely you will create a system that enables you to effectively manage your contracts. Regardless of your type, however, do not worry! No organizational type is “good” or “bad.” Instead, it is important to know how you organize things and then adopt a system that best meets your needs and your institution’s needs.

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**Tip 3**

Some journals’ publishing agreements permit inclusion of articles in an IR subject to a brief period (sometimes referred to as an embargo period) after the article has been published in print. This timeframe is something that could be included in your contract management system.

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**Tip 4**

Look to other organizations’ practices for identifying and coding ILL terms, and then incorporate this coding into your contract management system for quick reference. The Information Delivery Services Project, for example, classifies ILL language for each database as follows:

- **[Y]** ILL OK with no restrictions
- **[YNP]** Restricted to non-profit or non-commercial borrowers
- **[PE & PNP]** Restriction on direct delivery of electronic version
- **[P & PNP]** Restricted to delivery of a printed version only
- **[N]** ILL prohibited
- **[S]** The license is silent regarding ILL

Here are some possible organizational systems that you might consider for your law library’s agreements:

- **Option one:** Group material by vendor.
- **Option two:** Group material by product, database, or service.
- **Option three:** Group material by renewal date.
- **Option four:** Some combination. For example, you could create a vendor file and a database file. There is no reason not to have the same agreement in both places if that helps you—simply cross-reference your two systems. This approach may enable more people to access necessary documents quickly.

Director of Library and Research Services Christine Scherzinger, Duane Morris LLP, Philadelphia, reports, “We do a combination of three different things. I keep a copy of all large contracts that require some sort of haggling each year (around 40) and detailed notes on each renewal in Filesite. I share access with my administrative assistant . . . [who] also keeps a spreadsheet that documents the renewal terms of each contract. She then emails [our library resources manager] and me at the beginning of each month with the upcoming renewals for the coming two to three months and lets us know the date for which we need to notify a vendor of cancellation if there is an auto-renewal clause in the contract. We also keep scanned copies of invoices for most renewals in Sydney as well for quick access and calculation of year-over-year increases.”

Contrast Scherzinger’s approach with the following simpler, yet still effective, approaches of other law libraries.
"We currently organize our contracts and licenses on a shared drive that has limited access for only certain individuals," says Acquisitions and Catalog Librarian and Assistant Professor Barbara Hilderbrand, Euliano Law Library, Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law, Barry University, Orlando, Florida. "We organize them by vendor at the top level then by date or product." Assistant Director of Business Services Ida Weingram, Jenkins Law Library, Philadelphia, also notes a desire to explore other options as library needs evolve: "Currently, we use a shared drive on our network for all of the library's contracts. [N]ext year we plan to explore content management systems for this and other material we need to retain."

In sum, the system's scale should correlate directly to your library's needs.

Creating an Inventory: A Checklist
Open a Word document or pull out a notebook and start listing agreements as an inventory. At this stage you are simply trying to ascertain the existence of any contractual relationships:

• Compile an inventory of all digital and paper agreements you can find.
• Check your email. Often, an agreement is signed by both parties, scanned, and emailed, and then it languishes in the inbox, never making it into the contract management system.
• Check hard drives to which you have access or that your predecessor may have accessed.
• Check CD-ROMs or USB drives left as parting "gifts" from a predecessor.
• Check any assortment of accordion files or drawers in your office.
• Scour any shared drives or intranet system your library may use.
• Inquire with colleagues about any possible systems that may currently be or have been set up for contract storage. Search those systems.
• Check past and current renewal invoices for any changes to "Terms," particularly with regard to automatic renewals.
• Check "Terms and Conditions" and "Terms of Use" posted on vendor websites for additional changes. (The Wall Street Journal has a Terms of Use agreement online that illustrates the issue: "1. Changes to Subscriber Agreement. We may change the terms of this Agreement at any time by notifying you of the change in writing or electronically (including without limitation, by email or by posting a notice on the Service that the terms have been "updated" or similar words). The changes also will appear in this document, which you can access at any time by going to the Subscriber Agreement and Terms of Use links at the footer of those Services which are made available through a website or to the Legal or Legal Notices area of those Services which are made available as an application. By using a Service after changes are made to this Agreement you signify that you agree to be bound by such changes." Unless your subscription excludes the applicability of the website Terms of Use to your library, you may be subject to any changes in the website Terms of Use.
• Add to your inventory any databases it appears you subscribe to.
• Using your new inventory of agreements, compare it against the databases to which your library subscribes.
• Build your list by consulting your law library website or an internal acquisitions list.
• Cross-reference the agreements you have against the databases to which you subscribe to determine whether you are missing any agreements. (Incidentally, you may also learn that you have acquired databases that you are not promoting to your users.)
• Ask questions about these databases, and start annotating your inventory with information that might be valuable in a contract management system. For example, how long have you subscribed to the databases? Which budget line or department covers the databases' cost? Who actually makes the payment, and how often are payments made?
• If your accounting department manages most payments, ask the department if there are any outgoing payments for library services, and cross-reference those against your growing inventory.
• Take note of all services your library receives (e.g., a UPS or FedEx package service) and pull any agreements associated with them that your department manages (i.e., negotiates, pays for)—if they exist. Add these to the inventory.
• Contact vendors to see if they have signed copies of agreements with your library.
• Visit vendor websites to see if they have licenses online that may apply to you (e.g., any "click-wrap" agreements or other non-negotiable terms).

Technical Services and Digital Resources Librarian Amy O’Connor, University of Richmond School of Law’s William Taylor Muse Law Library in Richmond, Virginia, undertook this process with positive results when she gathered all the law library licenses into the electronic resource management system CORAL.

“I thought it would be a good idea to gather all of the licenses and put them in one location,” O’Connor says. “I did this by noting all of the databases we have purchased, and then I started the process of finding those license agreements. Some were available from the vendor/publisher’s website; some were found in the [acquisitions manager’s] file cabinet with the invoices. Then I had to contact the vendors or publishers directly to see if they kept signed copies of the licenses. I was pretty successful in acquiring all of the database licenses we had contracts with.”

Best Practices for Implementing a Contract Management System
If you have a comprehensive, functional contract management process, congratulations! That being said, a quick audit of your process to fine tune it cannot hurt. Before you choose a system, note that renewal dates and vendor contact information are not your sole data points. There is a great deal more information that will make your contract management system valuable. To determine what else you might include, try the following:

• Review the contract or supplier file for the names of people previously involved in the process and any emails exchanged.

Tip 5
Consider incorporating any leases, employment agreements, or other non-software-related agreements into your management system.

Systems Librarian Lisa Genoese, Columbia University’s Arthur W. Diamond Law Library, New York, shares her experience: “We have recently begun using our electronic resources management module in our integrated library system (ILS) to track non-electronic/bibliographic resources for purposes of managing the library budget more completely through our ILS’s acquisitions/fund-tracking function. This includes, for example, equipment, office supplies, and MARC record services.”
Tip 6

Your library may be unknowingly paying for a service simply because your library has not audited all of its agreements. Director Angela Baldree at Franklin County Law Library in Columbus, Ohio, shares this anecdote: “When I first started my current job, I did an internal audit of all of our contracts. I thought I had everything accounted for. After several weeks of work, I noticed our friendly UPS carrier stopped by daily to ask if we had any packages for pick-up. A few questions later, I learned that some years back, when the library relied more heavily on print lending, we’d started paying UPS a monthly fee to simply stop by for pick-up. If I hadn’t asked the questions, we might still be paying for a now-unnecessary service.”

Two Types of Products to Consider for Your Contract Management Needs

1. Products designed for contract management or those with contract management modules (noted with an asterisk):
   - Innovative Interfaces*
   - LookUp Precision
   - OneLog
   - EOS*
   - Research Monitor*
   - ServiceNow Asset Management*
   - SydneyPlus*

   Many large firms that have migrated from a complex “foldering system” on their organization’s DMS to a module within the RM platforms say this is well worth the money and time required to populate the solution.

2. Products you can repurpose for contract management:
   - SharePoint
   - OneNote
   - LibGuides
   - Dropbox or Box
   - GoogleDocs (e.g., the Excel-like table feature)

   These simple and often low-cost solutions make sharing, collaboration, and organization painless.

