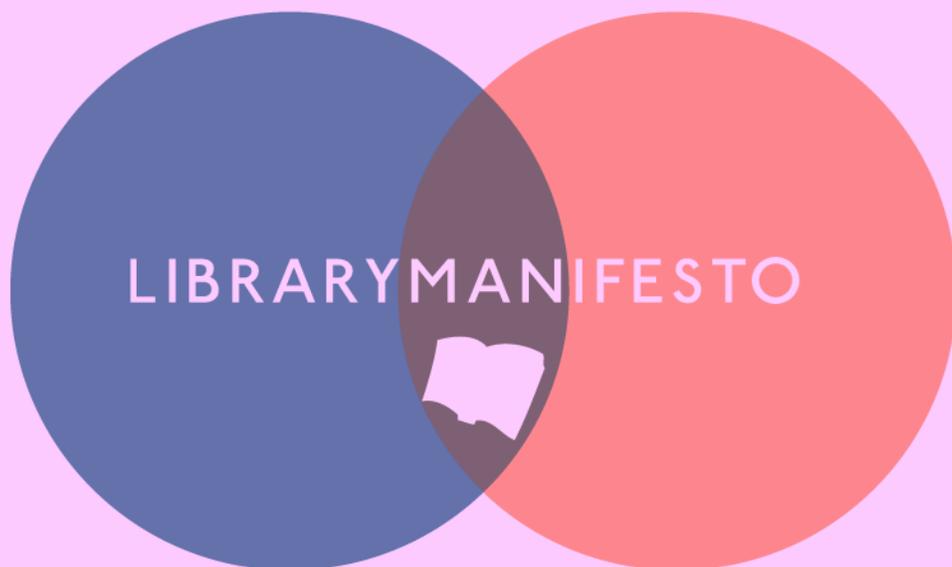


FEB II 2011
ISSUE 4



issue 4



his year, I spent the 2010 holiday with my significant other Matt and his parents at his childhood home in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Despite being 600 miles from my home in New York, I felt closer to my family than I had in a long time. Here's why; Matt's mom Deborah is a genealogy enthusiast and knowledgeable about the various tools available online on the subject of family history. She has been inspired to travel through the U.S. to visit meaningful places in her blood line.

The day after Christmas Matt suggested that she help me do some research of my own. Debbie jumped on the opportunity to help me trace my family history, "it's very addictive" she warned. As she logged on to Ancestry.com I quizzed my mother over the phone for research information. I asked for my grandmother's maiden name, a question that had never occurred to me to ask her before. With just a first and last name, approximate birth year, and city of origin we were able to find records dating back to 1795. Debbie said, "When I first started working on this about 10 years ago, the websites weren't so extensive. I would go to the libraries in some of the small towns where my family came from and was impressed with how much genealogy information the libraries had."

Ancestry.com is among the top earning subscription-based genealogical websites. A subscription costs about \$160.00 per yer. Once a member you may start building a family tree for yourself or other people, like what Debbie did for me on her account. Building a tree is easy. You can start by searching public birth and death records, and U.S. census records. In a press release from 2006, Ancestry.com announced the completion of digitizing all U.S. census records from 1790-1930. An enormous amount of labor went into that process, including 6.6 million hours of deciphering handwriting from thirteen million original census documents. The site has over a billion public member trees and 300 million private member trees.

There are also free genealogy websites to explore. Rootsweb, acquired by Ancestry.com is free. Perhaps one of the best resources for family history is FamilySearch, from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The site is backed by LDS libraries around the world. More recently, genealogy has been crossing over to mainstream pop culture on television shows like Faces of America on PBS, and another show called Who Do You Think You Are? on NBC, both tracing the genealogy of celebrities. In 2010 journals like The New York Times and USA Today reported distant family ties between Robert Pattinson and Dracula, Madonna and Ellen Degeneres, and Barack Obama and Sarah Palin. With a growing media interest in genealogy it is fair to assume that MLS degree holders should familiarize themselves with these types of research tools.

Genealogy may be a growing field in library science as more records become available. Online research tools have given us the ability to add new dimensions to our identity. A public interest in genealogy is bound to grow with the availability of more searchable records. While online sites like Skype and Facebook have connected us to our living relatives, genealogy sites are connecting us to our ancestors.

Many thanks for opening the issue we hope you enjoy it! LM is only possible if we have thoughtful contributions so I want to hear from readers about interesting topics we should cover. Go to librarymanifesto.com for more information about contributing.

