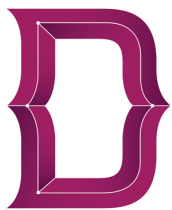


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manifesto



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Dear reader,

As this is the third issue of Library Manifesto, it may seem like an appropriate time for you to ask: "What exactly is the Library Manifesto?" Our premise, put simply, is that everyone has a relationship to the library world. Calling it "the library world" makes me uncomfortable, it's not as if you can get there through an intergalactic space trip. By referencing "the library world," what I am really pointing to is the fact that all libraries in existence – or maybe, for our sake, the Tri-State Area – are connected in some way.

Library Manifesto is meant to be a forum for conversation about libraries. We welcome the voices of non-librarians because everyone has opinions or experiences to share about libraries and library science. Without knowing it, people are using principles related to this profession every day. We are interested in hearing what an architect, doctor, composer, pharmacist, or teenager has to say about libraries. Librarians have to learn from their patrons and from other people that organize information. Librarianship is becoming much more interdisciplinary, especially as it incorporates the internet and new technologies and databases.

This October, we're heading to the movies because there are two new films of interest out: "The Social Network" directed by David Fincher and "Waiting for Superman" directed by Davis Guggenheim. "The Social Network", a film about Facebook's rocky start is arguably the year's most talked about and anticipated film. While the film's plot regards the beginning of Facebook, the largest social networking site in the world, it is also about the creation of data and more specifically databases. Why is this film so important to librarians? Here are three reasons: 1. People (about 500 million of them) apparently love using databases. As long as those databases don't remind them of databases. 2. Copyright is evil and limits our creative freedom. 3. Copyright is essential and protects our ideas. In some ways, librarians are in a unique position to make decisions about copyright.

The second film, "Waiting for Superman" is a documentary exploring what is going on in the American education system and why. Librarians should see this film, and grapple with the fact that they also play a major role in education. As stewards of information, maybe librarians can inform everyone that we're all to blame for the messy education system. We all have a part to play, school media specialists can develop a love of reading in children, public librarians can facilitate this excitement for learning, and academic librarians can expand on this relationship in higher education.

Both films are understandably catching people's attention. They attempt to put some perspective on today's stickiest trends. It's clear that both subjects, Facebook and charter schools, have rapidly become meaningful fixtures in American society and no one knows exactly what the consequences are going to be. Librarians are intrinsically involved in all of these issues and it is up to librarians to choose an active role in determining the future of education, databases, and privacy in the United States.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Mission Statement:
*May cuddle up with a soy
cappuccino and jcrew catalog
at any moment.*

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Drop cap





THE US SOCIAL FORUM AND LIBRARIANS: A REPORT-BACK

by Melissa Morrone

The second US Social Forum (USSF) was held in Detroit, Mich., this past June. The concept of the “social forum” has been developed since the first World Social Forum (WSF) took place in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. It refers to a dynamic process -- not just an event -- where progressive organizations and individuals come together to connect and strategize about ways to fight against neoliberal ideas of globalization and other oppressions.¹ I’ve never been to the WSF, but I attended both the 2007 USSF (held in Atlanta, Ga.) and the one this summer.

The social forums are overwhelming events. The 2010 USSF was five days long, packed with time slots that offered over 100 workshops each. People’s Movement Assemblies²- 50 in all - were special sessions for analysis and action plans related to topics ranging from prison to gender to the environment. How to choose what to focus on? For a few librarians, it was activities that would allow us to incorporate our training and interests.

Back in 2007, members of Radical Reference³ and the Progressive Librarians Guild (<http://libr.org/plg/>) participated on multiple levels as librarians.⁴ This time, we wanted to have a strong radical librarian contingent, but only three of us were able to go in the end -- me, Jenna Freedman, and Alycia Sellie. As it happened, we are all New Yorkers who are members of the NYC collective of Radical Reference and also have ties to the radical techie crew that formed the technological backbone of the USSF.

Alycia got caught up in helping with registration and other tech issues, so it was mainly Jenna and I involved in the People’s Media Center.⁵ As with all aspects of the USSF, the PMC took shape through (relatively) horizontal collective participation both before and during the forum -- it became what we all made of it. In fact, there were no special “press passes” for journalists who wanted to cover the USSF; every attendee had the potential to be a media maker, so the only requirement for entry into the PMC was the standard bracelet that indicated you had registered for the forum.

