Tagging Along: RFID Technology in the Mason Law Library

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RFID's History

Early use of RFID technology occurred during World War II when the British tried to differentiate between their aircraft and that of the enemy. Its use has since grown since the 1980s to include tagging of commercial goods and livestock as well as in toll collection and the tracking of people. Libraries have since embraced the technology because of benefits such as security, the identification and management of resources, including multiple tag readings at a time and the ability to embed different types of data on the tags. The National Library of Singapore was the first library in the world to use RFID.

RFID tags act as a two-way radio and are approximately 2 inches square. The RFID reader's antenna transmits a radio frequency wave to the tag. The tag then processes this signal and the data which is stored on the tag is then transmitted back to the reader. An application allows the reader to decipher the signal, sending the information on the tag to the computer. Tags are usually placed on the pockets of books and are capable of triggering gate alarms.

Why RFID Now?

The Charles N. and Hilda H.M. Mason Law Library serves the research needs of the students and faculty of the University of the District of Columbia School of Law (UDCSL). The university's status as a publicly-funded institution also requires that members of the public have access to the library's collection as well as

reference service. In July of 2009, the library began the process of implementing a Radio Frequency Identification or RFID project. While RFID technology has been embraced for a while now by public libraries, academic libraries have lagged behind in utilizing this increasingly popular collection management solution.

As a small law library serving a relatively sizeable clientele, with varying information needs, RFID technology was considered to be an appropriate mechanism to expand the library's services to its users while enhancing security and collection management. The geographic spread of the library's collection across faculty offices and a separate clinic library were also considerations for the use of the technology. Among the advantages envisaged at the project's completion are: shelf-reading, self-checkout, a decrease in loss or theft of resources, as well as improved workflow for Circulation staff.

Project Background

Consultations were held with 3M representatives and the Acquisitions Librarian about equipment needs and recommendations. Following the consultations, meetings were also held with all staff members to discuss the technology, roles and the implications for workflow. We purchased the following pieces of equipment:

1) 3M Basic ISO RFID Tags (48,000 tags)
2) 3M Staff Workstation Model 895 with USB

> While RFID technology has been embraced for a while now by public libraries, academic libraries have lagged behind in utilizing this increasingly popular collection management solution.

Welcome Spring!

Sara Sampson, Head of Reference, Georgetown Law Library, **sas235@law.georgetown.edu**

Spring is finally here. After the record-breaking winter we've had, I'm especially excited to see trees budding and tulips peeking up from the ground. Spring, for me, means change and re-birth. Law libraries have undergone tremendous change in our lifetimes and continue to do so. People outside of the law library world aren't always aware of these changes. Say "library" to most people and the first thing they think of is "books." In this issue, we highlight that libraries and librarians are "More than Books."

Books are still important, though. Yasmin Morais writes about a project at UDC to use new technology (RFID tags) to keep track of these important resources. Jennie Meade writes about her use of Kindle to continue to enjoy books—just in a new format.

Sarah Rhodes writes about a digital preservation effort, The Chesapeake Project, to save

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Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, please contact **Sara Sampson** at **sas235@law.georgetown.edu**. For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at **www.llsdc.org**.

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born-digital documents. Laura Moorer updates us on the process of moving the official DCMR to an online platform. Jennifer Eckel provides us with detailed instructions for using Excel to organize a PACER bill so that billing the right client is quick and easy.

Scott Wales was inspired by the theme "More than Books" to write about the role of people in libraries. Gary Bravy writes about the increasing availability of federal and state legislative history materials online.

If you experienced cabin fever during the winter months, you'll enjoy Morgan Stoddard's article about volunteer opportunities in the D.C. area.

Dawn Bohls takes an interesting look back at a groundbreaking book about the *Future Shock. Tech Talk* focuses on gadgets—how to learn more about them and find people who have the same gadgets.

Our next issue (my last as editor) will focus on researching special areas. Let me know if you're interested in writing an article on that or any topic. **LLL**

Reader. A total of 3 were purchased. Two of the workstation models were installed on laptops in Circulation and the other on a desktop in Technical Services. The laptops facilitate tagging throughout the library.

3) 3M Digital Library Assistant Model 803 Shelf Reader (or wand). The wand is a cordless, handheld device which is capable of storing information related to more than one million items.

A 3M representative conducted demonstration and training for Technical Services staff. The Library Director, the Assistant Director for Technical Services, the Acquisitions Librarian and the Cataloging Librarian held a series of meetings to map out strategies for project implementation. A wiki was created to disseminate information to staff about equipment procured, project timelines and progress. It was decided that immediate tagging would begin for newly cataloged resources, as the balance of the classified collection was processed.
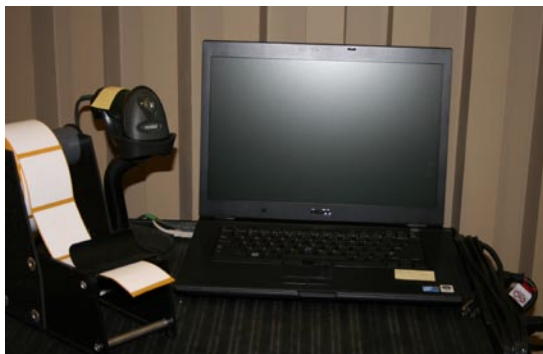
Figure 1: *Cart with RFID tags, laptop, scanner and reader*

The cart containing the conversion equipment shown in figure 1 facilitates movement throughout the library, as well as easy storage of, and access to the tags, scanner and RFID reader. The 3M conversion station reads the bar-coded item, requests the presentation of a tag, which is then programmed by the RFID reader, then attached to the book by the worker. The Reserve collection was tagged first, followed by the Reference collection.
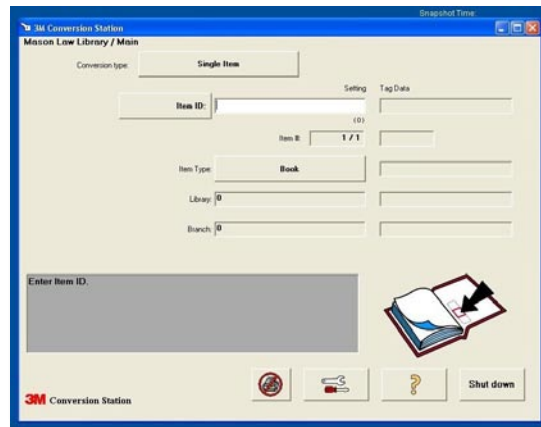
Figure 2: *3M Conversion Station screen display*

The 3M Conversion Station screen capture above shows the page displayed prior to tagging. At the "Enter Item ID" prompt, the scanner reads the barcode from a book and then suggests presentation of an RFID tag for programming by the RFID pad. The arrow to the right also suggests the recommended positioning of the tag in the book.

One direct result of the tagging process was the early implementation of a previously planned weeding of the library. The weeding process eliminates the risk of wasting tags on

RFID Technology *continued from page 3*

resources which were scheduled for withdrawal from the collection. Other benefits of the tagging process were the identification of resources for which item records had not been created or the need for location changes for some items.

What Are We Learning…

As of January, 2010, the Reserve and Reference collections have been tagged. Tagging of the main collection started early February. Technical Services staff worked with the Circulation Librarian to ensure that returned items from the Reserve Collection which were not tagged are set aside for tagging. Resources which are already checked out to faculty will also be identified and tagged. It will be interesting to see what issues will arise as we begin tagging the Main collection. At this point, there have been relatively few "bad tags" (approximately 5 to date), which the 3M representative had advised would be a possibility. These are tags which are unprogrammable and which generate a red, bad tag note from the reader.

As one of the newer staff members at Mason Law Library, the tagging process has increased my own knowledge of the library's collection. From a cataloging perspective, it has also allowed me to identify resources that required item record creation or other bibliographic amendments. Technical Services staff also enhanced their knowledge of a cutting edge technology which is becoming increasingly popular for collection management. In addition, our project management skills were sharpened as we sought to plan and manage this new and interesting project. One very useful resource on RFID which we relied on as a reference point, and which I highly recommend for any library considering RFID, is the *Radio Frequency Identification Handbook for Librarians.*

Concluding Thoughts

Implementation of the RFID project has been exciting so far, with few hiccups. There is great anticipation among library staff about the possibilities for service improvement and collection management. Going forward, training will be scheduled for Circulation staff and it is hoped that full implementation of the RFID technology will begin in the fall of 2010. We look forward to sharing more about our experience using RFID in the Mason Law Library with our colleagues as full implementation gets underway. Mason Law Library's project proposal on RFID technology has also been accepted for presentation at the SEAALL annual conference in April, where more details on project implementation and results will be highlighted.

Reference

Connie K. Haley, Lynne A. Jocobsen & Shai Robkin. *Radio Frequency Identification Handbook for Librarians.* (Westport, CT.: Libraries Unlimited. 2007). **LLL**

MEMBER NEWS

Shannon O'Connell, Research/Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly LLP

Lisa Harrington is the new Librarian/Records Supervisor at Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville, P.C.

Andrew Martin accepted a position as the Law Librarian at the National Labor Relations Board.

June Stafford is the new Law Librarian at the Department of Energy's Office of General Counsel. **LLL**

State of the Society

Cameron Gowan, Library Manager, Groom Law Group, Chartered, **cgowan@groom.com**

It is the beginning of spring, and one of my favorite things to do is play April Fool's jokes on my family and friends. I have always had a mischievous side to my personality and have loved playing harmless tricks on people and vice versa. My family will not answer my phone calls in the days leading up to April Fool's Day. Now of course, all these tricks were in jest and always caused laughs.

I'd like to take this opportunity to announce some exciting pieces of news for this year. Over the past couple of years, we have seen many law firms merge with each other. Due to the success of these mergers, we have decided to follow suit. Several other association chapters on the East coast have agreed to merge with us to form the largest chapter in the nation. As a result, we have decided to change our name to better reflect our new platform as the leaders in the library and information world. The new name will be The Massive Law Librarians' Society of the East Coast.

In addition, to accommodate our thousands of members, we have recently signed a twenty year lease on a 30,000 square feet property on Pennsylvania Avenue. This space will be used to conduct all meetings, host our events, and even includes a game room and gym. Another upside to these changes is that member dues will decrease to $1.50. However, the $1,500 initiation fee will help cover the costs for a new ten-person management team, catering, and the vintage Ms. Pacman gaming unit.