Last, but not least, consider these final tips:

- Write a memo to the system file on negotiation results, considerations, and promises made.
- Always obtain and preserve a signed-by-both-parties copy of the agreement. Do not merely store a draft signed only by your library, only by the vendor, or — worse — not signed at all.
- Use a file-naming convention that makes sense at face value.
- If your contract management system does not have a calendaring function, make sure you have noted relevant dates and set appropriate reminders somewhere. For example, if you need to give 30 days’ notice before terminating an agreement, that notice date should be calendared somewhere.
- Finally, write a brief memo describing the organizational system. Update it periodically so that anyone taking over after you have left knows how the system operates, can quickly find all of the libraries’ agreements, and does not miss a beat if an agreement needs to be revisited.

Remember, you do not need a large-scale solution; you only need a solution that meets your institution’s needs. You can read about a number of solutions that law libraries are currently using in “License and Contract Management Systems Used by Today’s Law Librarians” on page 21. Note that even the largest operations still rely on print copies for back-up for this critical information, and many of the systems are hybrids incorporating a few different tools to manage agreements.

Perhaps after reading this article, you have a few more needs than you originally thought, but hopefully you now have a process in mind that will enable you to set up a system in phases using the following steps: (1) create an inventory, (2) compile all contracts and negotiation records in one place, (3) organize the contracts and records by vendor, database, or both, and (4) create data points to help you easily track dates and other significant deal points. Your library is, after all, spending money on these resources, and organizing your resource documentation may help you save money in the end.

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License and Contract Management Systems Used by Today’s Law Librarians

If you are inspired to build a contract management system or to refine your existing system, the following are examples of strategies currently being used by various law librarians. Most of these systems have evolved or are evolving to meet the needs of the library and its staff as they change over time.

I scan all my contracts and store them in a folder in My Documents labeled “Contracts”; then I have subfolders for each vendor. I have a folder in my email, too, called “Negotiations.” All contracts that I’m currently working on are placed there until the negotiation process is over. Then they’re just kept for one year per our records retention policy.

— Angela Baldree, Director, Franklin County Law Library, Columbus, Ohio

We at Columbia have a wiki with our license agreements for our electronic resources on it. Right now they’re organized alphabetically by resource or platform name depending on what the license covers. We also link directly to the PDFs on the wiki from the corresponding records in our electronic resource management system, which is part of our ILS and does not currently provide for file storage and management. . . . Of course, we are also part of a larger organization, and some documents are also stored in the university’s enterprise financial system. However, for contracts and license agreements, our local records are more complete.


My current practice uses a combination of Word documents, email folders, a network drive for electronic filing, and a cabinet for physical filing. One Word document is used to track IP authentication and license information for different vendors. I put the primary sales contact and technical support contact for different vendors in a separate Word document. For double security, I use an email folder to track the same information I documented in Word files.

For annual contract organization, our network drive . . . is used for electronic filing. We scan paper copies and convert them to PDFs for filing purposes. The main folder [has subfolders listed] by vendor and then by year within each parent vendor folder. Each individual contract is named following the standard naming convention, and the physical copy counterpart gets filed in a filing cabinet organized by vendor.

— Ning Han, Assistant Professor, Technical Services Librarian, Concordia University School of Law, Boise, Idaho

For many years, we organized hard copies of documents in a vendor file cabinet and also kept electronic copies in our document management system. This proved a bit cumbersome when we couldn’t easily locate vendors who merged or changed names, and we didn’t have an alerting system to check when terms were up for renewal.

As a stop gap measure, we decided to capture basic information in our library management system (EOS) so we could then run a report on “Upcoming Renewals” that would provide an overview of what to consider during the next few months. We built in extra time to analyze usage trends and statistics with the appropriate practice group chairs so we were being much more proactive throughout the budget year and not just at the beginning.

Currently, the Acquisitions team utilizes these reports in conjunction with a SharePoint team site that includes information on all aspects of the license agreement process. Team site fields include Date Signed, Renewal Type (annual, biannual, etc.), Renewal Year, Renewal Month, Document Numbers, and basic Terms of Use. This way we can quickly note if a vendor permits distribution of content to current clients or any other idiosyncrasies. We scan all correspondence and final copies of each executed agreement and include these links on the team site. We also keep hard copies in our original file cabinet as back up.

In the future, we are considering a firm-wide repository so that we can standardize this information across all administrative departments.

— Catherine M. Monte, Chief Knowledge Officer, Fox Rothschild LLP, Philadelphia

We use (the) EOS ERM but have just started populating it. I am also using an Outlook calendar and, of course, a spreadsheet. This should be a lot easier than it seems to be for me but I am really challenged to keep up with it all. I have therefore delegated much of it to our clerks, and at the time they pay a renewal invoice they are entering data in EOS.

— Mary S. Newman, Director of Library and Research Services, Blank Rome LLP, Philadelphia

We use OCLC’s ContentDM to organize our vendor database licenses. ContentDM is a digital collections tool used by the main university library to curate various digital collections, including photograph and document collections that are publically accessible. They and we at the law library also keep scanned digital copies of electronic resource licenses, amendments, order forms, and addenda in that collection to make them accessible to those in the libraries who handle electronic resources.

I organized the law library’s collection by name of product (e.g., WestlawNext, LexisAdvance, CCH IntelligoConnect), but I include metadata, in appropriate searchable fields, that lists alternate product names and publisher. Other fields we can fill in are dates signed and expiration date. I don’t always include an expiration date because we generally renew and we don’t use the database to track renewal periods. The database administrator sets up the fields that resource managers populate for each collection.

The tool is helpful but awkward to use because we have to use both a client module and a web module to complete input, upload, and indexing of items. Upload and indexing can be done in batches, but our volume is not high enough to warrant that. The system also has the ability to link to group records that are related, but I have not been able to get that feature to work for existing records. However, I can find related items using a search.

I also keep a print copy of vendor licenses in a large binder. Again, they are organized alphabetically by product.

— Donna Nixon, Clinical Assistant Professor of Law, Electronic Resources and Access Services Librarian, Katherine R. Everett Law Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Mental Illness in the Library
Ten tips to better serve patrons

By Nick Harrell and Cindy Guyer

“This librarians are tour-guides for all of knowledge.” – Patrick Ness, author

This quote illustrates the unmatched level of service provided by our profession. Law libraries and law librarians in particular provide unique legal resources and services to many groups of patrons—students, attorneys, judges, and the public. Some members of the public are easy to help, and others can be more difficult, such as those with a mental illness. So how can we be better “tour guides” for these individuals?
Last year we presented a poster at the 2014 AALL Annual Meeting in San Antonio with tips for improving services to and relationships with patrons with mental illness. In this article, we explore those tips further and provide some examples of how they can be implemented. It’s worth noting that these tips would improve service to all groups of patrons, with or without mental illness.

1. Provide Quality Customer Service
Patrons use law libraries for two basic reasons: (1) they want access to library resources (primary and secondary legal materials, study space, internet access, etc.), and (2) they want help accessing and utilizing those resources. The latter reason keeps reference librarians employed and demands that we provide quality customer service. That high level of customer service should extend to all patrons who come to us with research needs, regardless of their mental health status.

From time to time, we all can fall into the trap of discrediting the research needs of members of the public, particularly when their legal issues or complaints seem baseless or suggest that the patron might have mental health issues. It can be especially difficult to take those research needs seriously when we have other responsibilities requiring our attention. At the University of Colorado, we have had a regular patron use our resources to pursue a seemingly meritless case through both the Colorado and federal court systems. With the peculiar subject matter of his claim, its low likelihood of success, and this patron’s other abnormal behavior, it is sometimes challenging to dedicate time to helping him with his research needs. Most recently he has begun working on a petition for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court. Although it is not likely that his petition will be granted, we make a conscious effort to respect his research needs by helping him find the appropriate resources and treating him cordially as we would any other patron.

2. Be Clear and Direct
Sometimes patrons request a level of service beyond what is appropriate for a law librarian. While the line between what is research help and what is legal advice can be blurry, we should make it very clear when public patrons request help that is beyond what is appropriate. Common inappropriate questions include: “What do you think this statute means?”, “Is it illegal to do . . . ?”, “Can the government do . . . ?” These types of questions can come from any patron; however, patrons with mental illness sometimes are more persistent in their questioning and skeptical of responses that are not direct answers to their legal questions. In these scenarios, it is best to explain that librarians can provide help with research, explain what resources are available and how to use them, but also note that librarians cannot provide any opinions or advice to the merits of their claims.