Jenna and I had been on PMC planning conference calls in the weeks leading up to the USSF, and once in Detroit we helped set up the physical space and contributed to the wiki. We also spent a lot of time at the Info Desk to help answer questions -- though most media-makers simply needed

1. See the Winter 2006-7 issue of Information for Social Change, <http://libr.org/isc/toc.html#24>.

2. <http://pma2010.org/>(<http://pma2010.org/>)

3. <http://radicalreference.info>

4. My write-up is at <http://www.radicalreference.info/MRM/ussf2007>

5. (http://wiki.ussf2010.org/wiki/Media_Center)

space (and electricity, and Internet access) in which they could create. One morning we conducted a fact-checking workshop for a couple of people.⁶ A few photos of the PMC are on flickr.⁷

Radical Reference was also invited by Team Colors⁸, a “militant research” collective, to be on their panel “Research for the Revolution: Radical Research Strategies for Movement Building.” Jenna, Alycia and I spoke about how we use our library expertise to work with social justice activists and independent journalists. Fellow panelist Cindy Milstein, an anarchist organizer and educator, was especially awesome, questioning even the use of the academically-fraught term “research” -- why not “inquiry”? Why separate “thought” from organizing? Milstein and some members of the audience brought up issues of class and race (the entire panel was white, for one) and criticized narrow definitions of media and materials worthy of research -- why shouldn’t, for example, a play be a valid media product? In Milstein’s words, we need to be decommodifying knowledge and reappropriating imagination.

As Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Andrej Grubic say in the preface to the recently-published Team Colors collection *Uses of a Whirlwind: Movement, Movements, and Contemporary Radical Currents in the United States*, “[there is a] perceived desperate need of current radical movements for processes of inquiry, that is, investigations into the strengths of contemporary organizing and processes that involve dialogue and communications in relation to the realities and experiences of oppressed peoples” (p. xv). And whether or not we consider ourselves “militant researchers,” the work of librarians is indeed connected with inquiry, investigation, and communication.

AND SO WHAT.....?

At least 15,000 people attended the 2010 USSF. One of my personal USSF regrets is not making more of an effort to learn about the host city, despite the great quantity of Detroit-specific workshops and talks.⁹ Media equipment from the PMC and other resources were left in Detroit for the benefit of grassroots organizations in that struggling but inspiring city.

And in the rest of society, the mainstream media naturally took little notice of this massive pan-Left event. According to an investigation by Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a Tea Party convention in February got 1500 times as many mentions, per participant, as did the USSF.¹⁰ Something to keep in mind when we consider that elusive “professional neutrality,” in journalism as well as in our own field.

6. <http://radicalreference.info/factchecking/ussf2010>

7. http://www.flickr.com/photos/mrm_nyc/tags/peoplesmediacenter/

8. (<http://www.warmachines.info/>)

9. Alycia, has a write-up of a talk with legendary local activist Grace Lee Boggs and Immanuel Wallerstein: <http://alycia.brokenja.ws/glb%2526iw>.

10. <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=4143>



1.5 FAST, 1.5 FURIOUS

by Matthew Walker



When I first spoke with Ms. Pantoja about composing an article around my experiences with the Free Music Archive (FMA) – a seemingly bottomless well of wealth – her interest seemed piqued by the opportunity to showcase an archive incorporating the tools of Web 2.0. As a slowly recovering academic, my own enthusiasm was aroused by the opportunity to incorporate a bit of theoretical library science jargon into the fabric of what would otherwise be a fairly cut-and-dry, show-and-tell exercise. However, despite the seeming potential for obtuse and abstract pontification (and much to my dismay), the concept of Web 2.0 actually refers to the most predominant (and often banal) terrains of the internet landscape: twitter, facebook, blog comment sections,

and wikipedia (which, of course, taught me the definition of Web 2.0). Web 2.0 comprises those web applications that foster open interactivity, collaboration, informational exchange. Thus, imagine my elation when I discovered that the more accurate categorization for the FMA was not the run-of-the-mill 2.0 model, but instead the much more rare and obscure model of “Web 1.5” (ain’t no entry in Wikipedia for that!).

The FMA was created in 2007 as an essential appendage of WFMU, the country’s longest freeform, non-commercial radio station (pumping out weird jams from a home base in Jersey City since ‘58). Functioning as an interactive online library for (relatively) high-fidelity audio downloads, the FMA now hosts more than 25,000 files – all cleared through licensing agencies such as Creative Commons to provide a range of legal uses, from private listening to podcasting to video soundtracking. However, much more than a gigantic storehouse of dope jams, the archive also provides artist biographies, album information, and relevant external links. Stored audio content can be browsed using a series of wide and narrow filters including artist, genre, customizable tags, usage type, etc.