Thank you to all the authors and contributors to this issue of *Lights* for their valuable articles that address this edition's theme of 'More Than Books.' This will be the final issue of *Lights*. April Fool's. **LLL**

Dear LLSDC Members,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued participation in LLSDC. It is through the dedication of members like you that LLSDC is best able to meet its mission of cultivating the profession of law librarianship and providing for the continuing education of law librarians in the mid-Atlantic region.

As we begin a new decade and plan for the future of our society, I also invite you to consider donating to the new LLSDC Annual Fund. The Annual Fund is designed to help LLSDC plan educational programs, award scholarships and grants, produce publications such as *Law Library Lights*, and undertake new projects to enhance our society's contribution to the profession. A donation to the Annual Fund also helps to ensure that LLSDC will continue to meet its day-to-day operational expenses.

A donation of any amount to the LLSDC Annual Fund is appreciated, and we encourage you to contribute through the LLSDC website at **www.llsdc.org** (click on "Giving Opportunities"). Please contact me with any questions and many thanks for the many ways that you support LLSDC.

Very truly yours,

Cameron Gowan
President, Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C.

D.C. Area Community Service Opportunities

Morgan M. Stoddard, Reference Librarian, Georgetown University Law Library, **mms237@law.georgetown.edu**

The theme of this *Law Library Lights* highlights the many services we provide in our libraries and countless ways in which law librarians help our patrons in addition to supplying books. However, we librarians do not check our commitment to service and assisting others at our library door. Law librarians as a whole are civic-minded individuals who are engaged in our communities, and we have many unique skills and abilities that enable us to contribute greatly to efforts to improve the world around us. Just talking to fellow law librarians or browsing old issues of *Lights*[1] offers evidence of our dedication to volunteerism.

As a newer resident of Washington, D.C., I recently have been exploring ways in which I could get more involved in my new community. This article shares some of what I learned and will hopefully aid those readers who are also searching for new opportunities to volunteer. After first discussing a few general resources for finding local volunteer opportunities, this article then highlights the enormity and diversity of options for contributing to the D.C. area community by providing a few examples based on different professional and personal interests.[2] In conclusion, this article will discuss some of the things every volunteer should consider before committing to a project or organization.

Getting Started

The simplest way to get started volunteering locally is to talk to the people around you. Chances are that your coworkers, colleagues, friends, and neighbors are involved a range of activities and can provide recommendations and insight into what it is like to volunteer for a particular organization. In addition to tapping into the experience and knowledge of fellow law librarians and others in your community, the following resources are good places to start exploring opportunities.

Greater DC Cares: Greater DC Cares, **http://www.dc-cares.org**/, works with hundreds of area nonprofits and mobilizes thousands of volunteers. The organization coordinates a variety of activities from one-time projects to more long-term opportunities such as the Skilled Volunteering Program that "allows you to lend your professional skills and expertise to a pro bono consulting team" that assists a nonprofit.

National Volunteer Databases: Search for local opportunities on one of the national volunteer databases, which generally have hundreds of listings in the D.C. area. A great site is All for Good, **http://www.allforgood.org**, which pulls information from several different volunteer databases like **http://www.1-800-volunteer.org**/ and **http://www.volunteermatch.org**/. There are other smaller sites as well that cater to particular volunteer populations or offer a certain type of volunteer experience. For example, One Brick, **http://washingtondc.onebrick.org**/, seeks to offer a "unique, social and flexible volunteer environment" by coordinating discrete volunteer opportunities—no orientation or paperwork required—followed by social event.

The Washington Post: *The Washington Post* publishes a weekly list of volunteer opportunities. Local newspapers generally are a good source of volunteer information as they contain coverage of upcoming events that may need volunteer assistance and even advertisements calling for volunteers. For example, I discovered the Washington Literacy Council (see below) through an advertisement in the *Washington City Paper*.

Local Blogs: Local blogs, such as DCist, **http://dcist.com**/, and neighborhood listservs

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[1] *See, e.g.,* Nancy McKinley, *Volunteer Opportunity to Benefit DC Public School Libraries,* LAW LIBRARY LIGHTS, Mar./Apr. 2001, at 16; Iris Lee, *LLSDC Members Perform Community Outreach at MLK Library,* LAW LIBRARY LIGHTS, Nov./Dec. 1998, at 13.

[2] The number of organizations in the Washington, D.C. area with which to volunteer is essentially endless, so this article is inherently selective and is by no means meant to be an exhaustive or necessarily recommended list of resources or opportunities.

will often mention volunteer opportunities and charitable events.

Personalized Altruism

The primary motivation for individuals to volunteer is presumably to help others in need and give back to their community. The positive outcomes of volunteering, however, are certainly not limited to the beneficiaries of the service.[3] While knowing you made a difference in the world is a great reward in itself, volunteering can also be, among other things, fun and educational. A simple way to find a rewarding volunteer experience is to seek an opportunity that compliments your personal interests, goals, and talents and is conducive to your lifestyle and schedule. With the breadth and variety of volunteer opportunities in the D.C. area, there is something for everyone. The following are just a few examples of what is available.

Library/Work-Related: Volunteering at another library or similar institution not only affords the opportunity to promote something we care about deeply—education and access to information—but also results in the added benefit of gaining unique work-related experience and making professional connections. Public libraries are an excellent place to learn about what is happening in our community and gain more exposure to popular or inter-disciplinary materials and resources. The public libraries in the District of Columbia, **http://dclibrary.org/volunteer**; Montgomery County, **http://www.montgomerycountymd. gov/content/libraries/getinvolved/vol.asp**; and Fairfax County, **http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ library/volunteer/** all have volunteer programs. Another excellent option is to take advantage of our proximity to outstanding museums and archives, by, for example, volunteering for the Smithsonian Institution, **http://www.si.edu/ Encyclopedia_SI/volunteer/**, or the National Archives and Records Administration, **http:// www.archives.gov/careers/volunteering/**.

Volunteers can also bring the joy of reading to others by becoming a tutor for the Washing-

ton Literacy Council, **http://www.washing-tonliteracycouncil.org/**, which offers a range of classes from small group, one-on-one, and family literacy, to workplace success and computer classes. In addition to the required training, the time commitment varies from a couple of hours a week to a few times a year.

If the suggestions above are not feasible due to the training required and ongoing commitment, there are many occasional, discrete opportunities in the area of information and literacy. For example, the DC Books to Prisons Project, **http://bookstoprisons.org/**, meets every Wednesday evening at a local church to pack and send books requested by prisoners, and volunteers can just show up and help out (although first-timers should email the organization in advance).

Volunteer opportunities that benefit both the community and your professional development exist outside of the above settings as well, and volunteering is the perfect way to maintain and improve skills that you do not always have the chance to utilize in the workplace. For example, librarians who are also licensed attorneys and interested in pro bono can contact their local bar association about opportunities for individuals[4] and multi-lingual librarians can help sustain fluency by offering their services at any of the many organizations in need of translators and interpreters.[5]

Something Different: Of course, after a long day at the library, you may be looking for an option entirely unrelated to what you do at work that caters to your personal interests, fits your schedule, and meets your volunteering goals. Here is just a short list of ideas that highlight the many types of volunteering opportunities available.

- **Family:** Many organizations offer opportunities for the entire family to get

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[3] Studies have shown that volunteering can be beneficial to psychological and physical health. *See, e.g.,* Francesca Borgonovi, *Doing Well By Doing Good: The Relationship Between Formal Volunteering and Self-Reported Health and Happiness,* 66 Soc. Sci. & Med. 2321 (2008).

[4] *See, e.g.,* DC Bar, How to Volunteer, **http://www. dcbar.org/for_lawyers/pro_bono/volunteering/ volunteer.cfm** (last visited Feb. 21, 2010); Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, **http://www.probonomd. org/** (last visited Feb. 21, 2010).

[5] Find organizations looking for translators and interpreters through, for example, Greater DC Cares or by searching a volunteer database like Idealist, **http://www. idealist.org**, by skill for "Editing and Translation" or language needed.

involved, and there is even a Family Volunteer Day on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, **http://disney.go.com/disneyhand/familyvolunteers/**. For more information on family volunteering visit Family Cares, **http://www.familycares.org**.

- **Environment:** Environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts can lend a hand at the U.S. National Arboretum, **http://www.usna.usda.gov/Support/volunteer.html**, and at a local park operated by the National Parks Service, **http://www.nps.gov/getinvolved/volunteer.htm**, or see what local events are happening on Earth Day (April 22) by visiting **http://www.epa.gov/earthday/events.htm** or **http://www.earthday.net/**.

- **Animals:** Local animal shelters and rescue organizations are always in need of volunteers to assist with everything from cleaning and feeding to socialization and training and even fostering. Also, interested and eligible pet owners willing to make the necessary commitment could train their pet to be a part of an animal-assisted therapy program. Therapy animals, for example, help with rehabilitation and care at children's hospitals or assisted living facilities. For more information, visit National Capital Therapy Dogs, **http://www.nctdinc.org/**, which also has a program to help improve children's reading skills by having them read aloud to trained dogs. Finally, animal lovers certainly should not overlook opportunities at the National Zoo, **http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Support/Volunteer/**.

- **Arts:** Artistically inclined librarians can help at-risk youth by volunteering to teach art classes or assist with art classes through Project Create, **http://www.projectcreatedc.org**.

- **Poverty/Homelessness:** Volunteer with one of the many great local organizations combating poverty and homelessness. The Capital Area Food Bank, **http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/**, needs both one-time volunteers to sort donations or assist in the office and more long-term volunteers to assist with, for example, promotions and nutrition education. Calvary Women's Services, **http://www.calvaryservices.org/**, needs volunteers to staff shelters, prepare meals, teach life skills, and more.

- **Seasonal:** If you are not looking for a year-round commitment, there are many seasonal opportunities and days of community service. In addition to probably the most well-known drives and events that take place around the winter holidays, there is, for example:

  - **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service & September 11 Day of Service and Remembrance:** Greater DC Cares organizes a large volunteering events for both days, and there are a lot of other opportunities to serve. For more information, visit **http://www.mlkday.gov/** and **http://www.911dayofservice.org/**.

  - **Tax Season:** Volunteer in the spring to help prepare tax returns for low-income individuals and families through one of the local volunteer tax assistance organizations, such as the DC EITC Campaign, **http://www.dceitc.org**.

  - **National Library Week:** Participate in or organize a book drive or other event during National Library Week, which is April 11-17, 2010.

  - **National Volunteer Week:** It takes place this year from April 18-24, and Greater DC Cares organizes a Servathon, **http://www.dc-cares.org/servathon.html**.

  - **Commemorative Months:** Every month is commemorative or draws awareness to a particular issue, such as black history (February) and breast cancer (October), and volunteer opportunities will become available through organizations involved in the month's activities.