Although we should strive to provide quality customer service, we do have to set limits on the resources we dedicate to any individual patron. Librarians should make clear that they have other responsibilities if a patron begins consuming too much of their time. If you need to cut your time short with a particular patron, you might suggest a research guide or text on the subject of the patron’s research issue and then check back if time allows.

3. Be Informed
One of the best ways to better serve patrons with mental illness and fight the stigma of mental illness is to learn more about mental illness. Mental health organizations, such as the National Alliance on Mental Health and Mental Health America, make information about mental illnesses and symptoms readily available on their websites. Knowledge about mental illness makes it more familiar and might make unusual behavior seem less disconcerting or threatening.

Familiarity with symptoms of mental illness may also empower a librarian to inform a dean of students, human resources, attorney assistance programs, or other appropriate groups if patrons begin displaying symptoms of mental illness. At the same time, librarians should not try to diagnose or label patrons with mental illness, as this is best left to trained mental health professionals. At the University of Colorado, we had a homeless patron come in regularly to use our services who was also in the process of applying to the University of Colorado Law School. Everyone on the library staff had pleasant interactions with her and enjoyed her presence. However, after several weeks, we began to receive elaborate, confusing emails from her seeking a student employee position at the law library. The library was not able to hire her for several reasons, not least of which was because she was not yet a student at the university. But due to concerns about her mental health and well-being, we were able to recommend her to local social services agencies who could help with employment, housing, and mental health services. Providing these recommendations via email avoided a potentially challenging or awkward conversation. Similar recommendations could be provided in person by creating flyers or other handouts with information on how to contact local social services agencies and mental health organizations.

4. Collaborate with Colleagues
Mental health and library literature can provide great information but may be of little help in the midst of a challenging situation with a patron with mental illness. Thankfully we can turn to our colleagues where those resources leave off. Whether they are more experienced, fresh out of school, or simply have a different life story, our colleagues often provide us with different vantage points. Colleagues can give us an objective perspective when we are going through a challenging situation. Instead of reacting with emotion, a colleague may be able to provide dispassionate advice or step in and help manage the situation. Most of us are able to tell when an interaction between a co-worker and a patron is not going well. In those situations we should offer assistance. Similarly, if we are having a difficult interaction, we should politely remove ourselves from the situation and seek help from a colleague. Saying something like “You know, I have to check with someone else about that” can provide a way to step away and find support. In those situations, an objective colleague can shed light on the situation and either direct a course of action or step in and resolve the situation.

Furthermore, colleagues can help us brainstorm creative solutions to challenging situations. New initiatives tend to be executed better by a group of folks working together toward a goal. Discussing challenging situations involving patrons with mental illness may draw attention to the need for creative solutions to potential problems and address possible safety concerns.
Colleagues can also help maintain our own mental health. After a difficult situation, it can be helpful to vent with a colleague about frustrations and challenges. Importantly, these discussions should not turn vitriolic, and it should focus on the frustrating behavior without demonizing any patron involved in the challenging situation. Such conversations should take place in staff areas away from patrons. Librarians shouldn’t hesitate to consult a professional therapist if repeated or particularly traumatizing or challenging situations have a lasting negative impact on their emotional or mental health.

5. Develop and Consistently Enforce Library Rules
Most patrons have a sense of what is appropriate in a library. However, when someone exhibits inappropriate behavior, it is helpful to have rules already in place to enforce. Rules should be posted to a library’s website, at the library entrance, and in any designated public patron areas, as well as distributed to patrons who are new to the library. Explicit rules put patrons with mental illness on notice of what behavior is appropriate in the library. According to mental health professionals, people with mental illness typically comply with explicit rules, and when told there are rules against certain behavior, they will change their behavior to conform to the rules.

At the same time, library rules should have enough flexibility to accommodate all patrons. At a minimum, library rules should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws that prohibit discrimination based on mental health status. When possible, library policymakers can consider how current and prospective rules may impact patrons with mental illness. Noise provides an example. Rules and other library rules need to be crafted to ensure the smooth operation of the library. But those same rules should not be so stringent that they alienate patrons with mental illness. A patron who talks to himself may be exhibiting a common symptom of mental illness that can run afoul of noise policies if that talking becomes distracting to other patrons. It is appropriate to inform or remind the patron that the library has a noise policy and that he or she may be creating too much noise. In addition to conveying the information about the noise policy, a librarian might offer a study room or recommend a place in the library that is more accommodating to noise. Well-crafted rules provide support to address inappropriate behavior and enough flexibility to develop creative solutions to reoccurring problems.

6. Be Creative
When patrons come to our libraries, one of our goals is to ensure that they are able to find and access our resources with ease. However, this goal can be challenging to meet when it comes to patrons with mental illness. To achieve that goal, we need to be creative in order to maximize their library experience and provide quality customer service. One way is to create web browser bookmarks or computer shortcuts for commonly used library resources, which will help patrons easily and quickly find the resources they need. Additionally, consider creating simple one-page guides and tips for using these resources and placing print copies near the public workstations. These bookmarks and shortcuts will not only benefit those patrons with mental illness who struggle with memory problems or are frustrated easily, but they will also require less time and effort of librarians who would normally have to aid those patrons.

We should also address the needs of patrons who are not web-literate or computer-savvy. In fact, individuals with mental illness often fall in the economic and social categories that are at the less-privileged end of the digital divide. Even though many libraries are reducing print acquisitions and decreasing their print collections, it’s important to offer print resources for patrons with mental illness. Consider starting a pro se library with commonly used self-help resources, such as Nolo publications, form books, and practice guides. At the USC Law Library, we have such a library that we keep current and close to the reference office, along with a quick guide organizing the titles by area of law.

Of course, there will be situations where your library does not have the specialty resources or expertise to assist a patron’s particular legal issue. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t still provide assistance. In such situations, you can refer the patron to local legal aid and pro bono and low-cost organizations. Create a list of these referrals with their contact information, including their hours of operation and website URLs. Have copies of this list available to give to patrons still in need. By doing this, you will comfort a possibly frustrated patron and make his or her trip to your library worthwhile by still serving as a valuable informational resource.

7. Frame Modifications as Disability Accommodations
As mentioned previously, we have policies and procedures intended to keep our library running smoothly and to provide services to all patrons fairly and equally. However, for patrons with mental illness, these policies and procedures may require modifications. But instead of seeing this as providing exceptions with a negative connotation, frame the modifications more positively as accommodations for a disability. Examples of modifications include offering a longer hold or reserve loan period, accompanying patrons to retrieve sources, or offering the use of a separate research space such as a group study room for a single user. Some patrons need more individualized services that could include one-on-one training for using certain databases or a library tour if a patron is unfamiliar with your library.

At the USC Law Library, we had a situation recently where a patron with mental illness was coming to our library almost daily for a month for his research on filing an appeal. He was using the same sources, but he had difficulty remembering the names and locations of the sources. One of our staff members decided it would be more accommodating to keep those sources on a library cart so he could retrieve the sources more easily and quickly. She also wrote down the names of the publications for him in case they got re-shelved or he went to another library. This is just one example of modifying library policies as a disability accommodation. Requiring little time and effort, this simple accommodation allowed our library to better serve a patron with a mental illness.

8. Give Power to the Patron
Patrons with mental illness can exhibit behaviors that are loud, awkward, or aggressive. These behaviors are disturbing to other patrons and library staff and therefore must be addressed. To do so, focus on the inappropriate behavior but not the patron. Instead of telling the patron “You are disturbing other patrons,” kindly say “The yelling and slamming the books down on the desk are inappropriate for our library.” Then give the patron the choice to modify the behavior or be asked to leave the library. For example, “To continue using our library and books, could you please refrain from such behaviors? Otherwise, we’ll have to ask you to leave. It’s up to you, sir.” In this way, you give the patron the power to eliminate the disturbing behaviors or be subject to restricted access.

Many times, patrons with mental illness may simply need to understand appropriate behaviors in public spaces. Consider drafting a code of conduct for your library consistent with these tips to share with patrons who display disturbing behaviors. This is another way to focus on the behavior and not the person. See these situations as teaching
opportunities for patrons to learn what is expected and permissible at your library.

