

Montana Library Network

February and March 2005

Planning Jan 30 and 31

The Networking Task Force, MLN, and Library Development staff met for a two-day planning session with Alane Wilson, from OCLC and co-author of the OCLC Environmental Scan. Alane led us through a process that is resulting in a planning document for MLN, beginning the process of setting our course for the next five years.

A document from this process is in final draft form, to be completed by mid-April, and will be shared with the Commission in due course. Here's an excerpt from our planning document that summarizes the tone, if not the complete substance, of our retreat:

Preferred Future—User Community

- Libraries are the center of our communities
- Libraries are thriving and growing
- Information and service is available to all
- Every library user's need is equal to every other library user's need
- Every library has staff appropriate to their needs
- Library values are recognized, understood and valued community-wide

Preferred Future—Library

- Montana libraries have balanced collections, featuring appropriate print and electronic resources
- Librarians are adapting and adaptive to change
- Libraries embrace what's best from Google, Amazon, OCLC, etc.

Preferred Future—Support and Funding

- Funding follows success
- Every community has thriving, supported, busy libraries
- Funders understand and support our goals and projects
- Lifelong library users support libraries
- Libraries have resources sufficient for the task(s) at hand

Preferred Future—Collaboration

- Libraries work together and are in-synch with one another's goals
- Libraries work together productively towards their communities' needs
- State level collaboration enhances us all equally
- All libraries and library users are included
- Expertise is shared and rationalized

OCLC

OCLC Members Council met February 6–8, 2005 in Dublin, Ohio. We discussed the implications of recent technological advances, e-content, and extending OCLC WorldCat services to more libraries as part of an overall theme of "Moving Libraries Beyond Their Comfort Zones."

The Resource Sharing Interest Group had a stimulating discussion about peer-to-peer resource sharing, that is, one library lending or borrowing from another library without going through a centralized service such as OCLC's interlibrary loan system. This was particularly germane in light of the huge number of reimbursable interlibrary loans between Montana Shared Catalog Partner libraries (see ILL note below). Montana's growing experience with peer-to-peer ILL, and

our need for improved fulfillment services (including courier services), parallels the experience of many States' and consortia from around the world.

My term on the OCLC Members' Council runs through the spring 2006 meeting, and serve on the OCLC-Western delegate nominating committee. I had the privilege of nominating Lyn McKinney from the Billings School District to join me as an OCLC-Western delegate in Members Council. Lyn would be the first ever (I believe) school librarian to serve on Members Council, and would speak with a fresh school oriented rural voice. Her election is of course not guaranteed, but her nomination was a real if small victory for multi-type library cooperation, and for rural libraries role in the OCLC collaborative.

We will begin the FY06 OCLC enrollment process in the next few weeks. Unless the measures by which a particular library's contribution changes (usually this would mean either getting more or less staff), libraries' contribution will increase 4% from last year's payment. This increase is set by our contract with OCLC.

MLNCAT

Interest in MLNCAT and Montana's relationship with OCLC continues to grow in other states. I have accepted invitations to speak to groups in Alberta, Wisconsin, and Alaska about what we have done, how, and why. Washington now has a group catalog, as does Idaho. Oregon, I understand, is looking at building a statewide union catalog based on OCLC's Group Catalog product. It will be interesting, in the future, to see if we might use this shared platform to further interstate interlibrary cooperation.

MLNCAT use is increasing here in Montana. We are continuing to work with OCLC and others to help libraries and library users discover that it is powerful and easy to use. I will try to have current MLNCAT statistics available at the meeting; the numbers I have are dated.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

In fiscal year 2004 (last year), all Montana libraries reported 36,605 reimbursable ILLs to the State Library. This resulted in ILL reimbursement to the amount of \$172,635.00, or about \$4.72 per item.

The breakout by library type for this total is as follows:

- Academic 12,843
- Public 21,572
- School 249
- Special 1,941

The Montana Shared Catalog Partner project, currently comprised of six libraries (and growing), is borrowing and lending relatively massive numbers of items between each other. Their users are delighted, and of course this is precisely what we were hoping for—increased resource sharing between Montana libraries. This will, however, reduce the per-item value of future ILL reimbursement.

Between July 2004 and February 24, six MSC Partner libraries' loaned 29,416 to one another. During most of this eight month period, only four MSC libraries were sharing patrons. Drummond and Polson were added in January.