Important Things to Consider

The number of volunteer options can be overwhelming, and it can be difficult to decide how to donate your time when there is so much need. In addition to considering personal in-

terests and skills, all volunteers should consider the following before signing up:

- **Time:** Realistically, how much time do you have to volunteer? The quality of the experience and the service provided may be diminished if you overextend yourself. Also, are you interested in an established, ongoing commitment or are you looking for more short-term, discrete projects? When are you available—weekends, evenings, business hours? Does your employer offer community service leave?

- **Location:** Are you interested in on-site volunteering or would you rather find ways to contribute from home? Do you want to be in the field or do you prefer a behind-the-scenes position? If volunteering on-site, is the location difficult to get to due to distance or the availability of public transportation and parking?

- **Personality:** It is very important to be real with yourself about what you can handle physically and psychologically. For example, although you may care deeply about an issue like violence against women, not everyone is emotionally capable of providing counseling to victims at a rape crisis center or working with abused women and children at a domestic violence shelter.

In conclusion, this brief article was meant to provide aspiring volunteers with information on some helpful resources as well as a few examples of how to get involved. Given the number and variety of community organizations in the D.C. area, it only skims the surface of the pool of volunteer opportunities. There really is something for everyone looking to volunteer locally, which is not surprising, because as Martin Luther King, Jr. famously said, "[E]verybody can be great. Because everybody can serve."[6] **LLL**

[6] Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Drum Major Instinct,* in A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. 259, 265 (James Melvin Washington ed., 1986).

> "[E]verybody can be great. Because everybody can serve."
>
> *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Kindle and Me: An Experiential Essay

Jennie C. Meade, Director of Special Collections, Jacob Burns Law Library, The George Washington University, **jmeade@law.gwu.edu**

For those of you considering the purchase of an electronic book reader, I endorse that adventure. I became interested in the e-book reader about ten years ago, when it was in its infancy (an e-reader incunabulum, if you will; although there is a strong argument that e-book readers are still in swaddling clothes). The obstacle preventing my leap to that intriguing new way of reading was lack of "content;" no one yet had taken definitive steps toward resolving the copyright logjam that blocked access to works other than those long in the public domain, rejects from mainstream publishers, and lackluster educational texts.

Up front I freely disclose my unabashed affection for my own Kindle; we soon will celebrate our first anniversary together. I also must make clear that it is not "Kindle" as a "brand" that captivated me; rather Kindle happens to be the e-book reader I chose and have come to know. Had timing and circumstances been different, perhaps the Sony Reader, the Barnes & Noble nook, or the Apple iPad would have occupied the e-reader place of honor in my backpack. Another caveat: neither do I presume in this piece to "review" Kindle, nor offer a detailed comparison of Kindle with its competitors. Ditto a discussion of the future of the book. What follows are but personal observations about Kindle, the Kindle "reading experience," and random thoughts on e-book readers. And though most of us are law librarians, none of this has to do with legal literature *per se*.

Kindle was the first e-reader which made sense, because it drew on the massive Amazon.com inventory for its library (current advertising boasts the availability of "over 450,000 books;" and "over 1.8 million free, out-of-copyright, pre-1923 books"). Even so, I skipped Kindle 1, the original, despite reviews running at approximately 80% positive (remaining

steady at about 80% since the introduction of Kindle 2, and the larger-screen Kindle DX). Its price was an impediment of sorts: at $399 for a newly-introduced product (subsequently lowered to $349), it was in the reasonable range, yet required serious pre-purchase analysis. Amazon mounted a superb advertising campaign, and Kindle 1 sold out in five and a half hours after its release in November, 2007.

Without a doubt, I was itching to own a Kindle. As to books, I confess to being a lifelong "frequent buyer," and thus a likely Kindle purchaser (a digression: remember the "frequent buyer" cards at the late D.C. independent book haunt Chapters: A Literary Bookstore? FYI: Chapters now is reincarnated as the nonprofit Chapters Literary Arts Center and Bookstore: please see **http://www.chaptersliterary.com/NASApp/store/IndexJsp/** for the details of this innovative venture). Even so, prudence prevailed.

When Kindle 2 was released in early 2009, I got serious about committing. At that point the remaining hindrance was that no one I knew had bought or even seen a Kindle; I wanted to talk to a book person I trusted who owned one, plus have the chance to see, touch, and read on a Kindle before taking the plunge. The closest I came to this pipe dream resulted from an off-hand remark I made to the book-and-business-savvy scion of a preservation firm with whom I was discussing deacidification. Near the end of our meeting, I chanced to ask him what he knew about Kindle. Immediately he launched into the tale of his own Kindle odyssey. His seatmate on a recent cross-country flight had a Kindle. After reading surreptitiously over the stranger's shoulder, all the while experiencing the e-ink glare-free display and the simplicity of Kindle's operation, he had confirmed that Kindle was for him. It was the closest he had come to touching one, and it was enough. He planned to buy a Kindle immediately upon his return home, intending
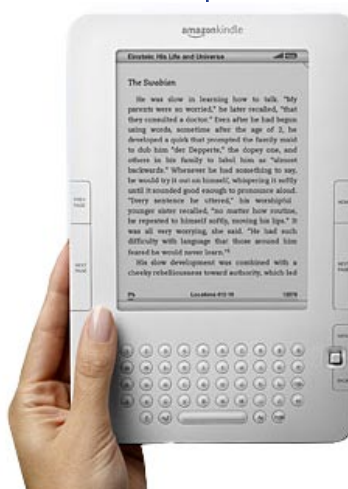
to use it primarily for newspaper and magazine reading on the go. Sold!

By then, that was all I needed to hear. After my protracted period of circumspection, it took only this voyeuristic description of an e-reader by a person I had met only once, who himself had yet to buy or even handle the product, to sweep me away. I arrived home that evening, paid my visit to the Amazon website, and added Kindle to my cart.

It shipped that night and arrived within two days, and the box was inscribed "Once Upon a Time…" And yes, it was a sort of dream come true. Before I even had received my Kindle, I had set about ordering a "starter" library, beginning with some classics of literature and nineteenth-century gems of horse handling wisdom, available either gratis or for a couple of dollars. I congratulated myself for acquiring these treasures while spending so little money, yet indulging in the heady experience of unbridled book buying. Who would not want instant access to this grab bag of titles (all from my first order binge):

The Arabian Art of Taming and Training Wild and Vicious Horses (1856) (my proud first purchase)
The Federalist Papers
The Anti-Federalist Papers
William Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon*
Sir Henry Irving's *The Art of Acting in the Drama*
Crime and Punishment
The Works of Charles Dickens
The Time Machine by H.G. Wells
Andersen's Fairy Tales

Several titles later, I told myself I definitely had "paid" for my Kindle with the brilliant purchases I had made, and Kindle's initial cost faded from memory. The elegant e-reader in its sixteenth-century-style distressed leather-thonged cover (my purchase from among the legion Kindle covers available) has become my constant companion. I read from it in the car while stopped at traffic lights; I sometimes have it read to me in the car (with the "Read to Me" function, not available for all titles due to copyright restrictions); it contains my bedtime reading, and of course during train and plane travel, it is unsurpassed since it obviates the need to take along a bag of reading material. The recently-introduced "Kindle for PC" allows all Kindle

books purchased (not including newspapers or magazines) to appear for free on one's computer, in larger format and complete with all the "notes" and highlighting already recorded while reading on the Kindle.

For me Kindle is most useful for what I call "pleasure" reading, defined as any reading unrelated to the reading I do for library projects. I compare owning a Kindle to 24/7 access to a public library. Instead of spending time visiting the library (and having my reading selection limited by their holdings), checking out books, returning home, then one morning waking up to realize the books are due today, I pick up my Kindle. If I'm bored with what I find in there, I go to the Kindle Store and pick out something else. Yes, this may cost something, but probably not as much as transportation and time to visit the library, much less the bookstore with the retail cost of the book factored in. An unexpected benefit: I have found that I am more willing to try books outside of my well-trodden (by me) subject areas, due to increased accessibility: such books, whether heretofore ignored, out of print, or too expensive, become more "visible" during the Kindle book search process (plus, free pre-purchase samples are available). And don't forget the extra-Amazon free material already Kindle-formatted: **www.freekindlebooks.org/**, a relation of Project Gutenberg.

Kindle is more private than a stack of physical books, unless you allow someone access to the device or leave it in plain view for someone to monkey with (there is no password protection). That makes it a useful venue for collecting and reading books which otherwise might elicit patronizing or disparaging comments from "intellectual" friends. When you read on your Kindle, it is virtually impossible for someone to detect the book title in use without moving to your lap or making an otherwise obvious move. No danger that a sensational book jacket will tip off a bystander that you are reading *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe* and not *Dubliners,* the discussion of which you promised to lead day after tomorrow at your book club meeting. Kindle can help you realize the peace of mind associated with a hassle-free reading life.

Is Kindle useful for research? I have not found it to be so. First, many research sources are not available on Kindle, and many university press and other scholarly books are either unavailable or extremely expensive (one example:

When you read on your Kindle, it is virtually impossible for someone to detect the book title in use without moving to your lap or making an otherwise obvious move. No danger that a sensational book jacket will tip off a bystander that you are reading *The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe* and not *Dubliners,* the discussion of which you promised to lead day after tomorrow at your book club meeting.

> **Kindle first appealed to me as a dedicated e-book reader rather than as a multipurpose electronic device, and though it has some additional functionality, it has retained its primary identity. Kindle broke ground and set standards as an e-reader with a library large enough to justify its cost.**

The Politics and Processes of Scholarship Kindle edition is $101.56 versus a new hardcover available at $12.75). However, there also are instances where the Kindle edition is less or far less expensive than the new scholarly hardcover; it is best to check each title. Second, the process of research, which usually necessitates checking footnotes, and flipping back and forth from one end of the book to the other, rather than reading straight through, is far more time-consuming and cumbersome on an e-book reader than with "real" books. As critical as Google Books has been to me in my research, I think all of us may have found the online research experience to be at times more cumbersome than having the physical book at our disposal. It's even a bit harder on Kindle due to the relatively small size of the screen compared with a pc screen. Compounding the difficulty is that Kindle does not include page numbers (it uses location numbers), so a citation is of little use in locating material in a Kindle book. At this point in Kindle's evolution, citing material is problematic due to the location numbers (of use only to other Kindle users; there are discussions/suggestions online for citing); it's best to paraphrase and attribute rather than quote directly, if that is feasible.