9. Underreact to Unexpected Situations
Disturbing behaviors can sometimes escalate into scary and unexpected situations. Patrons with certain types of mental illness can be very emotional, become frustrated easily, or lose their tempers quickly. When this happens, such patrons can exhibit frightening or threatening behaviors. The most essential tip we can offer is to not match these behaviors. Rather, know that you have the power to de-escalate the situation by underreacting. This can be done by listening to the patron patiently and responding slowly and calmly with an even, low voice. Keep an arms-length distance so the patron doesn’t feel intimidated. Don’t try to joke with the patron in hopes of reducing tensions because this may only confuse or further upset the patron. Maintain a professional, detached manner, and try to prevent emotion from influencing your reactions.

Of course, your safety is paramount. Providing good customer service does not give anyone permission to abuse you or your library services. Follow your library’s policies and procedures for addressing challenging situations. Call on a colleague for assistance or security personnel if warranted. After these unexpected situations have passed, remember to appropriately cope with work-related stress, because your mental health is important too.

10. Respect the Privacy of the Patron
Patrons with mental illness often come to law libraries seeking assistance for their own legal issues. Some of them may feel very uncomfortable or paranoid about sharing personal information but feel they must in order to obtain librarian assistance and be directed to the appropriate resources. In cases where you sense that the patron is uncomfortable, provide adequate privacy to allow the patron to discuss personal information and direct the patron to private, quiet spaces for conducting his or her research. Acknowledge that what is being shared is personal and will be kept in confidence. And follow through in maintaining the confidentiality of the patron’s legal issues by only discussing such issues with your colleagues as necessary. Respecting the privacy of patrons is common sense and applies to all we serve, but it may be even more crucial for patrons with mental illness. Honor their privacy and you honor them.

All libraries are unique in their services, collections, and the populations they serve. It’s possible that not all of these tips can be implemented at your library or would have to be adapted for your unique circumstances. In June 2014, the AALL Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section formed a Standing Committee on Disability Issues to address both mental and physical disabilities issues in law libraries. Specifically, that committee discussed some options for improving services to patrons with mental illness and promoting mental health among law librarians. Please contact us if you would like to become involved in the standing committee.

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Additional Resources
For more information on how your library can better serve patrons with mental illness, consult the following resources:

What Do We Owe the Pro Se Litigant?
Providing a better level of service to our pro se patrons

By Nathan A. Preuss

If you have ever spent a shift or two at the reference desk of a law library that is open to the public, you will have some pro se litigant stories. Sometimes it seems like listening to the story is half the battle. Law librarians walk a fine line with this particular patron group that our colleagues in other types of libraries do not. If you have ever felt frustrated, drained, or even inspired by doing this important work, you are not alone, friend. This article is meant to amuse, encourage, and, despite myself, inform. Our patrons are not the only folks who want their say. Well, I say it’s our time! Librarians need to be heard, too! Without further ado, I proudly present a transcript of the old time radio show, The Nearly True Adventures of “The Librarian.”

The “Over-Dramatization” Part

NARRATOR: Can I share a story with you? It’s mostly true, but a few names have been changed to protect the innocent . . . and the guilty. There was once a young and eager law librarian named Nathan . . . er, Jackson. Yeah, Jackson. In the first few months of Jackson’s career as a reference librarian at a public academic law library, he couldn’t help enough. Faculty, students, and pro se litigants, ALL WERE EQUAL! ALL WERE ENTITLED TO READY ACCESS TO INFORMATION!

One day, Jackson, our young protagonist, is working a shift at the ‘ref’ desk. For some reason, everything looks black and white. There is some cool jazz softly playing in the background, and rain clouds are making the day as dark as night. There is a street lamp lit at the end of every stack. Library-noir, dig it? Jackson is lighting up another Lucky Strike. Then he puts away his custom lighter in the band of his fedora, just like his old man used to. A strange woman walks in to the library.

CUE THE SAXAPHONE SOLO.

PRO SE PATRON: “I hear this is the place to come for answers.” The distrust was dripping off her cheeks like raindrops.

JACKSON: “That depends on the questions, ma’am. I’m a law librarian. How can I help you?”

PATRON: “I’ve been through half of the attorneys in the phone book, and they can’t help me.”

JACKSON: “Go on.”

PATRON: “I’m looking for the book that has all the laws on divorce. I don’t need any legal advice. I just need you to tell me what papers I need to file, exactly how long it will take to get this bastard out of my life, and how much of his money I’ll get.”

NARRATOR: Jackson’s heart sinks like a sack of rocks in the Tennessee River. It is going to be a long shift. . . .

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSER, ACME BRAND CATALOG CARDS!

END SCENE.

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The “Confessional” Part

Spoiler alert: Jackson is based on yours truly. Granted, I do not smoke. And my library has not had streetlights at the ends of the stacks for months now. Eventually, my responsibilities at work increased. No longer did I wait expectantly at the reference desk to help anyone who walked within earshot, whether they needed it or not. Still helpful, yet, assistance had to be rationed out based on the category of the patron (faculty, student, attorney, general public), class prep, grading, committee work, and the occasional golden moment when scholarship could be done during business hours and not during evenings and weekends. Even the public service policies provide a governor to prevent my engine from revving too high in assisting those who represent themselves.

Yes, that’s right . . . “I’m a librarian, not a lawyer. I can help you find and use resources that will help YOU find the answer to your problem.” The words provide some comfort to me but not necessarily to the patron. Perhaps comfort breeds complacency.

Library school friends who were reference librarians at other types of libraries would make sour faces when I described a class of people in dire need of assistance who could only be helped so much, even during those hallowed days when time was abundant. On the other hand, grad school chums, landing at certain private academic law libraries, didn’t mingle with pro se litigants at all. They weren’t even allowed in the building. I became defensive with the reference purists and envious of the restricted law libraries.

What, if anything, does our profession owe to the pro se litigant? Does it matter that the ideals that brought many of us into this helping profession are necessarily challenged by the realities of many conflicting priorities? Perhaps it does not. If our ideals are not challenged by actual events, our ideals should probably be elevated. What if, however, we abandon our ideals for convenience? Has there ever been a crackdown on law librarians providing too much help to pro se litigants? I have been unable to find any evidence of such a purge. Perhaps these rogue librarians are rotting away in a CIA black site; “disappeared” to perpetuate the regime. Tonight on 60 Minutes . . . tick-tick, tick-tick . . . the dark side of law librarianship.
I'm good at my job, I do not hold myself While I hope, and usually believe, that and perhaps my profession's, using Perhaps it's a critique of my weak points, existence. I may have just discovered approach is best. Neither the over-eager nor the reluctant have the greatest need for assistance. balance between “practicing law without academic or otherwise, who can help me duties guilt-free. But I want to learn how to better serve the outliers. I am confident that there are model librarians at public law libraries, academic or otherwise, who can help me and the profession in striking the right wheel, one must be aware of the wheel's... that was disappointing. Attorney General] opinion from 1956 to... But still, we'll assist as much as possible. Frequently, we'll also show the patron websites that he can use from home or somewhere with wi-fi after the library is closed. I once recommended that a patron who had a computer but no internet go to a 24-hour diner with wi-fi to continue his research. “State and judicial law library websites are very helpful, and we rely on them heavily. In Connecticut we can point them to the State Law Library, Connecticut Judicial Court websites, and CTLawhelp.org. The “Let’s Do Something About It” Part My library serves the faculty, students, and staff of the University of Tennessee College of Law, the local bench and bar, the greater University of Tennessee community, and the general public, more or less in that order of preference. Therefore, it is not feasible for my institution to raise the pro se patron to the highest priority when we are continually seeking to provide greater services with dwindling resources. That being said, time can be found to better serve any and all of our patron groups. Efficiency strikes me as the name of the game. So how can we be more efficient in serving the pro se patron? First, all faculty and staff in any library should have clear guidelines and training on policies pertaining to all patron groups. With regard to public patrons, pro se litigants specifically, some conversations about the nuanced approach to whether and how to provide assistance must be an ongoing conversation. An honest dialogue about the difficulties of helping this group should be more than a water-cooler decompression session. It should help inform members of the public services team on areas of strength and weakness so that consistent, excellent service is provided to all patrons. Second, we must be prepared to provide tailored information to this group. Existing reference guides, typically written for law students or attorneys, are likely to be insufficient in helping the general public better understand the complicated endeavor of researching the law. Perhaps by selecting the handful of topics that the general public most commonly brings to your library, you could create a relatively short list of research guides written specifically for that audience. This is a diverse audience, so, while the physics professor could understand a research guide written for a high school dropout, the reverse may not be true. I would also like to see these particular research guides made available in print. These guides can be handed out at the reference and circulation desks, so the public patron can take it along throughout the library. Again, this is a diverse population, but it includes the patrons who are least likely to be computer savvy. The bench and bar of your jurisdiction may make similar guides, such as forms, available for free online. In the past few years, the Tennessee state courts have made available forms that (continued on page 32)
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Contact us at library.marketing@oup.com if you are interested in pricing discounts, a 30 day FREE trial, or receiving more information about these products.
I became the director of the St. Louis County Law Library in November 2013. The law library, located in Clayton, Missouri, serves pro se, attorney, and judicial patrons and is housed on the 5th floor of the county courthouse. In this position, I recently found myself in the eye of a storm, from which I learned important lessons taught neither in library nor law school. I learned that disaster can strike at any moment, and it’s important to let go of my controlling nature in order to remain flexible so as to adapt to the needs of the institution. I learned the true continuing value of print resources when online resources are suddenly unavailable. I learned that the needs of each patron have to be evaluated on an individual basis, and though I can’t always give patrons what they want, I can help provide them with what they need. At the end of the day, the most important lesson I learned was to let go of my controlling nature. I have to stop thinking of the space as “my library” and instead focus on making the place “our library,” where the needs of each group of patrons can be fulfilled. Even if that need is just a quiet place away from protests.