CONTRIBUTORS

Natalie Pantoja, Editor
Mission Statement: Would never live blog an award show

Matthew Gengler
Introducing Bookmobile from Cleveland Museum of Art.....2

Dan White
Casanova.....2

Laura Amos
Serving on the Newbery Selection Committee.....3

Interview
Dan Taeyoung Lee, Web Designer.....4

Jonathan Heifetz
The Homeless and Public Libraries: An Important Conversation.....5

Amy Helfant
Design Consultant

Jessica Hische
Drop cap



INTRODUCING BOOKMOBILE FROM THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

Matthew Gengler

This past fall the Ingalls Library of the Cleveland Museum of Art announced Bookmobile, a mobile phone friendly version of the library's website and catalog, at library.clevelandart.org/mobile. With fully-functioning search capabilities, access to Ask-A-Librarian and publication request forms, and even a scaled down version of the library's popular blog, the bookmobile made a quick impact. The launch of Bookmobile provided the library with a unique opportunity to promote increased user services, access, and technology, both to library patrons and to colleagues among the membership of the Art Libraries Society of North America, or ARLIS/NA. Simply put, we are the first art library to do this and would like you to know that.

That said, you can do this too. The Bookmobile is the joint effort of a hardworking systems librarian and a reference librarian with almost no code smashing ability. Niki Krause, the former, wove together the CSS, java, and PHP required. I tested things and made suggestions. To be honest, I think she let me in on the project because I have an iPhone and enthusiasm in buckets. The model for the catalog portion of the Bookmobile originated with a systems librarian in Sweden, who politely documented his work. While testing, we accessed dozens of other mobile websites until we settled on the features presented on our site. We envisioned our curators utilizing the Bookmobile to check our catalog and request books while traveling, students asking questions from the galleries, and museum members accessing the scaled down library blog by chance. We recognized early that a mobile site needs to provide simple directions, like how to find the library, and we provided these essential elements as well.

In conjunction with the development of Bookmobile, Niki utilized a quick online QR code generator to create additional access points. These codes, scanned by a mobile phone application, link to the Bookmobile's Ask-A-Librarian form and to highlighted collection search results. At the first chance possible, the museum featured a QR code on a special exhibition bookmark, providing a link to a related bibliography, through Bookmobile. Further opportunities exist for collaboration at the gallery level with Ask-A-Librarian QR codes and bibliographies on wall labels.

What is important here is not the technology, but rather, how we use it. If you look at Bookmobile on a purely feature level, it is essentially a scaled down version of a website with some of the sharp corners filed off. Accessing the above link from a computer proves that. But the outreach possibilities are truly meaningful. This places the library within the context of the museum's galleries and collections in ways unthinkable before. And that is remarkable.



Dan White



SERVING ON THE NEWBERY SELECTION COMMITTEE

Laura Amos



This year I have the honor to serve on the 2012 John Newbery Medal Selection Committee for the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and the American Library Association (ALA). I've had many people ask what the Newbery award is, what kinds of things the committee looks for when deciding on a recipient for the award, and how one goes about getting on this committee. To answer these questions, here's a Newbery crash course.

The John Newbery Medal is an award given each year by ALA and ALSC to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. The award can go to authors of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, and can be given for books written for children up to age 14. The Newbery Medal is considered one of the most prestigious awards that can be given to children's books. This award, along with the other book and media awards that ALA awards, are called "the Oscars of children's literature" by some. Newbery winners and honor books are often considered to be classics, and often have places of prominence in classrooms and libraries across the country.

While committee deliberations are held in the strictest confidence, and committee members cannot comment on why certain books did or did not win the Newbery award, there are general criteria that the committee considers when evaluating eligible books. These criteria include such areas as: plot development, character and setting delineation, style, information presentation, and the interpretation of the overarching theme. Distinguished books must have outstanding elements in all of these areas that are applicable to the book. While the committee does sometimes give the award to authors or books that are well-known and highly popular with children, the goal of the committee is to give the award based solely on literary merit, not popularity. While many people think popularity should be taken into account, awarding the medal based solely on literary merit ensures that books of the highest quality will have the distinction of being called Newbery books.

Hopeful committee members need to either be known to the ALSC membership or known to the ALSC president. Committee members can be nominated for the ALSC election ballot and elected to the committee by the entire membership of ALSC, or they can be appointed to the committee by the incoming president of ALSC based on their previous work in the field of children's literature and their work for ALSC.

So, how does one go about getting the name recognition to make their way onto this committee? I recommend becoming involved in ALSC and ALA while you're in library school. There are many ways you can do this, such as:

Join listservs and participate in discussions.¹

Take some of the ALSC online training courses (one of which includes a history of the Newbery Medal).²

Volunteer for one of ALSC's 60 committees, task forces, and discussion groups. You can volunteer for areas that you're most interested in.³

Lastly, go to ALA conferences if you're able so you can attend programs, open committee meetings, and social activities to introduce yourself to ALSC members and officers.

Another important area of focus is critical analysis skills. Committee members need to be able to read hundreds of books in a year and participate intelligently and eloquently in committee book discussions to determine the medal winner. Practice writing reviews of books (both good and bad), and post them on Amazon, your own blog, or sites like Goodreads. If you're currently working with kids or teens, submit an application to School Library Journal to become a book reviewer. This type of experience will keep your analytical skills sharp. Remember that it takes years for many people to get on these committees. Keep honing your skills and networking, and you might possibly be on the Newbery committee yourself one day.