That said, perhaps the most attractive feature of Kindle—the ability to read a book within 60 seconds of ordering—is a potential lifesaver in cases where a book critical to one's research is discovered at the eleventh hour when libraries are closed and the last Fedex truck has left the depot. This situation arose when my husband learned of a recently-published book which delivered a critical insight on an issue highlighted in a brief due shortly in the U.S. Supreme Court. Click! Sixty seconds later, he was reading the book on Kindle for PC while integrating the newly-located information into the brief. Magic!

Kindle is not perfect. Among its many good features are: the e-ink display technology which makes the screen read more like paper (no backlighting, and great for reading outdoors), adjustable font size, ability to annotate and highlight, The New Oxford American English Dictionary built-in, wireless access to Wikipedia, 3G wireless with no monthly charge, decent battery life (with wireless turned off, I've had about 2 weeks without charging), elegant design

(and more, see the many online discussions and reviews). Among the downsides, an inconvenient one: the Kindle device must be returned to Amazon for battery replacement when the time comes. The sleeker design of Kindle 2, according to Amazon, necessitated a different battery, placed inaccessibly, as compared with Kindle 1; batteries replaced by the owner will void the warranty. One glitch I had, but have not yet addressed with Amazon, was a book which so far has failed to open (*Laugh and Live* (1917) by Douglas Fairbanks). As an electronic device, the hi-tech-literati may find Kindle somewhat primitive when compared with the B&N nook (color, touch screen, but with specs very similar to Kindle) or the (backlit) Apple iPad, which has grander designs on the computer market and will have far more functionality beyond e-reading than either Kindle or nook, but at substantially greater expense.

The name "Kindle?" It's been the subject of jest for implying the sinister antithesis of the warm fuzzy feeling retailers seek to associate with e-readers (Kindle = book burning = *Fahrenheit 451*), but "Kindle" has withstood the gibes and so far has weathered the name game better than some of the others. These days the name seems to suggest "newness," "something brewing," or according to Amazon's Jeff Bezos, "igniting a revolution." Sony played it safe with "Reader;" Barnes & Noble passed up "Athena," the stuff of legends, for the unfortunate "nook," too obvious a target for those who fail to stifle their tittering while repeating "nook e-reader" very quickly. But these forays into new product christening cannot compete with the "iPad" naming gaffe, which resulted in a moniker so absurd as to have been "predicted" by a 2005 MADtv spoof, recounted by its writers recently in an NPR interview: **http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123081467/**

Kindle first appealed to me as a dedicated e-book reader rather than as a multipurpose electronic device, and though it has some additional functionality, it has retained its primary identity. Kindle broke ground and set standards as an e-reader with a library large enough to justify its cost. My relationship with Kindle continues to evolve. I'm happy its cost dropped by $100 to $259 (to match nook), but irritated that it happened after I came on board. I graduated long ago from acquiring only free- and near-free books, and now indulge in new releases

at $9.99 (while that lasts; pricing discussions are raging) and other even pricier titles (still all under $20). Kindle's instantaneous access to books never fails to dazzle: "Thanks, Jennie! Your Kindle Edition order has been placed… You can go to your Kindle to start reading."

Yet Kindle has not lured me away from physical books, especially old and rare books. Kindle and its brethren allow alternative ways of reading text, and likely will not hasten hard copy book extinction but rather trail blaze parallel methods of using books. Colleagues have found it amusing that a special collections librarian (perforce an assumed technophobe/Luddite; hmmm…) would own a Kindle. On the other hand, I find it astonishing that I know of only one other law librarian who owns a Kindle[1], and he won it in a drawing. Aren't we as law librarians supposed to be not only well-read, but tech-savvy and inquisitive, maybe even a little adventurous? According to PC World.com, 2010 will be the year of the e-reader: "Kindle, Nook [sic] and Other E-Readers to Take Off in 2010" shrieked the November 25, 2009, headline. If *PC World*'s prediction is accurate, we soon should have plenty of choice in the land of e-reading. Please permit me to cannibalize John Lennon's immortal lyrics: "All I am saying/Is give e-reading a chance." **LLL**

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[1] There must be others. Please confirm at **jmeade@law.gwu.edu**.

More Than Books—The Library Is People

Scott Wales, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton, **swales@sheppardmullin.com**

As our physical collections may shrink and our presence becomes more virtual, it is imperative that we let our co-workers know that we exist. Yes, it isn't just books. It isn't just the routing of newsletters, both electronic and paper. It's us.

In the movie *Soylent Green* there is a famous line by Charlton Heston. Spoiler alert—If you haven't seen the movie and want to, please skip the next line. Heston shouts near the end of the film, "Soylent Green is people!"

Well, so is the library. After more than a quarter century in this business, I believe that more each day.

Librarians are often timekeepers. Billing time for our services is often crucial. As keen researchers, who bill at lower rates than associates, our work saves clients money. We know were to look, and can often do so much faster than associates. Our non-billable projects that keep attorneys informed of current events are important as well. By providing excellent service, we keep our firms aware of our existence. But there is more to the story.

At a previous firm, the library was an intregel part of the firm's social culture. Famous for its parties, the library was the place to be and the glue that held the firm together. I became semi-famous myself for my deviled eggs and marshmallow on a string contest. We had fun and the library became known as a fun place.

Now, it wasn't the books that were fun, it was the people. When I came to Sheppard Mullin, I became the manager of our softball team. I reported on the firm's success or lack of in a weekly sports report.Using humor to soften the news of a team that sometimes couldn't hit, throw or run. But doggone it, we did play. In no case however, did the seriousness of the job ever become questioned.

Last summer, I attended a memorial service for Harold Schlicht, who was a librarian at Hunton & Williams. I knew Harold for twenty-five years. I did not know him well, but we chatted at library events and sometimes over interlibrary loans. He seemed like a nice guy. His firm had a wonderful service for him. Remarking on not only the fun events he organized, but his professionalism as well. It was touching to see so many people from his firm at this service.

It was obvious that he was thought of highly by those he worked with.

Continuing education. Training. Saving money. Updating technology. Monitoring. These are all what we do. Sometimes, it's difficult to do with a smile, but we try. But sometimes we provide opportunities for the firm to get together and let off steam.

How many of us hold functions during National Library Week? In the past I have held miniature golf contests, trivia bowls and parties. I know many of you hold your own celebration. It is good public relations, but it lets many people who do not use our services know who we are.

As our physical collections may shrink and our presence becomes more virtual, it is imperative that we let our co-workers know that we exist. Yes, it isn't just books. It isn't just the routing of newsletters, both electronic and paper. It's us.

So, hold and occasional party and provide good service. The next time someone may ask you about the library, you can honestly quote Charlton Heston. Make sure you get the movie correct. You don't want to be parting the Red Sea or challenging talking apes. **LLL**

Beyond the Banks of the Chesapeake: Creating and Expanding The Chesapeake Project Legal Information Archive

Digital Preservation at the Georgetown Law Library

Sarah Rhodes, Digital Collections Librarian, Georgetown Law Library, **sjr36@law.georgetown.edu**

Introduction

In 2008, Google announced that it had surpassed a milestone. For the first time, its crawlers had discovered and indexed more than one trillion unique and simultaneously active URLs[1]. Maybe a trillion doesn't sound so impressive these days, after a global financial meltdown and a string of multibillion-dollar economic bailouts, but, to put that number into context, Google had detected only 26 million Web pages just ten years earlier. That's an average of more than 99 billion URLs added to the Web per year—and more than 273 million pages added per day—since 1998.

While these figures give us an idea of the growth of the Internet over time, they fail to convey the extent to which URLs have changed or disappeared during the course of that ten-year period. Web-based materials frequently disappear as URLs change and Web sites are updated or deleted. Moreover, file formats and applications are rapidly evolving as our technology progresses, rendering previous generations of digital content obsolete and unreadable.

This disappearance of Web-published information, and the risk posed to digital materials in general, is especially challenging in the fields of law and policy, where important legal materials are increasingly digitally born and distributed online, as opposed to published on paper.

To tackle this challenge of preserving important, at-risk legal information, the Georgetown Law Library in 2007 joined forces with the State Law Libraries of Maryland and Virginia to form The Chesapeake Project Legal Information Archive (**http://legalinfoarchive. org/**). The project began as a two-year pilot with the goal of forming a shared legal information archive for preserving and providing permanent access to legal materials published to the World Wide Web. This article explores the project's history, its digital preservation system and collections, the results of its evaluation efforts, and the future of The Chesapeake Project.

The Origin of The Chesapeake Project

In 2003, a group of national experts in the fields of law librarianship, legal publishing, and digital preservation descended on the campus of the Georgetown Law Center to attend a conference called "Preserving Legal Information for the 21st Century: Toward a National Agenda." They had come at the invitation of Robert Oakley, the late director of the Georgetown Law Library, who, along with a team of key Georgetown librarians, organized the conference to advance the law library community's dialogue on the topic of preserving digital content and to develop a plan of action to prevent the loss of legal information in the digital age.

Those attending the conference responded to this call to action by forming a new organization called the Legal Information Preservation Alliance, or LIPA, with the goal of providing the law library community with the leadership, guidance, and organizational backing to support the preservation of legal information on a national scale.[2]

In 2006, LIPA's strategic plan called for the development of a pilot project to preserve born-digital legal information.[3] Thus, The Chesapeake Project was born, formed by the

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[1] Jesse Alpert & Nissan Hajaj, *We Knew the Web Was Big.* The Official Google Blog (July 25, 2008) **http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2008/07/we-knew-web-was-big.html** (last visited Mar. 15, 2010).

[2] Legal Information Preservation Alliance. Preserving Legal Information for the 21st Century: Toward a National Agenda, March 6-8, 2003, Legal Information Preservation Alliance (LIPA) conference report. (2003), *available at* **http://www.aallnet.org/committee/lipa/ LIPA_Conference_Report.pdf**.

[3] Legal Information Preservation Alliance strategic plan outline (2006), *available at* **www.aallnet.org/committee/ lipa/StratPlanFinalDraft20060620.doc**.

> To tackle the challenge of preserving important, at-risk legal information, the Georgetown Law Library in 2007 joined forces with the State Law Libraries of Maryland and Virginia to form The Chesapeake Project Legal Information Archive.

The Chesapeake Project

continued from page 15

Georgetown Law Library and the State Law Libraries of Maryland and Virginia, each an institutional member of LIPA.

During its two-year pilot phase, The Chesapeake Project set out to preserve legal information published directly to the Web, and to test the feasibility of forming a collaborative, nationwide digital preservation initiative within the law library community. In late 2006, a digital archive, Web harvesting system, and suite of digital preservation tools were selected for the project, and the three library partners began actively archiving digital legal materials in early 2007.