The Story
On Saturday, August 9, 2014, an event took place in a small municipality named Ferguson that would draw global attention. This episode was, of course, the shooting of Michael Brown, a black unarmed teenager, by Darren Wilson, a white Ferguson police officer.

After the shooting, emotions immediately began to run very high. Many voices began to shout “racial inequality,” and riots and looting happened overnight and into the next week. Many people gathered to protest, in an effort to convince the St. Louis County prosecutor to bring charges against Wilson. The prosecutor’s office is located in the Justice Center, next door to the St. Louis County Courthouse.

Our” Library

Serving the needs of patrons during the Ferguson, Missouri, protests

By Lacy Rakestraw

Protestors also gathered outside the St. Louis County Police Department headquarters, across the street from the courthouse. Essentially, the courthouse was at any given time surrounded by protestors who, while remaining peaceful, were still very emotionally raw.

Decisions had to be made regarding building security, and, as a part of courthouse management, I found myself on the receiving end of orders that the buildings in the Government Complex (the courthouse, justice center, administrative building, and police headquarters) were going into lockdown. While our buildings already have strict security procedures maintained by county officers, security was even further elevated so that the doors to all the buildings were locked and handcuffed. All the buildings, that is, except for the front door to the courthouse. This meant that while my library was still open to the public, the public went through stricter security, officers were patrolling more frequently, and everyone was on high alert.
The lockdown created a very stressful environment for courthouse employees, attorneys, and members of the public. Courthouse personnel handled the increased stress very professionally. The presiding judge of the courthouse recognized the need to protect courthouse employees, some of whom parked two blocks away from the courthouse, and on a few occasions employees were sent home early so as to avoid protests. This was an effort to allow protestors ample room to exercise their constitutional right to free speech while at the same time eliminating possible altercations with county employees.

During the time period stretching from August through the November 2014 grand jury decision, library patrons, including attorneys and members of the public, were full of questions. They noticed the increase in security, including the larger-than-usual police presence, the barricades surrounding the government buildings, and the occasional lockdowns that prevented them from entering and exiting the buildings other than the courthouse. It became very important for me to convey to my staff that they should answer questions in a way that did not cause alarm but explained that the Government Complex was acting in an effort to protect employees and members of the public. Courthouse employees attempted to make the environment feel as “business as usual” as possible, always with an eye to the news and our email inboxes waiting for further instruction from courthouse management.

Many protestors respected the call for peaceful demonstrations issued by the family of Michael Brown. However, others turned to violence. Buildings and vehicles in the immediate Ferguson area were burned, windows were smashed, and stores were looted. Members of the hacking group Anonymous began attacking government websites and servers, including those maintained by St. Louis County. As a result, internet access was cut off in the government buildings for a few days, including the law library.

Anyone who works in a modern law library understands the importance of internet access to our collections. The St. Louis County Law Library provides access to a number of heavily used online databases. This use came to a screeching halt once the internet plug was pulled. My immediate thought was that I would have to close the library. Without the online databases, there was no way to do legal research, right? These thoughts scrambled through my brain as I stood at the front of the library with key in hand, ready to lock the doors. I paused, looked to my left, then to my right. Wait! We still have books! I didn’t have to close the entire library after all.

I did, however, lock the door to the computer lab, and I placed a sign on the door that read “Internet Outage: Computer Lab Closed Until Further Notice.” From my vantage point, I could see patrons walk in the front door and head to the computer lab to read the sign. It was a very interesting phenomenon to observe. Those attorneys who were taught in law school how to do research via print materials read the sign, looked at me, and made comments like, “well, good thing I remember how to use the books,” or “guess I’ll be doing research the old-fashioned way.” However, the younger attorneys, who clearly learned to rely on online databases in law school, read the sign and immediately turned around and walked back out the front door.

There were a few patrons who hesitated after reading the sign. They turned to look at the books, and then turned to look at me with a look of pleading. I asked these patrons if they would like me to show them how to find information via print, which they immediately pounced upon with gratitude. I explained to these patrons that there wasn’t any shame in forgetting how to use a print digest, which they likely hadn’t used since their law school days. I am fortunate that I had legal research professors when I was in law school at Southern Illinois University (SIU) who taught students the value of both online databases and print materials. I remember the director of the law library at SIU, Professor Doug Lind, telling his students that print was important to learn because some day we might be in need of legal resources and the only materials available might be print books. I learned first-hand through this experience that Professor Lind was right.

The St. Louis County prosecutor announced the decision of the grand jury the evening of Monday, November 24. More than 100 days after the shooting, the grand jury elected not to indict Officer Wilson. The St. Louis County Government Complex was closed for the remainder of the week, once again in an attempt to give protestors the space they needed to demonstrate while also protecting the safety of county employees.

The Library as Place
Up until this point and for a while after, the law library served many purposes. It became a meeting place for employees to meet with grief counselors. It became a place where members of the public who might not otherwise visit the library could come to learn about grand jury proceedings and read the law pertaining to police shootings. It served its function as an area where courthouse staff could research case law and statutes relevant to the grand jury proceedings. And, perhaps most importantly, it acted as a place where both patrons and employees could come to discuss their views, vent their frustrations, or otherwise sit quietly and escape the chaos going on around them. The library evolved into a place to serve the needs of its patrons, whatever those needs happened to be at any given moment.

Looking down from the sky bridge connecting the Courts Building to the Justice Center: a view of the parking lot filled with news vans

Lacy Rakestraw
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The Open Carry Library
Navigating gun policies in the age of open carry laws and mass shootings

By Mary Beth Chappell Lyles

Most people do not associate libraries with weapons, guns, or violent conflict. People perceive libraries, whether right or wrong, as safe, inherently peaceful, and often quiet places. In the case of public libraries, the added expectation exists that the space is a resource available for everyone’s benefit. It is a unique conception of space, perhaps only rivaled by that of houses of worship. Despite this perception, the specter of the library as a theater for mass violence was raised by the 2013 Santa Monica shooting. On June 7, 2013, John Zawahiri opened fire on people, cars, buildings, and a bus in the Santa Monica area, killing and wounding several bystanders. He then proceeded to the Santa Monica College Library and began to shoot before, in turn, being shot by police. The New York Times reported that patrons fled from the library’s back door when Zawahiri entered the building and started to fire. It is surely no exaggeration to say that the 2013 Santa Monica shooting constitutes the absolute worst nightmare of any library professional. Library security is often a complex issue, inherently enmeshed with the internal politics of the entity or organization with which a library is associated. Generally, the American Library Association offers guidance related to best practices on its website, including an ethical duty to offer security to those using and working in the library. Additionally, the Library Leadership and Management Association Building and Equipment Section’s Safety & Security of Library Buildings Committee prepared a Library Security Guidelines Document, dated June 27, 2010, which states that a “Library Director, or designer in safety and security matters, should be responsible for: ensuring the physical protection of both library staff and library patrons. He/she also is responsible for protecting the building, its contents, and its immediate surroundings.”