Perhaps most interestingly, though – and this is where the Web 1.5 bit comes in, and where the FMA distinguishes itself from both file-sharing networks and open-source libraries such as archive.org – the audio content hosted at the FMA is hand-selected by a diverse array of more than forty forward-thinking curators from the Seattle-based public radio station KEXP to the Indonesian record label Yes No Wave Music to ISSUE Project Room, a non-profit experimental arts presenter based in Brooklyn (full disclosure: this is where I work and on whose behalf I sometimes curate at the FMA). As its centerpoint, the FMA hosts a blog through which the various curators can wax poetical, analytical, or educational about recently shared content and general users may, in turn, post their own comments, criticisms, praises, and non sequiturs.

The FMA occupies an intriguing middle ground between the purely user-generated content of Web 2.0 and the cold passivity of Web 1.0, providing selective content from a broad but exclusive group of curators while maintaining an open environment through which the general user can interact with curators and offer feedback. While the term Web 1.5 might seem to suggest a retrogression away from the anarchic free-for-all of the numerically-advanced Web 2.0, the concept instead offers a refreshing (and, I might go as far as to posit: superior) alternative to the overwhelming deluge of unrestricted access and unmediated content so prevalent in new models of web-based archivism. Rather than wade through an infinite stretch of unregulated media, FMA users can browse the archive with the assurance that featured content has been selected for its compelling/unique/bizarre qualities by a discerning and critically-minded ear attached to a human being or two who have already proven their curatorial merit in some external arena. All the while, the communal freedom of open exchange remains and users can enjoy the free and legal pleasures of licensed audio files.



THE ART LENDING PROGRAM

by Cynthia Belanger

In 2003, the City of Red Deer, Alberta was designated one of the "Cultural Capitals of Canada" – a program of the federal government. With this recognition the city received a sum of money and local organizations were invited to submit proposals for arts projects to a committee created to disburse the funds. Red Deer Public Library's proposal for an art lending project was approved and we received \$10,000.

The project idea was hatched by a committee representing the library and the arts and business communities in Red Deer. The committee's first meeting was in April 2004 and at that meeting the goal of fostering partnerships between local artists, businesses and the general public was established. After brainstorming many ideas over a number of monthly meetings the art lending program idea was formulated and submitted to the City's review committee. As stated before, the project was approved and it was decided that the seed money of \$10,000 would go to the library to implement the project and administer the funds.

Two facets of the program made it especially appealing to the business and arts groups in Red Deer:

- 1) creates awareness and appreciation of local emerging and established artists; fosters their development and enlarges their marketplace.
- 2) makes original art freely accessible to everyone in our community to enjoy in their home or business.

The launch date for the project was October 17, 2005 (during Canadian Library Week). The inaugural collection consisted of 42 framed and matted original pieces of art selected by a Jury appointed by Red Deer Public Library. In order to purchase as many pieces as possible and introduce many emerging artists, the majority of the initial acquisition was selected from our local colleges 3rd year art student show.

Two years later, the library funded a second call for art as a result of a successful grant application to a local body promoting arts and wellness. A special jury was struck that included visual artists, health professionals and librarians. 50 new artworks by local artists were purchased and are now on loan to a unit in our local hospital.

The philosophy behind the Library's Art Lending Program is documented in our Art Lending Program marketing brochure.¹ There you will find the Manifesto of the Art Lending Program, a reference to artotheken – German art lending libraries, and info on our hospital partnership.

Our borrowers are quite varied – college students, regular library patrons, nonprofit agencies, Mayor's office and even some local real estate agents who are "staging" properties for viewing. Recently we loaned about 20 of the works to a seniors living complex for an artshow they hosted over a weekend.

In order to add the collection to the library's catalog, I worked with the Technical Services staff to photograph each piece and create a basic catalog entry that would describe the artwork. The collection is searchable in the catalog by artist name and title of work. You can also just type in "art lending project" under word/phrase and pull up the list of works that are available. The 50 works on loan to the hospital are shadowed in our catalog as they are not available to the general public at this time.

We located a small business that would sew cloth bags with handles so that each piece had a traveling bag. All the works were framed at a reduced cost by working with our local cultural centre staff who purchased mattes and frames at bulk buying prices. The framer was paid as well of course. This all came out of the grant money we received. We have had no problems getting back any of the art. We have had a couple of pieces returned with glass broken but we did not charge the customers.

Due to budget restraints we have not added any new works since 2007. I would love to expand the collection so we do watch for any type of new grants that might be open to this type of project.

Read more about the Art Lending Program at <http://www.rdpl.org/vision>.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Ann Arbor Public Library has been lending art prints and posters for 20 years. Three prints can be checked out at a time, for a period of eight weeks. The collection includes posters from museum and gallery exhibitions and prints of paintings like Van Gogh's "Starry Night" – bound to end

up in a University of Michigan dorm room. In the past three years, AAPL has steadily increased their budget for the poster collection and the library hopes to represent more local artists in the future. AAPL librarian Jacqueline Sasaki says, "Although there is a growing trend towards downloadable media for books, CDs and videos, framed art prints appear to have lasting value."