In 2009, The Chesapeake Project's pilot phase came to a close, and the Georgetown Law Library and its partners committed to continue the project as a permanent preservation program. Today, the digital archive is expanding, and The Chesapeake Project has begun working with other law libraries interested in preserving digital legal content.

Digital Preservation System

The Chesapeake Project uses OCLC's suite of hardware, software, and technological tools and services built for digital preservation and content management, which allows for digital items to be remotely archived and for collections to be managed online.

Using this system, original Web-based content is harvested from the Internet, and two files are derived from the original: a master file and an access file. The master file is stored in the OCLC Digital Archive, a dark, offsite digital preservation system that is inaccessible to users, while the access file is uploaded to CONTENTdm, a hosted open-access digital asset management system with a Web-based user interface.

Permanent links to the access versions of the preserved files in CONTENTdm are added to each archived resource's MARC record. As a result, if the item is ever removed from its original URL, or deleted from the Web altogether, a version of the archived item in CONTENTdm will remain intact for users to access.

User discovery of and access to The Chesapeake Project's collections is made available via participating libraries' OPACs; OCLC's subscription WorldCat database and non-subscription WorldCat.org; The Chesapeake Project's open-access CONTENTdm Web interface, **http://www.legalinfoarchive.org**; and popular search engines, such as Google. Additionally, the metadata in CONTENTdm is compliant with OAI-PMH (the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting). Metadata from OAI-PMH-compliant systems can be easily captured by other information services and made discoverable, for example, via a single, federated search interface, allowing users to search the contents of multiple, distributed digital archives at the same time.

Collections

There are no approval plans or in-print lists to guide collection development when selecting content directly from the Web for preservation. Considering that there are at least one trillion active Web pages on a given day, delineating The Chesapeake Project's collection scope, while also allowing for participating libraries to develop their own unique collections, has been crucial to the project's success.

Materials selected for The Chesapeake Project during its pilot phase consisted of content that was law- or policy-related, digitally born, and published to the "free Web," i.e., freely accessible to the public via the Internet, rather than available via subscription or within a site requiring registration or password access. Beneath this broad collection theme, each library participating in the project determined its own collection development priorities, based on its institutional mandates and the research needs of its users.[4]

The archive collection of the Georgetown Law Library is a largely thematic collection of secondary legal sources, selected based on research and educational areas of interest at the Law Center. The collection also includes law-related publications produced by and about the District of Columbia, as well as select high-interest reports, documents, and studies produced by the federal government. The Maryland and Virginia State Law Libraries' archive collections, on the other hand, are primarily jurisdictional, and include documents and publications relating to justice, law and policy in their respective states.

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[4] The Chesapeake Project Collection Plan (2010), *available at* **http://legalinfoarchive.org/policies/LEGAL_CollectionPlan_Updated_2010_01.pdf**.

Project Evaluation

During the two-year pilot phase, a comprehensive evaluation of The Chesapeake Project was conducted annually. Evaluation parameters included quantitative as well as qualitative assessments of the project's progress. The quantitative parameters consisted of a count of archived items and titles, access statistics for archived items, and an analysis of "link rot" among archived items to determinate the percentage of archived items altered or removed from their original URLs (a measure that helped justify the need for the project). The qualitative analysis explored staffing and time required for the project, a discussion of project challenges, and an assessment of overall progress toward the accomplishment of the project's mission and vision.

The Chesapeake Project's 2009 evaluation found that that the libraries participating in the project had archived more than 4,300 digital objects and tracked more than 177,000 visits to **http://www.legalinfoarchive.org**, the project's CONTENTdm user interface.[5]

But perhaps the most interesting finding documented in the 2009 evaluation had to do with link rot among archived titles. The content archived by The Chesapeake Project is captured from stable, legitimate Web-based sources—primarily sites hosted by federal, state government, non-profit, and educational entities. Yet, the project evaluation revealed that nearly 14 percent, or approximately one in seven, of the online publications archived from these source Web sites between March 2007 and March 2009 had already disappeared from their original locations on the Web but, thanks to the project's efforts, remained accessible via permanent archive URLs.

The project's evaluation from the previous year, 2008, showed that slightly more than 8 percent of archived titles had disappeared from their original URLs, demonstrating a dramatic increase in link rot among archived Web content over a single year's time.[6]

Currently, the libraries involved in The Chesapeake Project are conducting their third annual link rot assessment. Preliminary data from this study indicate a further increase in the number of archived titles missing from their original URLs—perhaps as high as 20 percent, possibly higher.

In addition to The Chesapeake Project's self-evaluation efforts, the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) was enlisted last year to conduct an independent and objective project assessment based upon criteria identified in the Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification Criteria and Checklist, or TRAC.[7] The assessment commended the project overall—stating that "the Chesapeake Project provides good stewardship of the web content it has identified and collected, "addresses a real need in the legal research community, and uses tools and processes that are "cost-effective and focused"— while also providing concrete recommendations for strengthening the project to ensure its future viability.[8]

The Future of The Chesapeake Project

During a meeting of LIPA member libraries in July 2009, LIPA's executive director announced that The Chesapeake Project had become a LIPA-sanctioned project under the umbrella of the Legal Information Archive, a shared digital archive being established for LIPA members. Presently, LIPA membership is comprised of 83 institutions.

The Legal Information Archive is being introduced to LIPA members this year and will utilize the same OCLC-provided digital-archive solutions currently used by The Chesapeake Project. These digital archiving tools and services will be offered at a significant discount to LIPA members, who have the opportunity to control costs even further through collaboration and cost-sharing with partner libraries.

The Chesapeake Project libraries are now working with LIPA to help implement the Legal Information Archive, and The Chesapeake Project itself, now an expanding part of the Legal

[5] Chesapeake Project, Two-Year Pilot Project Evaluation (2009), *available at* **http://www.legalinfoarchive. org/policies/legal_twoyearprojectevaluation_ june2009.pdf**.

[6] The Chesapeake Project, First-Year Pilot Project Evaluation (2008), *available at* **http://legalinfoarchive.org/ policies/LEGAL_FirstYearProjectEvaluation.pdf**.

[7] RLG-NARA Task Force on Digital Repository and Certification, Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria and Checklist (2007), *available at* **http://www. crl**.

[8] Sarah Rhodes, Here's To Your (Digital Archive's) Good Health: Applying TRAC and Other Evaluation Parameters to a Local Digital Preservation Project. *Digital Preservation Presentations*. (2009), *available at* **http://scholarship.law.georgetown.edu/digital- preservation_presentations/2**.

Information Archive, expects to add at least one new partner library this year.

It is an exciting and gratifying time for the Georgetown Law Library and its partners in Maryland and Virginia. After three years, the lofty original vision of The Chesapeake Proj-ect—"to help inspire, establish, and galvanize widespread participation in a comprehensive, collaborative, and nationwide preservation program for legal resources"—is coming to fruition. For more information about The Chesapeake Project, visit **http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/ cp/ or http://legalinfoarchive.org/**.

D.C. Register: Off the Shelf

Laura Moorer, Legal Reference Specialist for Public Defender Service for DC, **lmoorer@pdsdc.org**

In the spring of 2008, many law librarians around the Washington, D.C. area received a notice that the *D.C. Register* would no longer offer print subscriptions to its customers. I, for one, was initially concerned about losing this great print resource. I checked it weekly for new Mayor's orders, rules, or emergency legislation that impacted my work at the Public Defender Service. Wondering what was behind the move to go paperless, I asked Andrea Garvey, Director, Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances (ODAI) about the change and what prompted the decision to stop offering print subscriptions to the *D.C. Register.*

ODAI's Move to Go Paperless

Garvey told me that Stephanie Scott, Secretary of the District of Columbia, made the decision about going paperless with the D.C. Register in hopes "to advance all of our publications and work flows to be digitized and online for better, faster, cheaper, and more accurate information regarding the District of Columbia government." The Secretary, Garvey stated, wanted to focus on moving all publications of the D.C. government online, which would include the *D.C. Register*, the *D.C. Municipal Regulations* (D.C.M.R.), Mayor's Orders and an e-rule-making system. The goal is to empower all citizens of the District by having the most up to date D.C. government information at their fingertips for free. This decision meant a huge undertaking for the ODAI but their hard work seems to have paid off.

Now law librarians and the public have easy access to a great online resource. Garvey commented that she now receives many questions from patrons and constituents *around the country* about D.C. regulations and that the District is now recognized as one of the most advanced online, state regulatory web sites in the country. As a user of the Web sites myself, I find the online versions very helpful, up to date, and enjoy the ease of searching both of these publications for important D.C. government information.

The Secretary's decision to provide these publications online is an important contribution to all D.C. citizens and researchers of D.C. law. Both the *D.C. Register* and *D.C.M.R.* are key resources for understanding and following D.C. government laws and regulations.

D.C. Register

The *D.C. Register* is the official weekly legal publication for the D.C. government and was first published on July 19, 1954. The *Register* includes "D.C. laws, administrative rulemakings, notices, orders and other items from the D.C. Council, the Mayor's executive agencies and independent agencies, charter schools, ANC's and other official entities of the District government." See **http://www.dcregs.org/ AboutUs.aspx**. It became the official tool for D.C. government actions in 1969, when Congress passed and the President signed into law, the "District of Columbia Administrative Procedure Act" (D.C. Code § 1-1501 *et seq.*) For a more thorough history of the *D.C Register* visit **http://www.dcregs.org/History.aspx**.

D.C. Municipal Regulations

At the same time the *Register* was adopted as the official publication for D.C. government information, the APA required that administrative rules and regulations of the D.C. Council and the Mayor's Orders to be kept in one place and compiled into one publication, titled the *D.C.M.R.* The ODAI is now responsible for codifying all final rules in the regulations.

Many law libraries retain the paper versions

of the *D.C.M.R.*, but the paper versions are often outdated and may or may not contain the most recent updates or amendments to these rules. Until two years ago, there was no current, official online version of the regulations. It was also hard to determine which online version was accurate, as Westlaw had some amendments included online and Lexis had a few different versions. Garvey and her office worked for over a year with local agencies to make sure all titles and amendments that were added over the past 25 years were included in the online version, resulting in the most accurate and current compilation of the D.C. regulations online.