In light of incidents like the Santa Monica shooting, it is not a stretch to assume that a visibly armed patron is, at a minimum, likely to cause anxiety and bring about intimidation among non-armed patrons and library professionals alike. A “no guns” policy, which, granted, might not effectively stop an armed assailant in the vein of the Santa Monica shooter (absent a metal detector or X-ray machine) but would prevent adverse reactions to casually carried firearms, might seem like a common sense measure for a library to enact in the cause of patron comfort. However, open carry laws in several states, some of them recently enacted, and the deliberately increased visibility and activity of proponents of the open carry movement challenge the ability of libraries to control the presence of guns within their walls.

The Movement
So what exactly is the Open Carry Movement? According to the website OpenCarry.org, the self-described “social networking portal for the open carry movement,” which proclaims the motto “a right unexercised is a right lost,” this movement works to protect the “right to openly carry properly holstered handguns in daily American life.” OpenCarry.org references anthropologist Charles Springwood, quoting “open carriers are trying to ‘naturalize the presence of guns, which means that guns become ordinary, omnipresent, and expected. Over time, the gun becomes a symbol of ordinary personhood.’” Another group, Georgia Carry, states through its website that the “Citizens of Georgia and the United States have the right to own and carry the firearm of their choice for any reason other than to commit a crime.”

Legislation, such as a recently enacted Idaho law that allows students to carry guns onto the state’s college campuses despite opposition from college administrators, students, and professors, can be seen as part of the larger push for gun normalization. There is a push for campus carry, often of concealed weapons, in several states. According to the National Conference of States Legislatures, campus carry legislation was introduced in approximately 19 state legislatures during 2013.

Proponents of open carry and expanded gun rights not only work to enact pro-gun and pro-open carry legislation but also to exercise existing open carry rights in everyday life. One tactic of the movement is to encourage proponents to exercise existing open carry rights by bringing legally openly carried guns into spaces where they are generally not expected. The idea is to get the public used to seeing citizens who are not involved in law enforcement wearing weapons while performing normal, nonviolent activities. During a 2010 campaign in California, gun owners brought their weapons into Starbucks and other businesses, sometimes in large numbers, in order to test open carry laws. Starbucks did not enact a “no guns” policy in response to this particular campaign, but rival Peet’s Coffee and Tea did enact such a measure. Starbucks later asked patrons not to bring guns into its stores. It is important to note that the leeway given to individual businesses and organizations to regulate whether or not weapons can even be banned is controlled by state legislation, varies greatly, and is often dependent on the specific type of entity in question.

How Libraries are Affected
National business chains are not the only organizations targeted by the open carry movement. Libraries also find themselves the target of this particular brand of civic activism. In 2012, the Richmond, Virginia, public library was targeted in a read-in protest, where gun owners entered the space while openly carrying firearms, in response to a newly posted rule change on the library’s website. Local news affiliate NBC 12 reported that open carry proponents felt that the rule was “confusing and discourages people from exercising their 2nd
Amendment rights to carry a firearm, even in a quiet place like the library,” and drew parallels between the restrictions placed on gun owners to that of a hypothetical law prohibiting library access to African Americans, invoking the historical specter of Jim Crow in the southern state. 

On June 8, 2014, in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Mike Warren, a 31-year old father and small business owner, brought an FNS 9-millimeter handgun to the Kalamazoo Public Library's Summer Reading Party, an event planned for children. He carried the weapon openly though he did possess a concealed weapons permit. Library officials invited him to leave the event even though local media later contended that Michigan law did not grant them the right to ban the gun. In 2012, Michigan’s Court of Appeals held that the Capital Area District Library’s ban on open carry weapons violated state gun regulations, which prohibit both district and public libraries from regulating gun practices. The Michigan Supreme Court refused to hear the case, leaving the ruling intact. Warren's motivations for his actions, as reported on MLive.com, reveal the open carry mindset and the paradox of patrons who, while acting to ensure their own security, make others feel unsafe. He is quoted as saying, “I was there to protect my family. God forbid there was a person who decided to shoot up the place, but I'd be the only one there who could do something about it.”

Open carry laws introduce additional uncertainty into the everyday life of the library. Georgia serves as a prime example. The Safe Carry Protection Act went into effect on July 1, 2014. The question of what exactly the implications are for libraries under this legislation has been a subject of contention. Referred to as the “guns everywhere bill” in the media, it is widely reported to allow firearms in municipal buildings, schools, public libraries, churches, unsecured airports, and bars. Some of these newly granted rights are not as sweeping as might be first assumed. Georgia requires a permit or license to open carry, which makes its gun policies more restrictive than states such as North Carolina and Kentucky. Interestingly, Texas and South Carolina outright forbid open carry. As for guns in churches, pastors or church councils have the option of allowing guns in their churches but can also ban them. Bar owners have the option of posting a sign stating their businesses’ no guns policy. School districts have the possibility to allow some employees to carry firearms, but the controversial “campus carry” provision did not make it into the final bill. That said, conflicting language in the bill has created confusion on whether weapons may, in fact, be carried on public college campuses. The state attorney general has stated that there is a general prohibition against carrying guns in a school safety zone, which includes technical schools, vocational schools, colleges, and universities, with an exception for people picking up students at the school who have guns secured in their vehicles. Guns are allowed in government buildings, except when that building has security personnel in place. This has caused librarians to ask questions. As reported by NPR, Atlanta area public librarians understand that they fall into the unsecured government building provision and they will not be allowed to check to see if a patron has a gun permit. Hypothetical scenarios create uncertainty around the issue. For example, if a patron places a gun on a desk in a library populated by active children, can the librarian ask the patron to secure the weapon without violating the patron’s rights? For Atlanta librarians, this question did not have a clear answer. Similar questions are likely to occupy librarians and library administrators for the foreseeable future, and it is likely that answers may ultimately come from the courts.

Mary Beth Chappell Lyles (chappell.marybeth@gmail.com), Assistant Law Librarian for Reference, Hugh F. MacMillan Law Library, Emory School of Law, Atlanta

pro se litigant continued from page 27

will be accepted by courts statewide. The State of Tennessee’s “Pro Se Litigant Filing Guide for the Appellate Courts of Tennessee” is available at www.tsc.state.tn.us/sites/default/files/docs/prosefilguide3-31-10.pdf. The page for “Court-Approved Divorce Forms” in Tennessee is available at www.tsc.state.tn.us/help-center/court-approved-divorce-forms, and additional forms are provided at www.tsc.state.tn.us/forms-publications. If your state puts free, court-approved forms on a virtual silver platter, you simply can’t ignore it. Further, you should shout it from the rooftops! Figuratively shout, that is— we are talking about libraries, after all! Third, take advantage of AALL and regional chapter resources. If you want to know whether the wheel has been invented by one of your colleagues, the AALL and regional chapter websites are a great place to start. A few good examples include www.aallnet.org/sections/sccll/toolkit/Best-Practices, www.aallnet.org/sections/sccll/toolkit/Self-Representation-Resources, and www.aallnet.org/sections/lisp/2014illinois.pdf, an excellent guide to assisting pro se litigants, with some focus on Illinois. This third type of document is a useful reminder to library faculty/staff and literate pro se litigants. I would feel comfortable referring some public patrons to a guide like this along with some advice specific to their situation. Any law library would benefit from creating a jurisdiction-specific guide like this one.

Fourth, AALL and regional chapters must provide sessions at Annual Meetings where this dialogue can continue. Insular approaches to finding solutions stifle creative solutions. The odds are that if you are struggling in any aspect of your professional life, so are many of your colleagues. I am an academic law librarian, but I am 100 percent confident that I could stand to learn much from my colleagues in public law libraries when it comes to assisting pro se litigants, among other topics.

The Part Where I Wrap It Up

As with seemingly all things in this profession, we are never the “only one” struggling with any issue, and our colleagues are often the best resource for support and assistance. Tailoring resources to this group is challenging. While almost all pro se litigants lack formal legal training, their education and literacy levels vary widely. However, plain English explanations, handouts, and other resources will likely be welcomed. Seek resources from other institutions, like AALL, regional chapters, and your state (or federal) websites that cater to the general public. Once we put a little extra prep time into completing these materials, it will make it easier to improve the level of service to this patron group without depleting the time we need to fulfill our other responsibilities.

Nathan A. Preuss (npreuss@utk.edu), Associate Professor and Reference and Student Services Librarian, Joel A. Katz Library, University of Tennessee College of Law. In addition to reference services, Nathan teaches legal research in the first-year curriculum as well as advanced legal research, and he coordinates services to student organizations.
Online Education and the Law Library

How can we best serve our online patrons?

