

Montana Library Network

April—May 2005

LDD Goal 2: To ensure that all Montana citizens have access to quality library services.

Montana Library Association meeting in Billings

In addition to staffing the MSL booth in the exhibits hall, we participated in several discussions of topics I believe the Commission will want to be informed about:

1. I presented a paper titled: "Rural Libraries: Good (if often isolated) neighbors". The title of this paper has been changed to "Montana's Libraries: Good Neighbors", and is available at: <http://montanalibraries.org/MLNNews/RuralLibrariesWhitePaper.doc>

This paper summarizes the results of the Networking Task Force's planning retreat in January of this year, and looks at Montana libraries' environment. Finally, this paper recommends a series of actions; I hope these recommendations will be considered during MLN's and MSL's next planning cycle.

Four basic assumptions underlie this paper:

- Libraries are successful to the extent our customers are successful
- Libraries must collaborate
- Libraries, if successful, will cost their communities more, not less; but will increase their value
- Our users are worth it

2. We had a series of discussions regarding Montaniana, that is, digital metadata and content pertaining to Montana's culture and history. There is considerable interest and movement among Montana's larger libraries, universities, museums and archives, toward building online digital content. In particular, a presentation titled: "Finding Primary Sources: Using the Web to Access Archival Materials", presented by Molly Kruckenberg, State Archivist, Helena, Jennie Stapp, Technical Services Librarian, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, and Donna McCrea, University Archivist, K. Ross Toole Archives at University of Montana, Mansfield Library, Missoula, was terrific. Listening to these three assured me that the State's digital content future is in good hands.

MLN's role is to encourage the development of a statewide digital content consortium, by purchasing a server and mounting a (one-year) trial version of a software application called CONTENTdm on this server, and making this available to interested Montana institutions. Our role, in addition, is to encourage standards-based implementation of Montaniana so that our users can search all Montana, an institution, a collection, or for a single item. Further, we hope that the consortium builds collections in such a way as to interoperate with other state's similar services.

This has been and continues to be a worthy goal. It is worth noting, however, that the State purchasing process has held up MLN's purchase of a server since late March. As time passes and we sit here waiting for ITSD's decision, our opportunities (to encourage coordinated development of Montaniana) are beginning to fade away.

3. The Ask-a-Montana-Librarian group met and discussed pricing, package, marketing, and administration-related issues. A subsequent meeting at the MSL, May 25, was attended by twenty-three of the twenty-five coop members from as far as Wolf Point and Glendive. From this meeting concrete plans emerged for marketing, pricing, and governance. OCLC is being a good partner and doing everything they can to bring about our success.
4. OFFLINE will be in Helena next year, during February.
5. The Interlibrary Loan interest group discussed ILL reimbursement and trends in resource sharing. There is a growing emphasis on 'fulfillment', getting materials into patrons hands, rather than a focus on tools (ILL, placing holds, acquisitions, etc.)

Montana Shared Catalog

1. The Montana Shared Catalog members had a meeting in Missoula, May 6. We discussed a number of items, but perhaps most interesting was the discussion of a Sirsi product called 'Director's Station'. This is a report generating add-on to the Sirsi application, and it appears to be quite useful for most MSC members. The interesting bit was seeing how, with fifty-six libraries, the usual consensus process begin to break down. There wasn't time at the meeting to come to a group decision regarding whether to purchase Director's Station. Most interestingly there has been considerable subsequent discussion about whether the consensus model could or should work for the MSC, whether majority votes should be used in instances where agreement cannot be achieved, or whether the group needs to hone their consensus skills and devote more time to wrestling with difficult topics. It will be fascinating to see how this develops.
2. The six partner libraries will be requesting ILL reimbursement for the current fiscal year. I don't have a current count, but I continue to estimate that the six partners will claim about as many reimbursable ILLs as did the entire state last year.
3. As of this writing (May 27, 2005), we have received three complete MSC new library applications, and expect another five or six. We have attracted no larger libraries, and will ask the Networking Task Force to consider adding a third category of libraries and a second round of applications.