Access to the *D.C. Register* and the *D.C. Municipal Regulations*

Accessing these publications online is not only a very simple process, but it is also free! To access the *D.C. Register*, visit **http:// www.dcregs.org** or **http://www.os.dc.gov**. Currently, one can access versions of the *D.C. Register and Regulations* starting with the October 1, 2009, issue to the present. Some of the archived *Registers* are available on the Secretary's Web site (**http://www.os.dc.gov**) and can be accessed by clicking on the link titled "*D.C. Register April 2003 to present.*" According to Garvey, the ODAI is working on scanning all of the *D.C. Register* issues back to the first one published in 1954, and they hope to have these up on their website and available to the public in approximately one year. Having all of the *D.C. Registers* online will not only be an invaluable resource to law librarians but also the general public. Another useful feature of this online resource is the ability to sign up for alerts on various topics that are published in the *Register and Regulations*. To do this, one must first become an online subscriber at **http://www.dcregs.org** and set up a user profile. If the topics one chooses appear in either of these regulations, users receive email notifications about that particular subject. Finally, one can also chose to have the *D.C. Register* mailed directly to an email inbox weekly by sending an email to **dcdocuments@dc.gov** asking to be added to the weekly distribution list. And, for those librarians who still prefer publications in print, it is still possible to purchase a copy of the weekly *D.C. Register* at the Secretary's office at 441 Judiciary Square, NW, Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20004. To obtain a print copy one must show up in person, as copies will not be mailed out.

The staff at ODAI are extremely friendly and willing to answer questions about the move to a paperless system for the *D.C. Register* and *D.C.M.R.* Their hard work in creating the high quality website and improving access to the documents should be commended. The decision to maintain both these publications online has resulted in a more efficient and cost-effective way to conduct legal research for everyone, be it law librarians or the general public.

If you wish to find out more information or have questions about the new paperless system, please send your questions or comments to **dcdocuments@dc.gov**. **LLL**

Taming the PACER Beast: Translating the Quarterly Statement into a Sortable File in Excel

Jennifer Eckel, **jgeckel@verizon.net** *(Jennifer is an information professional living in Alexandria, VA)*

A recent survey indicates that Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is used heavily by a number of law firms and schools.[1] Documents electronically filed in the US Court system make up the database. Users can obtain federal court case and docket information for all 94 district courts, 90 bankruptcy courts, and 13 courts of appeals via the Internet. PACER currently provides access to 500 million case documents, which are available immediately after they have been electronically filed. Transcripts are the newest addition to the PACER universe as some courts and court reporters begin to put these documents online.

PACER has a diverse user population that is made up of solo lawyers, litigants who represent themselves, government agencies, trustees, researchers, educational institutions, commercial enterprises, financial institutions, law firm libraries, and the media.

As a law firm user I have worked with PACER and its two interface giants CourtExpress and Courtlink. Where these commercial products excel over PACER is in billing and the ability to breakdown billing data and sort it by client codes. Wayne's survey indicated that law firms spend an average of $13,068.48 per year on the PACER service. Attempts to recover these costs are met with the complications of PACER's quarterly billing structure. The PACER bill is intimidating with page after page of data usually sorted by date and court—not by client code. The quarterly cycle and the confused breakdown are not nearly fast enough to meet a law firm's bottom line expectation for cost recovery. There are ways to improve the cost recovery on PACER. It involves data export and import through Excel. The process is no more intimidating than reviewing the print quarterly bill. Follow the steps below using Excel 2003 and you too can review a monthly PACER bill.
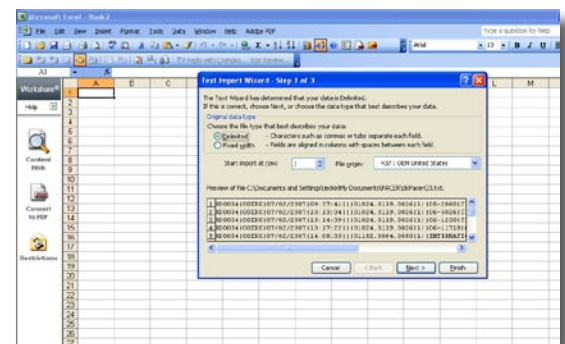
Your PACER bill has just arrived and the columns of data are ready to overwhelm. Follow these simple steps and the bill will not be so fearsome.

1. Go to the PACER web site (http://www.pacer.gov) and select "Account Information."
2. Under "Usage History" choose "Review Detailed Transaction Statement."
3. Then under "Sort Options," select the dates you'd like to review.
4. Under "Display Options" choose "Details," and under "Report Options" select "Write Report in Text Format."
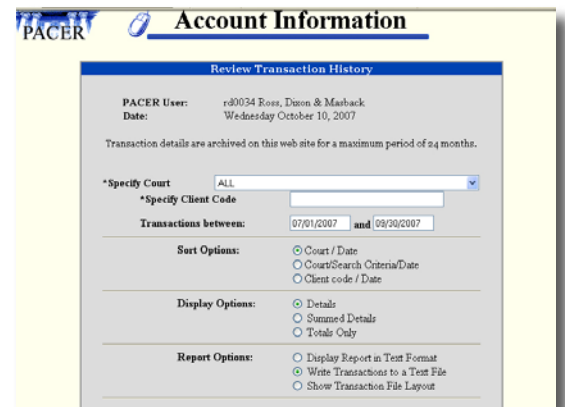
5. Save your .txt file to a handy place where you can find it again (e.g., your desktop).
6. Exit Pacer and open Excel.
7. Create a new blank worksheet.
8. Under "Data" click "Import External Data" and then "Import Data."
9. Find your saved .txt file and open it.

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[1] Erika Wayne, PACER Spending Survey (August 28, 2009), **http://legalresearchplus.com/2009/08/28/pacer-spending-survey**.

10. Select "Delimited" and then click the "Next" button.
11. Deselect "Tab" and click "Other."
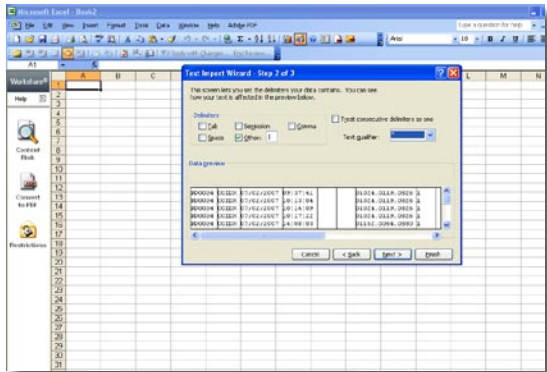
12. In the empty box type | (This is the "pipe" character, usually the "shift" value for \). Then, select "Next," then "Finish," and finally "OK."
13. Now that your data is ready to sort, select and highlight the worksheet.
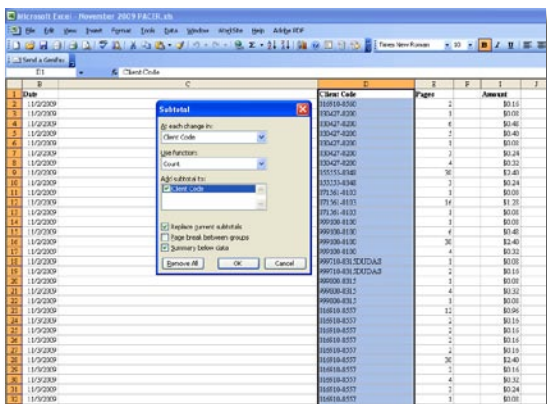14. Click "Data" and choose sort. Sort by "column" with the client number (this might be column G). Then click "OK."
15. To further sort, leave the worksheet highlighted (selected) and add subtotals.
16. Insert a blank row and assign labels to the various columns you'll be working with (e.g., client codes, pages, amounts).

17. To calculate for each client code, select the column labeled "Client Code" and then choose "data/subtotal."
18. In the box that opens select "Client Code" under "at each change in" then "Count" under "Use function" and then check the box next to "Client Code" under "Add subtotal to:"

19. Then, check "Replace present subtotals," check "Summary Below Data" and click "OK."
20. Now, format the cells of the amount column for currency, by selecting the column.
21. Choose Sort/Subtotals.
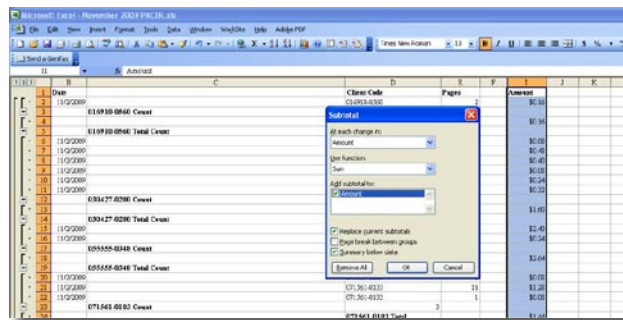
22. In the box that appears, select "amount" under "at each change in," "Sum" under "Use function," check the "amount" box under "add subtotal to," check "replace current subtotals" and then "summary below data" before clicking "OK."
23. The worksheet is now ready for coding and reporting. **LLL**

Over the past fifteen to twenty years legislative history and its use have been the subject of a series of highly charged developments that have changed access to legislative history materials at both the state and federal level, impacted its use in the courts, and generated extensive discussion and comment in both research and practitioner oriented literature.

The Impact of Technological, Court, Academic, and Practice Trends on Legislative History: Implications for Law Librarians

Gary J. Bravy, Part Time Reference Librarian, American University Law School Library

Over the past fifteen to twenty years legislative history and its use have been the subject of a series of highly charged developments that have changed access to legislative history materials at both the state and federal level, impacted its use in the courts, and generated extensive discussion and comment in both research and practitioner oriented literature. This article will describe these trends and assess the implications of the trends for practicing law librarians.

Technological Trends

Since the advent of web browsers using a graphical user interface (GUI's) for the internet and portable document (PDF) files, along with the capability to scan and store large volumes of pages, access to federal legislative materials, both current and retrospective, has increased by a huge magnitude. THOMAS and GPO have made available most Congressional Committee Reports, Committee Hearings, the Congressional Record, and other publications, generally from the 104th Congress, with most available fairly quickly after publication. Commercial publishers as well as the Library of Congress have made even some very early publications —the Congressional Record predecessors and Continental Congress are examples—easily and widely available. Previously, access to these materials required a trip to a regional depository, or access to large university library with an extensive microfiche collection (or simply being fortunate enough to be located in or near the District of Columbia). Now, anyone with access to the internet and a modicum of computer literacy can search and retrieve a broad range of Congressional materials, usually in page image format.