Ellen Q. Jaquette

Law libraries are supporting an increasing amount of online learners. The most recent American Bar Association (ABA) Survey on law school curricula, collecting data from 2002-2010, listed 14 online degree programs offered by nine ABA-approved institutions. A more recent count of online programs at ABA institutions this year found more than 40 programs—a steep increase in just four years. In addition, these numbers do not highlight the number of law schools offering online courses using synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (on your own time) methods, already at 23 percent and 25 percent of law schools in 2010, respectively. The proliferation of new online programs and ongoing experimentation with offering online courses to on-campus students presents new opportunities and challenges for law school libraries looking to support the curricular demands of their parent institutions.

As law schools continue to experiment with new digital models for legal education, questions arise about how law libraries can support these new online programs. The new ABA Standards for Approval of Law Schools, Section 306(c), notes that law schools offering online instruction to JD students “shall have the technological capacity, staff, information resources, and facilities necessary to assure the educational quality of distance education.” These standards speak to JD student education, but the goal to support online learners with staff, technology, and relevant information is applicable to all law school libraries supporting online learners, regardless of their degree program. In the spring of 2014, with the growth of such programs in mind, I surveyed libraries at institutions currently offering online programs or courses in order to discover possibilities for library services for institutions preparing to wade into these new waters.

My survey, which included mostly open-ended questions in various library service areas, was sent directly to library directors at law schools that were currently offering an online degree. Additionally, the survey was distributed via the law library director's listserve to include libraries at institutions that may still have been developing programs or that already were offering online classes—information not readily available even to the most thorough website lurker. Overall, 39 people responded to the survey to share their thoughts on library services to online learners. Here’s what I discovered.

Teaching Legal Research Online

Of all the services listed in the survey, respondents had the most to say about online legal research instruction. And for good reason: this service was likely one that they already provided. Thirty-eight percent of respondents offered for-credit courses on legal research, while 76 percent provided other opportunities for research training. Overall, more respondents listed research training than lending books as a service provided to distance learners, a seemingly more traditional function of the library.

Resources that librarians mentioned using for credit legal research courses included instructional videos, discussion boards, and prerecorded faculty lectures to instruct students online. Less common but still mentioned tools included synchronous classes, CALI lessons, and various video conferencing software. Given the high number of libraries offering these services, this area is ripe for further investigation. Librarians interested in teaching legal research to online students should seek out AALL’s Research Instruction and Patron Services Special Interest Section’s Committee on Distance Education to connect with other law librarians exploring similar issues.

Outside of for-credit learning opportunities, librarians also reported providing scripts to videos, and relying more generally on electronic tools, such as online textbooks or readings.

Reference for Online Students

The physical reference desk is a vital part of a law library, so recreating a digital centralized help point for online students is an important consideration for librarians. Surveyed libraries reported offering reference support through email, phone, chat, and even other services, such as text message or embedding themselves into the online class, with Blackboard listed as the most frequently used learning management software at respondents’ institutions. While no libraries adjusted existing reference hours to accommodate the different time zones...
of online learners, some respondents mentioned extended hours to answer reference email requests.

**Library Lending and Access**

Online students may not reside close to your library, so accessing library resources may be difficult. Some respondents noted that they were beefing up digital resources in content areas aligned with their online programs. However, while most online courses focus on digital materials for classroom or research use, thesis requirements or other in-depth research needs might require students to turn to print legal materials.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents stated that they were lending non-electronic materials to distance learners. Some libraries supported lending to distance students through their ILL programs, while others reported having a separate system for shipping physical materials to online students. A few respondents noted arrangements with local libraries to support sharing materials while others mentioned they had such systems in place but rarely, if ever, used them.

**Communication**

Without successfully communicating with distance learners, a library’s efforts in online instruction, reference, and lending are moot. Unfortunately, research outside the legal sphere notes that communicating with online learners can be difficult. Among the responses to my survey, methods for reaching out to distance learners included an on-campus orientation, email, a library presence in the online class’s course portal, and in-class library instruction. Other methods mentioned included a toll-free number and online chat to reach reference librarians, interactive sessions via the online course management system, and website information.

Many respondents noted they wanted to improve their communication with distance learners, which is not surprising given the aforementioned difficulty communicating with online learners. Additionally, the need for effective communication and outreach techniques will likely increase, since the majority of respondents reported working with online learners who were also on-campus students and thus arguably more exposed to library information via their physical proximity and use of the building.

Since libraries are often the point of contact for electronic course reserves or other digital access questions, I asked whether respondents noted an increase in technology assistance questions from digital learners and whether this placed a burden on the library. Slightly more than half noted an increase in technology issues but did not report a huge burden on librarians’ time. Some noted that such requests were handled by the IT contacts responsible for the learning management system and that a pre-class checklist for students listing their responsibilities for technology alleviated some of the burden.

**Next Steps**

From the results I gathered, librarians looking to support new or existing online students can see there are no clear-cut answers or models to follow for developing library services. Generally, libraries at the responding institutions found ways to support this new patron group by using existing tools and library services previously targeted at on-campus students. If distance online learners increase—or as student demands, tools, and staffing levels change—the next survey on library services to online students may introduce even more creative solutions to supporting this exciting group of library patrons.

**Resources for Online Education in Law Schools**


Library Services for Distance Learning: A Bibliography. An online bibliography organized by library services. Available at dlisfitbib.wordpress.com.

For more information on this survey, visit z.umn.edu/lawlibrarysurvey.

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**How Does Your Library Communicate with Online Students?**

**Staffing**

Supporting a new, unique group of library patrons without additional staffing can be difficult. Most respondents spread out support for online students among different staff members and did not designate a particular librarian as the point person for an online program. Among the libraries that did specify a librarian in the charge, the title of the librarian varied greatly.

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**Libraries with a Designated Librarian for Online Students**

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Ellen G. Jaquette (equaley@umn.edu), Emerging Technologies Librarian, University of Minnesota Law Library, Minneapolis
What is your elevator pitch for attending the 2015 AALL Annual Meeting?

I graduated with my MLIS in March of 2014. Though whole-heartedly in love with librarianship, I wasn’t sure what the ideal environment was for my professional pursuits. I had no idea I would be working at a law firm a few months later! I hope to attend the upcoming AALL Annual Meeting because it will give me an opportunity to learn a great deal and gain new inspiration. I’d like to meet a variety of law librarians and set goals for my own future. Plus the meeting is in my home town, so I’m a great resource for visitors looking for a good time!

—Jess Burkhardt, Library Services Coordinator, Fox Rothschild LLP, Philadelphia

"Hey, did you attend last year’s elevator pitch program by Wendy and Fran?"

—Francis X. Norton, Jr., Head of Public Services, Law Library of Louisiana, Supreme Court of Louisiana, New Orleans

At AALL, I’ll hear about the issues that will be important next year. I’ll hear about ideas for programs that will be held next year, discussions about what a committee should do to benefit the membership next year, and what a friend of mine has heard about another person’s entirely new use of technology. Of course, if you want the library to bring the same old solutions to the problems of the past, it’s not worth it.

—James W. Hart, Associate Senior Reference Librarian, University of Cincinnati College of Law Library, Cincinnati, Ohio

I build and maintain relationships with other librarians and information vendors during the AALL Annual Meeting. I bring back new solutions to challenges we face so that we better serve our clients, faculty, students, etc.

—Mark E. Estes, Law Library Director, Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library, Oakland, California

To help you develop your own elevator pitch, AALL offers resources to “Make Your Case” at www.aallnet.org/conference/get-there/make-your-case.
the reference desk

Q: I’ve always believed that being a librarian means supporting my profession as well as supporting my library. In fact, to some degree, my library’s mission extends beyond the four walls of the library. I’ve been active in my regional association, and I’d like to continue to participate locally as well as nationally. I’m all too aware of those librarians who seem to do everything and do it well. I’m trying to find that work/life balance that everyone talks about. There was a time when I was willing to take on almost anything, and I’ve learned so much from those experiences. However, I can’t do everything. How can I say no to some things and yet pursue the opportunities I’m interested in?

A: I understand what you’re asking. I’ve worked for and with some remarkable librarians who could “bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan,” etc., who had seemingly limitless energy and yet retained their poise. I have frequently been dumbfounded by their achievements. Most of us, as librarians, feel “called” to service, whether that be to our libraries or to our profession. We’re committed to giving our best and to demonstrating our value by taking on any and all tasks, no matter the size. This is especially true when we’re at the beginning of our careers or when we’ve changed jobs and want to foster credibility. Eventually, there comes a time when our job responsibilities, personal lives, and professional interests come into conflict. It sounds as if you’re facing that dilemma now.