Existing categories—

- Program One, Larger Library: 100,000 or more bibliographic records, *and* 25,000 or more registered patrons
- Program Two, Smaller Library: Not a larger library

Proposed new categories—

- Program One, Larger Library: 100,000 or more bibliographic records, *and* 25,000 or more service area population (or over 15,000 full-time-equivalent students, staff, and faculty). Maximum request amount \$50,000.
- Program Two (new), Middle-size library: 35,000 to 100,000 bibliographic records *and* 10,000 to 24,999 service area population (or 5,000 to 14,999 full-time-equivalent students, staff, and faculty) Maximum request amount \$25,000.

- Program Three, Smaller Library: Not a larger or middle-sized library. Maximum request amount \$10,000.

Care will be taken to keep this process fair, and in particular to allow libraries an opportunity to apply for the maximum amount of financial assistance they are eligible.

OCLC Members Council

1. The best news is that Lyn McKinney, the Librarian at Billings Senior High School and a member of the Networking Task Force, has been elected by OCLC-Western member libraries to the OCLC Member's Council. Lyn is the first school librarian in memory to be elected to this august body. She will learn lots, but the Member's Council will learn more by having Lyn's clear and thoughtful school librarian's voice added to the dialog. The Member's Council advises the OCLC Board and staff on a wide variety of topics.
2. I attended a Member's Council meeting in May, 2005, and served on the nominating committee, chaired the Resource Sharing Interest Group, and informally presented our white paper discussing rural libraries. I anticipate next year, with Maggie Farrell as MC Chair, that this paper will be discussed at length. Already it has attracted a buzz, with Community Colleges wanting to draft a similar paper for their environment.

LDD Goal 5: Montana citizens can easily access the holdings of all Montana and OCLC libraries and online electronic resources through their libraries.

1. I consulted with Saskatchewan libraries in regards to Montana's Group Catalog. They were interested but for a variety of reasons are holding off beginning a group catalog for the Province.
2. I attended the May Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR) board meeting in Darlene's stead.
3. OCLC enrollment is coming along at about its expected pace. Approximately 150 of the expected 250 libraries have reenrolled as of May 27, 2005.
4. The Thomson/Gale InfoTrac subscription process is underway, with online enrollment becoming available May 27, 2005. Mike Price did a great job with this, and with the OCLC enrollment process, providing libraries with the ability to sign-up online, and using MSL's online library directory database structure.

Prices have not increased (unless a library's materials expenditures have, and have moved a library to a higher category). All the current databases and indexes subscribed library users have become familiar with are available. As a bonus this year, your library has the choice of adding, at no extra cost, either Gale's Contemporary Authors database, or the Biography Resource Center. Try the new databases at <http://trials.galegroup.com/pubacd/>

* Username: ease * Password: ofuse

This subscription is for two years service; libraries pay once for a subscription running from September 2005 through August 2007.

Libraries can decide if they want to continue to use the current InfoTrac user interface, or move to the new version. The Networking Task Force will discuss a migration and training strategy at its June 6 meeting in Helena, at the Lewis & Clark Library.

We are in the process of selecting a vendor for the Chilton auto repair content. Both Gale and EBSCO now offer this product, we intend to select one or the other by September 2005.

LDD Goal 3: Montana citizens will understand, value, and use the services of Montana's libraries.

1. MLN is working closely with Sara Groves and others on a new statewide marketing strategy. I will let Sara report on this herself, but note that Sara is also helping the Ask-a-Montana-Librarian cooperative online reference group with their marketing.
2. The laptop lab was replaced with new, easier to tote, easier to maintain, wireless laptops. John Redmond and Bob Cooper are taking the lead on this project.

LDD Goal 6: Montana citizens and students will have dependable access to electronic information services at their libraries by the end of 2007.

1. The Flathead County Library and Great Falls Library have both purchased a thin-client public access solution from a Canadian firm called 'Userful'. These smart-terminals seem to be cost effective solutions to the problem of providing maintenance-free public computing. The Sidney Public Library is interested as well. We are seeking a statewide contract for these, or similar, library-oriented thin client workstations. <http://userful.com/products/library>