Activity at the state level has mirrored that of the federal; most states have made access available to a wide variety of legislative materials, although not all materials are available in PDF format, and access to retrospective materials prior to about 1995 is, at this point, quite spotty. A number of states also provide web-casts of the sessions of their legislatures. Each state has a unique bill passage process and set of legislative conventions; however most states appear to be trying very hard to make as much information as possible easily accessible. Given that most states change their codes relatively slowly, compiling a state legislative history for a complex act that was passed prior to materials being placed on the web (and amended after materials were placed on the web) will still be very challenging. However, there is little evidence of states backtracking on their commitment to make this information available, and as time goes on and more legislative years are added, these state sites will become valuable repositories of state legislative information.

Legislative History and the Courts

The extensive use of legislative history by the United States Supreme Court in statutory interpretation is well documented by two articles. Carro and Brann wrote an intensively researched and statistically based article in 1982 and concluded that "the overall impact of legislative histories upon the decision making process has not been dramatic, but sufficient enough to be considered substantial."[1] An article by Judge Wald in 1983 further documented the extensive use of legislative history by the Court, and Wald noted that "if legislative history is now scanned in every case of statutory construction, rarely is it determinative of the outcome. It competes with presumptions and canons of construction: some old, some newly derived, and many reflecting the policies in our wide-ranging legal and constitutional system that most commend themselves to the majority of judges." [2] However, in what might be called a reversal of fortune, a highly thoughtful article, also by Wald, in 1990 described a somewhat more restrained use of legislative history by the Court in response to the

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[1] Jorge L. Carro & Andrew R. Brann, *Use of Legislative Histories by the U.S. Supreme Court: A Statistical Analysis,* 9 J. Legis. 282, 289 (1982).

"textualist" movement.[3] Wald noted that "there now exists a fully articulated and quite aggressive assault in the Supreme Court on the use of legislative history in construing statutes."[4] Wald concluded that "[t]he textualists have not taken the fortress, but they have made gains in the 1988-89 Supreme Court Term. One can detect a certain tone of caution in the Court's use of legislative history in almost all cases."[5] An important and heavily cited article by Eskridge further reinforced the concept of the Court's more frugal use of legislative history and attributes this to the rise of "textualism," or sometimes the "new textualism," "originalism," or sometimes simply "plain meaning."[6] (The Eskridge article seems to have coined the term "new textualism.") Justice Scalia, the most vociferous advocate of "textualism" has taken the position that legislative history should never be consulted, although none of the other justices has supported so radical a position. A heavily cited article by Schacter takes a somewhat contrarian position, suggesting that in 1995 the Supreme Court used legislative history in about half of the opinions as one of the determinants in the decisions.[7] And a 2006 article by Molot goes so far as to declare that the use of textualism has peaked and the movement is waning.[8] It is somewhat paradoxical that, as access to federal legislative history has become quite widely available, the Supreme Court has seemingly become less willing to use it as a source in statutory interpretation.

There have been few articles discussing the use of legislative history by the lower federal courts making it difficult to judge how widely the Supreme Court's practice has impacted the lower Federal courts. In a 1996 article Snyder noted that in 1995 in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals "about 25% of all the Tenth Circuit decisions dealing particularly with statutes used legislative history to help interpret those statutes."[9] Snyder also noted that, from his analysis, only one judge in that circuit seemed to have been impacted by Scalia's views and commented that further research was necessary to determine to what extent, if any, the debate was impacting the lower federal courts.[10] A 1994 article by Nehf[11] did not find that state courts dealing with consumer unfair and deceptive acts and practices cases were any more or less inclined to use or not use legislative history. The article did note that the judges in the cases surveyed had a strong preference for textual materials but that when necessary the judges consulted many other sources, including legislative history, and also noted the many time and economic pressures at the state level not present at the federal Supreme Court.[12] A more recent article by Mikva and Lane cautions that "[a]s we survey decisions across the country we observe little that has changed in the way that courts interpret statutes. In short, the Supreme Court, other federal courts, and state courts throughout the country continue to use legislative history to interpret statutes."[13]

Research and Academic Literature Trends

The Supreme Court's more frugal use of legislative history has spawned a veritable explosion of comment in academic legal journals. Numerous, lengthy, and highly intellectual discussions—also sometimes highly charged—of statutory interpretation, originalism, the proper role of judges and the courts in interpreting statutes, bicameralism, presentment, and delegation have been written. The Snyder article gives a well rounded and even handed introduction to the debate. The very heavily cited article by Eskridge states the case

[2] Patricia M. Wald, *Some Observations on the Use of Legislative History in the 1981 Supreme Court Term,* 68 Iowa L. Rev. 195, 216 (1983).

[3] Patricia M. Wald, *The Sizzling Sleeper: The Use Of Legislative History In Construing Statutes In The 1988-89 Term Of The United States Supreme Court,* 39 Am. U. L. Rev. 277 (1990).

[4] *Id.* at 281.

[5] *Id.* at 309.

[6] William N. Eskridge, *The New Textualism,* 37 U.C.L.A. L. Rev. 621(1990).

[7] Jane S. Schacter, *The Confounding Common Law Originalism In Recent Supreme Court Statutory Interpretation: Implications For The Legislative History Debate And Beyond,* 51 Stan. L. Rev. 1 (1998).

[8] Jonathan T. Molot, *The Rise and Fall of Textualism,* 106 Colum. L. Rev. 1 (2006).

[9] Fritz Snyder, *Legislative History and Statutory Interpretation: The Supreme Court and the Tenth Circuit,* 49 Okla. L. Rev. 573, 599 (1996).

[10] *Id.* at 601.

[11] James P. Nehf, *Textualism in the Lower Courts: Lessons from Judges Interpreting Consumer Legislation,* 26 Rutgers L. J. 1 (1994).

[12] *Id.* at 6.

[13] Abner K. Mikva & Eric Lane, *The Muzak of Justice Scalia's Revolutionary Call to Read Unclear Statutes Narrowly,* 53 Smu L. Rev. 121, 123 (2000). Unlike some of the other articles mentioned here, this article cites no statistics to support that observation.

against textualism and explores the role of judges in statutory interpretation. There are numerous trends and sub trends within this discussion; only the barest hint of the complexity, depth and occasional acrimony of this debate can be touched on here. This article is not intended as a literature review of the debate; readers wishing to look at these issues in greater detail can start with almost any of the articles cited and using the footnotes find their own way into whatever aspect of the debate they would like to pursue.

Practitioner Oriented Literature

In something of a contrast to the intense academic debate and conflicting signals from the Supreme Court about the appropriate use of legislative history, articles aimed more at the practicing attorney have for the most part side stepped the debate and continued to offer guidance in the compilation and application of legislative histories, both at the state and federal level.[14] The increasing complexity of many laws, along with the more readily available access to both state and federal legislative history may be factors that contribute to practitioners' need to understand and use legislative history. Further, practicing attorneys will always look for any tactic that may gain an advantage in court, however slim, and may thus be less interested in academic or theoretical issues. Indeed, it would not be "professional" for an attorney to overlook any strategy which might help the client in a reasonably cost effective manner.

Implications for Law Librarians

The implications of the technological trends are clear: law librarians can now quickly provide, often in page image for the federal level,

the documents of even a complex and extensive legislative history. The implications of the Supreme Court and academic debate regarding the appropriate use of legislative history may be interesting or even fascinating for (some) law librarians but should not impact on their professional practice of providing legislative history information to their client base. Law librarians have always operated on the assumption that legislative history is but one of many tools that may be used for statutory interpretation. And, as demonstrated by practioner literature, attorneys continue to want to know how to compile and use legislative histories.

Interestingly, over the next 5–10 years, it may very well be the continuing development of state legislative history resources that impacts most substantially on law librarians. Until recently, law librarians had few resources to assist their clients with developing a state legislative history. However, the continuing development of online resources in the states will surely impact law librarians, particularly those who serve attorneys with a large state practice. At least some law librarians will find that they have to be equally skilled in providing both state and federal legislative history assistance. Finally, it should be noted that law librarians, as always, will remain guides through the many thickets and brambles of legislative history. While the techniques that law librarians use to access legislative history documents have been substantially impacted law librarians will continue to provide not only documents but also guidance on the best and most efficient use of the documents of a legislative history, which documents are most important, and even which parts of the documents are most important. **LLL**

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[14] *See, e. g.,* Mari Cheney, *Utah Legislative History Research Tips,* 21 Utah B. J. 31 (2009); Andrea L. Hamilton, *Conducting Colorado Legislative History Research,* 37 Colo. Law. 113 (2008); Timothy Kearley, *Free Legislative History Online,* 31 Wyo. Law. 37 (2008); John McMickle, *Living Expenses in Chapter 13: A Fresh Look at the Legislative History of Bankruptcy Reform,* 27 Am Bankr. Inst. J. 1(2008); John Cannan, *Researching the Legislative History of Maryland Rules,* 40 Md. B. J. 48 (2007); Bart M. Davis, Kate Kelly, Kristin Ford, *Use of Legislative History: Willow Witching for Legislative Intent,* 43 Idaho L. Rev. 585 (2007); Susan Adamczak, *Researching Online Sources for Michigan Legislative History,* 85 Mich. B. J. 46 (2006).

The Power of Vision

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On February 24, Covington & Burling LLP hosted the first of DC/SLA's "Library Leaders/ Distinguished Speakers" series, a highly-attended event at which Roberta Shaffer was featured as the distinguished speaker. For those readers who may not be aware, Ms. Shaffer's credentials are unparalleled and her recent appointment by Congress in 2009 as the 22nd Law Librarian of Congress bodes well for the institution and profession alike. She holds a Juris Doctor, a Master's in Library Science, and has held adjunct professor positions in various Library Science programs around the nation. Ms. Shaffer is a former practicing attorney, but is still barred in the District of Columbia, Texas, and the Supreme Court. She holds a vision for the Law Library of Congress, and is not afraid to take the risks needed to cement her legacy. As a new law librarian, I found this event extremely refreshing and inspiring. During the Q&A session, moderated by Mary Talley, Ms. Shaffer shared insights on her career path, opinions on the profession as a whole, tips for job-seekers, and her vision for the Law Library of Congress.

Interestingly enough, after completing her J.D. and M.L.S. programs, Ms. Shaffer began her career as the Special Assistant to the Law Librarian of Congress. It was at this point that she realized that the Law Librarian of Congress was her dream job and she was going to do everything in her power to achieve it. Since then, Ms. Shaffer has cultivated her resume in an effort to become, as she calls it, the "perfect candidate." She credits her ability to strive to obtain the required skills for the position to the fact that she was exposed to it at such a young age, thus, giving herself a head start against any future candidates. If you know the job you want, it will help you target what skills you will need for it.

Ms. Shaffer went on to share what traits and characteristics she looks for when interviewing candidates for positions under her supervision. For her, the two important factors are (1) exhibiting a professional passion and (2) exerting some sort of physical energy. She wants people on her staff who will contribute to the bigger picture and who will not soften the truth.