Fortunately, our profession is filled with talented, accomplished individuals who’ve faced the same dilemma. I’ve asked my friend, Carol Bredemeyer, assistant director for faculty services at the Salmon P. Chase College of Law Library, Northern Kentucky University, if she will address your question and share the benefit of her experiences. Carol is amazing. She was inducted into the AALL Hall of Fame last July, and she has been recognized for her service on the AALL Executive Board; as chair of several committees, including the Law Student Research Competencies Task Force; and for her service to several regional law library associations.

Carol: “I’m limiting my answer to projects where you truly have a choice—not projects where you are ‘volunteered.’

“One facet of developing your leadership skills is learning how and when to say no. You have to know your limits. When I was serving on the AALL Executive Board, my director asked me not to take on much in the way of SIS and chapter activity. I’ve always appreciated the institutional support I’ve received to be professionally active, and this was certainly a reasonable request. As a board member, you serve as liaison to at least two to three committees, and you attend all of their conference call meetings as well as tending to your own board committee assignments. In addition to knowing your limits, you should decide what is truly important to you. If it’s a big project and your heart really isn’t in it, for example, not only could you become overwhelmed, but it’s likely that you won’t do it particularly well on the project.

“You may have just taken on a project at work and not yet know how much of your time it will consume. Or perhaps your library is involved in a renovation or building project, and it is requiring more of your time, leaving less time for professional activities. Most of us, at one time or another, have ended up falling into a seemingly bottomless pit of commitments, wondering if we will ever be able to climb our way out.

“It can be hard to say no, especially if it’s to someone you respect or have a long history working with on projects. We’ve had service and ‘can do’ drummed into our brains, and some of us just have trouble turning down projects. However, by limiting your commitments to those at the top of your list, you will be doing yourself and your colleagues a favor. Every year, the AALL president has to talk with committee members who have failed to participate in the committee’s activities. If you truly become overwhelmed by activities, try not to flounder and simply get by. Everyone

How can I say no to some things and yet pursue the opportunities I’m interested in?

By Susan Catterall

Are you in a sticky situation with a colleague? Looking for ways to discuss advancement with your supervisor? Send your questions to columnist Susan Catterall at scatterall@charlottelaw.edu.
announcements

Wheeler, Florio, and Matuszak Elected to Executive Board

AALL welcomes three members elected to its Executive Board in the 2014 Association Election.

Ronald E. Wheeler, Jr., director of the law library and information resources at Suffolk University Law School’s Moakley Law Library in Boston, was elected AALL vice president/president-elect for 2015-2016. He will assume the presidency at the conclusion of the 2016 Annual Meeting in Chicago.

Emily R. Florio, manager of library services at Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP in Washington, D.C., was elected to a three-year term on the Executive Board. She will serve from 2015-2018.

Mary Eileen Matuszak, director of library services at the New York County District Attorney’s Office in New York, was elected to a three-year term on the Executive Board. She will serve from 2015-2018.

Thank you to all Executive Board candidates and to all who voted in the election!

AALL Nominations Committee Seeks Candidates for Office

The AALL Nominations Committee selects the candidates for the Executive Board elections. This spring, the seven-member committee will present a slate of suitable candidates for the 2015 elections to the membership. They will choose two candidates for the position of vice president/president-elect (2016-2017) and four candidates for two open seats on the Executive Board (2016-2019). In accordance with its charge, the committee must choose candidates who reflect the diversity of AALL’s membership, thus ensuring that the members of the Executive Board represent a balance of library types, geographic locations, genders, and minorities.

For the 2015 elections, ballots will be distributed electronically to all voting members of the Association in November. The ballots will be tabulated at AALL Headquarters at the beginning of December and election results announced immediately. For more information about the nominations process or to propose possible nominees for the 2015 elections, please contact Chair Darcy Kirk at darcy.kirk@law.uconn.edu. Nominations must be submitted on or before February 23.

Grants are Available for Philadelphia Annual Meeting

AALL grants are available to cover the cost of registration for the 2015 AALL Annual Meeting to be held July 18-21 in Philadelphia and for workshops associated with the Annual Meeting.

Grants are available for experienced AALL members, as well as for students and new members. Eligible experienced librarians include those who have been members of AALL or an AALL chapter for five or more years. New members are defined as active members with less than five years of membership in AALL or an AALL chapter. Students must hold a membership in AALL or an AALL chapter to qualify for a grant. For experienced and new applicants, preference is given to those who are active in AALL or in one of its chapter organizations.

To apply for a grant, visit AALLNET, select the “Member Resources” drop-down menu, and then choose “Grants.” Next, link to “AALL Annual Meeting Grants.” In addition to completing the application, each grant applicant must submit two letters of recommendation, a current résumé, and a personal statement. These documents are vital because they give the Grants Committee insight into the unique qualifications, experiences, and aspirations of each applicant.

The application deadline is April 1. If you are thinking of applying for a grant, get a head start by reviewing the application requirements now. Please contact Grants Committee Chair Suzanne Corriell at scorriell@richmond.edu with any questions. Good luck, and we hope to see you in Philadelphia!
announcements

Terry Gross to Give Keynote at AALL Annual Meeting General Opening Session

AALL is pleased to announce Terry Gross as the keynote speaker for the 2015 AALL Annual Meeting General Opening Session in Philadelphia. Gross is the award-winning host of Fresh Air, National Public Radio’s weekday magazine of contemporary arts and issues. She has hosted Fresh Air since 1975, when it was a local, daily interview and music program broadcast only in greater Philadelphia. Today, the program is broadcast on 566 stations and became the first non-drive time show in public radio history to reach more than 5 million listeners each week in fall 2008, a presidential election season. In fall 2011, the program reached 4.4 million listeners a week.

Gross is known for her willingness to ask tough questions and for establishing an atmosphere in which her guests volunteer answers rather than surrendering them. Fresh Air has received a number of awards, including the Peabody Award in 1994 for its “probing questions, revelatory interviews, and unusual insight.”

Submit Your Photos for the 2015 Day in the Life Contest

The 2015 Day in the Life Contest, sponsored by the AALL Public Relations Committee, is accepting submissions through the end of this month. The contest invites AALL members to take and submit a wide range of photographs and videos of law librarians working, meeting, teaching, and doing everything else that law librarians do in a given day.

Entries must be submitted by February 28, but your photos and videos can be from any time between March 1, 2014, and February 28, 2015. Entries will be judged online through membership voting in April. For more information about the contest and how to submit your entries, visit bit.ly/DITL15. We look forward to seeing what a typical day in your library looks like!

Memorials

AALL Spectrum has been advised of the deaths of June Kim and Carol Elaine Meyer-Keener.

Ms. Kim was senior reference librarian at UCLA School of Law’s Hugh & Hazel Darling Law Library in Los Angeles. She joined AALL in 2002 and served on a number of the Association’s special interest sections. She passed away December 24, 2014.

Ms. Meyer-Keener (previously Ms. Bratton), was law librarian and head administrator of the Cincinnati Law Library Association for nearly 30 years. She saw the law library (now the Hamilton County Law Library) through many changes until her retirement in 1995, including renovations to the library’s space and the emergence of electronic resources. She also served the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries. She passed away December 18, 2014.

AALL Spectrum carries brief announcements of members’ deaths in the “Memorials” column. Traditional memorials should be submitted to James Duggan at Law Library Journal, Tulane University Law Library, 6329 Freret St., New Orleans, LA 70118-6231 or emailed to duggan@tulane.edu.
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views from you

Share Your Views with Spectrum

What views of your library are meaningful to you? Whether it’s the atmosphere surrounding your reference desk, a striking scene outside your window, a unique event taking place in your library, or a moment captured on your morning commute, this is your chance to share it with AALL.

In order to be publishable, pictures must be of relatively high quality. Digital submissions are preferred and must be high resolution (300 dpi). Submit your photos to AALL Marketing and Communications Manager Ashley St. John at astjohn@aall.org.

The study area on the main floor of Albany Law School’s Schaffer Law Library in Albany, New York, after a December 2014 snow fall. Photo courtesy of Leslie Cunningham, Catalog and Government Information Librarian.
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