1) <http://www.rdpl.org/documents/art-lending-program-brochure.pdf>

MAGGIE BALISTRERI, LIBRARIAN FOR POETS HOUSE

Interview by Matt MacVey

Maggie Balistreri is the librarian at Poets House. Poets House is a library and center for poets and poetry. In 2009, Poets House moved to 10 River Terrace in the Battery Park neighborhood of Manhattan. One year later they are going strong in their new space with no sign of slowing down. We asked Balistreri a few questions about the collection and her perspective on poetry and the library world.

Library Manifesto: What is the mission of the Poets House library?

Maggie Balistreri: Poets House was founded in 1985 by poet Stanley Kunitz and arts administrator Elizabeth Kray as a home for all who read and write poetry. We offer an all-inclusive library comprising 50,000 titles (books, chapbooks, journals, and multimedia) as well as a beautifully curated children's room and a program hall all in one space in Battery Park City. We aim to build a comprehensive collection of titles and rely on donations to build this collection.

LM: Who uses the library?

MB: Students, poets, professors, neighbors, tourists, cyclists pedaling down the Hudson, local business staff, old friends and new. Mike Romanos, the children's room coordinator, invites students from the five boroughs and beyond to visit and learn about the resources. Our programs introduce many people to Poets House, and they return to access the books as well as to bring their laptops and enjoy the view as they compose their own work.

LM: What criteria do you use for collection development?

MB: We have no budget for collection development; our budget is to ask politely. Each title was donated. Our focus for collection development is on books, chapbooks, and multimedia titles of and about poetry published in the United States. We keep one copy and sell any duplicates at an annual book sale. We get books in two ways: donations from visitors, poets, publishers, and poetry readers; and our focused collection-development

LM: What is the state of poetry publishing today?

MB: It's diverse, dispersed throughout the country (our focus is on US publishers, but international presses are also very well represented in our library), and there are many more collaborations we see between publishers and artists, either cover artists or artists' collectives. The departure from standard printing takes the form of poetry published as scrolls, broadsides, or mobiles; poetry inserted into repurposed pill bottles; books published in different editions or with different cover art (Booklyn, and Eileen Myles's *Inferno* by OR books); and in general, the trend toward gorgeous book design (Ugly Duckling Presse, for example). Publishing is a labor of love, and publishers are availing themselves

of the technology (both desktop publishing software and print-on-demand services) to produce gems.

LM: What are the goals of the library?

MB: Poets House's library serves as a home for poets by providing space in which to work and to access a democratic collection of poetry. We aim to be comprehensive and we offer books, chapbooks, journals, and multimedia titles. It's a noncirculating library. Although one is more than welcome to become a Poets House Member (with benefits including free admission to all programs and invitations to member events), we offer the library and the space free to the community.

LM: How do you involve youth with the collection?

MB: Each week Mike Romanos, Children's Room Coordinator, gives tours to students who come from all 5 boroughs. After a tour of the space, Mike either reads to the students or engages them in a writing or research project. We also have students from nearby schools (high school, college, grad school) working as interns for us in every area of the space. These interns learn about cataloging, greet visitors in the lobby, and post updates (Twitter, Facebook) about Poets House programs.

LM: Do you like poetry?

MB: I do. I hosted readings in town for years and co-organized the only 24-hour marathon reading of the complete poems of Emily Dickinson. I've always loved poems and philosophy; studied both as an undergrad.

LM: Can you name some poets/poems about libraries or to inspire librarians?

MB: Philip Larkin was a poet-librarian, and one whom I admire stylistically.

LM: What could MLS programs do to better prepare students to be poetry librarians?

MB: Special collections classes or collection development classes that offers strategies to deal with low or (in Poets House's case) no budget for collection development would help library students. [At Poets House we have an] annual Showcase, which offers publishers an opportunity to participate in an exhibition of poetry titles organized by publishers. In this way, poetry publishers are celebrated and promoted, and the library acquires the new titles needed for a comprehensive collection. I'd love to see more by way of publishing history and publishing networking, anything to teach students about working with publishers to help libraries offer their work. I took a publishing history class at Pratt (Professors Eiger and Crouch) that I benefit from every day because it filled in the gaps in my knowledge about publishing and how the industry has evolved.

LM: For your personal/home library Dewey or LOC?

MB: Ah, neither. It's deliberately organized by when I read them! I collect dictionaries, and those are together. I memorize where my books are in my home library, and I know that I read Santayana after reading Hazlitt, and so on. Keeps me sharp.



lm

<http://www.librarymanifesto.com/>

CONTROLLED VOCABULARY:

WFMU, Databases, Social, Michigan, 'Cultural Capitals', Manifesto.