Ms. Shaffer believes that a "yes person" does not fit well on her team. For managers in the field, she recommended that they seek feedback from staff, *not* supervisors. Over the years, Ms. Shaffer feels she has become a better manager because of it.

When speaking of Library Science education and graduate programs, Ms. Shaffer took a somewhat non-conventional stance. Claiming to be the odd woman out, she believes there needs to be a more theoretical and philosophical approach to Library Science instruction. While she recognizes that it is hard to teach tomorrow's skills, Ms. Shaffer is worried that the technological skills being acquired in programs around the country today could be obsolete by the time a student graduates.

Finally, Ms. Shaffer revealed her opinions on professional associations. As a manager, she does not pay professional association fees for members of her staff. She feels that an individual needs to invest in his or her own career, and the associations are great ways to make long-term connections with colleagues. Ms. Shaffer did, however, say she will always support her staff in attending the seminars, conferences and continuing education events hosted by these associations, but firmly holds that an individual should pay the annual dues to really demonstrate commitment to the career.

As I begin my law librarian career, I appreciate Ms. Shaffer's wise words of wisdom and I expect them to resonate within as I grow in the profession. Ms. Shaffer has cemented herself as a true leader in our community and I was so glad to be part of the audience for the event. Hearing the insight that she has gained throughout her extensive career was exciting and highly motivating. I look forward to the remaining sessions of DC/SLA's series and encourage others to attend as well. **LLL**

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New this year AALL is offering nonmembers a complimentary one-year membership when they register for the AALL Annual Meeting and Conference, to be held July 10-13 in Denver. The membership includes:

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- The opportunity to network and connect with other law librarians from across the country who share similar interests and are facing the same challenges
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Annual Meeting registration is now open. Register by June 1 at the early bird rate and save $100. Register at **http://www.aallnet.org/events/10_registration.asp**.

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Getting published demonstrates and shares your expertise, enhances your reputation, widens your career reach, and contributes to the profession. Join editing and publishing gurus in a webinar to learn the nuts and bolts of getting published and insiders' perspectives on writing and editing. Please join Janet Sinder (editor, Law Library Journal), Carol Bannen (chair, AALL Publishing Initiatives Caucus), and Mark Estes (editor, AALL Spectrum) at the April 14 webinar Publishing—Take the Write Road at 12 p.m. EST to learn how you can get on the road to becoming a published author. Details available at: **http://www.aallnet.org/calendar/eventdisplay.asp?eid=317&arc=no**.

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AALL Partners with Drexel University Online to Offer Members Reduced Tuition

AALL is pleased to introduce a new educational partnership with Drexel University Online. Through this partnership, AALL members and their immediate family members are entitled to receive a 20 percent tuition reduction for Drexel's top-ranked online library science programs. Benefit from Drexel's academic excellence, convenient online format, and specially reduced tuition rates. Visit **www.drexel.com/aall**.

AALL2go Pick of the Month

AALL's Continuing Professional Education Committee presents the AALL2go pick of the month: Libraries of Hope: When Professional Competencies and Social Responsibility Connect (**http://www.softconference.com/aall/sessionDetail.asp?SID=169224**)

As librarians, how do we best put information into the hands of the world? Librarians Without Borders (LWB) have developed guidelines for providing sustainable information that is tailored to each community's language and culture. Sandra Hodgson describes sending health-related materials to Angola and the continuing efforts of LWB, including advising those who want to send books to other countries. Jane Kenny Meyers developed similar relevancy guidelines when opening a library for street kids in Zambia. The children found a safe haven where they had the opportunity to improve their English language literacy to the point that they could seek acceptance to secondary schools where they received room and board. **LLL**

Dawn Bohls, Reference Librarian, Bingham McCutchen LLP, **dawn.bohls@bingham.com**

Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971) First published by Random House in 1970

The topic for this issue of *Law Library Lights,* "More Than Books," immediately made me think of the changes in libraries—law and otherwise—from their old role as repositories of books just a couple of decades ago. This whole idea of prolonged rapid change brought to mind a book that was mentioned numerous times in my library school classes. That book was *Future Shock*, written forty years ago by Alan Toffler. Even in my library school days, a full decade ago, the book was thirty years old. Since I needed a book to review, I thought I'd actually read *Future Shock* to find out for myself what all the fuss was about, and to see what my own reactions would be, forty years out, to Toffler's ideas and predictions.

Of course, I started reading the book wondering whether I'd feel it could have been written today. In many ways, it could have. The writing style is aimed at a popular audience and is very lively. The prose does tends towards breathlessness and hyperbole, but that's appropriate given Toffler's topic of "the roaring current of change, a current so powerful today that it overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots" (p. 1).

Toffler's thematic term "future shock" describes "the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time" (p. 2). Throughout the book, Toffler explores different ways in which modern society is subject to rapid and constant change. We have become a "throw-away society," subject to a constant stream of ever-changing fads, faced with a barrage of new (and increasingly disposable) products, holding numerous jobs throughout our lifetimes, moving frequently, and facing subsequent transience in our relationships to things, organizations, and other people.

I found myself reflecting on how Toffler's observations of forty years ago have come true in my own life and career. Rather than calling in a repair person to try and fix an old refrigerator, we just opt to buy a new one. I've had several careers and even more employers over the past twenty years, far exceeding the book's estimate of six to seven different employers over a lifetime. Each job has resulted in new relationships and the fading away of old ones. Even the relative permanence of home ownership has proven transitory for myself and my husband, as we opted to purchase a new home this past year just about five miles away from our old one for reasons having much more to do with our changing wants rather than our changing needs.

Toffler felt strongly that "unless man quickly learns to control the rate of change in his personal affairs as well as in society at large, we are doomed to a massive adaptational breakdown" (p. 2). I think this point is particularly valid. Although we must be able to adapt and to accept change, we also must be able to have constancy in at least some areas of our lives. I find that I am much more adaptable to career changes and physical moves than my husband, but whereas I like to settle down with a good old-fashioned print book in the evenings, he takes advantage of new technologies to keep up with friends through Facebook and to download songs and podcasts to his iPod. Although Toffler's book is hardly meant as a self-help book, and its stress is most definitely on society rather than the individual, one can't help but personalize his observations, predictions, and prescriptions to determine whether they have validity today.

The most dated aspect of Toffler's book forty years out is not his arguments. We hear so much about constant change and the need for adaptability that the general arguments still seem current. What's jarring is combining those ideas, which still have so much resonance today, with Toffler's 1970s sensibilities, prejudices, and stereotypes. Toffler's world, in spite of all the evolution and change he writes about, is still one where Daddy goes off to work in the morning, the wife concerns herself with decorating, little girls play with Barbies, Nixon is president, hippies (and their LSD) abound, and gender-neutral language is nonexistent. In 2010, Toffler's book is no longer about the future. It's a book about the present written from the perspective of the past. In reading *Future Shock*, we ultimately learn more about Toffler's own world than we do about our own. **LLL**

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GDGT: A Social Network for Gadget Fans

If you use, evaluate or own any technology gadgets, the website GDGT is a great resource for information and discussions. It's also incorporates social networking functions that allow you to find and follow people who share common technology interests.

GDGT (pronounced 'Gadget' or 'G D G T') **http://gdgt.com** is styled as a social network for gadget users. The site allows participants to list technology gadgets of interest, where users add simple flags of have it, want it and had it for each gadget on the site. For instance, 213 users have a Barnes & Noble Nook, 810 want it and just three no longer own it. The social network aspects of GDGT are something of a soft sell. Most site content is available without creating an account. For gadget nerds and technology enthusiasts, this site could be a great way to connect with others with shared interests.

Once you've created an account, you can connect with friends, follow other users and let others follow you. For individual users, you can subscribe to an RSS feed of their site activity, even if you don't sign up with an account. The range of gadgets covered includes computers, GPS units, mice, gaming consoles, home theater components, and many others.

GDGT is the creation of Ryan Block and Peter Rojas, two gadget journalists who helped found the most popular gadget blogs online: Engadget (**www.engadget.com**) and Gizmodo (**www.gizmodo.com**). While these blogs focus on a constant stream of news updates, GDGT is centered around a user community and discussions. Every gadget on the site has a unique page where you can find reviews, discussions and specifications. Each comment and update links back to a user's profile, where you can explore their activity and gadget interests.

For casual users, GDGT is a great source for researching new technology, because it has probably the most refined product finder online.

The power of the GDGT Gadget Finder (**http://gdgt.com/find/**) is in the list of features for each gadget they cover. On a site like Amazon, you can limit search results by price, manufacturer and a few other criteria. However, Amazon is not very good at letting you filter by specific product features. GDGT does this

tremendously well, presenting search options unique to each product type. For instance, not only can you search within the category of "fitness devices" but you can refine it with specifications unique to this product class.

Here are some example searches:

- Search: GPS unit with live traffic and an Energy Star rating. One Model: Garmin nuvi 865T

- Search: Orange laptops. Two Models: ASUS R0G G50V-A1 & Samsung N310

- Search: Cell phone with a calculator and alarm but no camera. Five models being sold today

If you've already bought a new gadget, GDGT is also a great place to find technology advice and news. There are active discussion forums with news and support information on hundreds of products. Also, the site integrates reviews from many external sources, which helps you get in-depth reviews and analysis.

As part of the site, Ryan Block and Peter Rojas host a weekly podcast at: **http://features. gdgt.com/podcast**/. Each episode includes more than an hour of gadget news, and they frequently feature roundtable discussions about a specific product, such as the iPad or Nexus One phone. This is by far the best gadget podcast on the web. One great podcast feature is that each iTunes episode uses chapter features, so you can quickly jump between stories. If the hosts launch into an extended dialog on the gaming console problems (which they often do), you can just skip to the next story. Each chapter includes a small picture the gadget discussed, which is great visual context, even on a small screen.

Some aspects of the GDGT site are not new. Online discussion forums have been around since before the world wide web. Also, sites like Amazon, CNET and Crutchfield have product finder tools and user-contributed comments. What makes GDGT unique is the complexity of the interface and thought that went into making this sophistication seem simple. Also, the social network and user contribution aspects position GDGT to be a go-to source for gadgets for a long time to come.

Finally, there is probably no other place on the Internet where you can easily find lots of people with seemingly obscure gadget interests. As two closing examples, on the site, there are 55 people who own a Colecovision game console, released in 1982. Also, 21 people own the Withings Wifi Body Scale, a personal scale that records weight and body mass, allowing you to save results securely online or broadcast them instantly to Twitter. LLL

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