It is likely that MSC Partner libraries will, in fiscal year 2005, by themselves exceed the number of ILL reimbursable loans of the entire state during fiscal year 2004. Further, it is likely that the

reimbursement value of an ILL will drop below \$2.00 in fiscal year 2005. As the Partner group grows (and other consortium follow suit) this trend will continue. It is not difficult to imagine ILLs being worth less than \$1.00 a piece in a couple of years.

The problem, as I see it, is not that libraries are using shared catalogs to increase their collections and expedite patron-initiated resource sharing. Resource sharing has fundamentally changed in the way it's done; it's gotten better for both our customers and our libraries. The problem is simply: Are there better uses for the resource sharing moneys we currently have? And are these funds sufficient to facilitate interlibrary sharing in the new ILL environment in which we live?

I wonder if it is time to revisit our use of these moneys. I think there may be ways of spending this \$173,000 that might go further (than reimbursing ILL transactions between Montana libraries) to encourage resource sharing between Montana libraries.

OFFLINE

Sarah and I attended OFFLINE in Lewistown in mid-February. Sarah dovetailed OFFLINE with some MSC training. I moderated a panel called: "Wireless Hot Spots for your Library". We had a good panel discussion of with panelists: Kathy Mora, Jim Semmelroth and Matt Beckstrom.

MSL staffers Roberta Gebhart and Jamie Harmon presented poster sessions on RSS feeds and Blogging, respectively. Tracy Cook presided over an MLNCAT poster session. Betsy Harper (MSU-Great Falls), Liz Babbit (Bozeman Public Library) and Jan Jelinek (Rocky) showed how the Ask-a-Montana-Librarian was working in a presentation called "Virtual Reference - Montana Style".

OFFLINE's next meeting will be in Helena, sometime next February.

Montaniana Consortium

OCLC has offered Montana a year-long 'free' trial of their digital management software, 'CONTENTdm'. It is our intent to form a consortium of libraries, museums, and archives that will work together towards preserving and making accessible digital Montaniana. We are in the process of getting a Montaniana Web server at the Montana State Library.

Our intent is to preserve and present digital collections and objects relating to Montana's cultural heritage. Examples might include digital newspapers, maps, copies of photographs, rare books, historic documents, diaries, oral histories, audio and video clips, paintings, illustrations, art, etc.

A steering committee has been formed to begin to flesh out this project. Initial committee members include representatives from:

- Montana Committee for the Humanities
- Montana Historical Society
- Montana State Library
- Montana State University—Bozeman
- Museum of the Rockies
- Parmly Billings Library
- State Law Library of Montana
- University of Montana Mansfield Library

I hope to demonstrate this product this summer or early fall. <http://www.contentdm.com>

Ask-a-Montana-Librarian Consortium (QuestionPoint)

This project continues to move ahead, although it is experiencing some growing pains. Consortium members, including Betsy Harper, Jan Jelinek, and Liz Babbitt, are doing a wonderful job running the project. There are currently twenty-six participating libraries. This project should continue to come together with a healthy admixture of training and marketing... both of which are in the offing.

Montana Shared Catalog

The MSC is in the process of adding an assistant for Sarah and Mike. We hope to have this employee hired by early this summer.

New MSC libraries are being added everyday, that is, libraries who joined last summer are continuing to add their holdings to the catalog and 'go-live'. Clancy went live today (Wednesday, April 06, 2005), and a new library the Highwood School Library, joined in February.

Mike went to the Sirsi 'SuperConference' last month, and came back with some good ideas and feeling that, all things taken into consideration, we were doing pretty well.

The enrollment period for new MSC libraries will begin in the next six weeks, with libraries going-live beginning this coming September.

The new servers are performing brilliantly. We all (all 57 MSC libraries) couldn't be happier.

Full Text Magazine Contract

After looking at the results of a request for information (sent to Gale, EBSCO, Proquest, and HW Wilson), the Networking Task Force (NTF) recommended we stay with Gale for the two-year contract period beginning September 2005, and issue a fresh request for proposal for the contract period beginning September 2007.

The overall cost for the Gale product will remain the same. We will be adding some content (at the same price), and upgrading to a new user interface. Details about the additional content and new interface will be forthcoming, after consideration by the NTF.

Auto Repair Resource Center

This product is now available from two vendors, EBSCO and Gale. We currently subscribe to this service via EBSCO.

We will issue an RFP to select a vendor late this spring.

Marketing

Under Sara Grove's able leadership, we are making headway toward more effectively marketing our content and services. Our plan is to focus marketing efforts on a discrete group, where outcomes can be observed. I will leave the details of this to Sara's report, but I suspect marketing and planning will occupy an increasing percentage of my day.