1 For more information on these lists, visit <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/compubs/alsc20/alscdisc-list/index.cfm>

2 <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/edcareers/profdevelopment/alscweb/index.cfm>

3 For more information on ALSC committees, visit <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/aboutalsc/coms/index.cfm>



DAN TAEYOUNG LEE is a web designer and architecture student at Columbia University. He has worked on art related websites including PS1's Studio Visit¹ and most recently Art on Air.² We interviewed Dan over e-mail about his approach to archival web design.

1. DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE OR LIBRARIANSHIP? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE FIELDS?

I do not have official experience with IA or librarianship, but I find them both very interesting. How do you represent a large archive of information easily, make it easily browsable, navigable, and understandable? This question of accessing information has been especially relevant lately, as I've been working on a website for a large radio archive, for a radio station/gallery called Art International Radio. Because of the nature of computers and technology, making a complex website is never really a problem from a resource or ability standpoint -- it doesn't really cost anything to make another webpage, or to access a webpage. Because of the ability to search files, actually locating and accessing specific files isn't that much an issue either. The real primary question, at least to me, is then: how do you make things easily understandable on an overall level? More importantly, how do you make people understand the breadth of the information you have to offer? I think the question on the internet isn't about 'How much information do you have?' or even 'How do you let people access the information you have?', but rather, 'How do you make people immediately understand how much information there is, and what kind of information they can access?'

Information architecture and librarianship is really very, very important, especially in the 'age of the internet'. Models of cataloguing, arranging, and displaying information aren't just ways of rearranging things -- I think that they're fundamental generators of information. The way in which information is arranged, and stored itself creates information. The Dewey Decimal System is a spatial cataloguing technology that enables people to 'browse' in libraries and have that model of accessing information (browsing) be productive. Any kind of discussion about those next-next-generation equivalents on the Internet is necessary. I'm also currently studying architecture in graduate school, so I'm always thinking about how to represent various kinds of information onto a flat surface. I happen to currently be working on an architecture project on libraries so I've been thinking about the nature of information and its organization within physical space, as well as 'internet-space'.

2. IS MORE WEB INNOVATION COMING FROM REGULAR WEB DEVELOPERS OR PEOPLE WHO ARE SPECIALIZED IN INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

The latter, most certainly, although I think in many cases, web developers end up necessarily and naturally thinking about information architecture. I think that any real innovation on the web comes as a consequence of understanding what the constraints of the internet are, and how to use them in a new way. Often times, people without technical knowledge of web development will say things like "I want my website to look and move literally like a Rolodex, or a library, or a bookshelf", or such, and then you'll see a literal implementation done in Flash. While that's fun and innovative, I don't think that's

1 <http://ps1.org/studio-visit/>

2 <http://artonair.org/>

a very good example of web innovation per se, because it's not engaging in the internet as the internet, but rather as a standalone computer application. I think that really innovative websites use the technology of the internet and the qualities of websites to their advantage: a site that is one long vertical scroll, or a portfolio site that's modeled like Google Maps, or even a complex website which seems boring but which makes 'sense' upon first visit and is absolutely intuitive to use.

3. WHAT WERE SOME IMPORTANT FACTORS IN CREATING STUDIO VISIT FOR PS1? DID YOU USE OTHER SITES FOR INSPIRATION?

Studio Visit was meant to be very very simple and easily navigable, and more than anything I wanted viewers to see the spread of artists at one glance. I checked out some sites, including Saatchi Online (which I am pleased to see has been recently redesigned), iTunes, Facebook, and so on. I wanted a large grid of artists, a simple navigation on the left, and a map on which you could see all of the artists' locations in the city. I've found myself liking the map the best, because it really makes visible the ubiquity and density of artists in the city, and I like the idea of being able to check out artists who live near you, and the subsequent interactions that might occur.

4. HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT GOOGLE'S NEW ART PROJECT SITE? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON ITS USABILITY AND DESIGN?

The interesting thing about the site is that everyone who has used Google Maps before already 'knows' how to use Art Project, and I think it's illustrative of the way that usability and design work in relation to an overall social landscape of design/usability issues. For example, I could have a website that functions very similarly to the way that Gmail works, and it would thus be 'intuitive' to the average user, because many people use Gmail. I read an interview where Steve Jobs spoke in a similar fashion: that many people already know how to use the iPhone and will thus know how to use the iPad, as if the question of using Apple's iOS operating system is like a knowledge or a language. I think it's necessary to think about usability in a similarly relational or linguistic framework. Things are deemed "intuitive" because the user has used similar devices before. What is interesting to think about is an 'intuitive' interface or an 'intuitive' structure as something that is not so much designed, but is rather generated by the most popular group of websites: Facebook, Google, Wikipedia, Twitter, Amazon, and so on. A populist user interface or information architecture, perhaps?

5. WHAT IS YOUR NEWEST FAVORITE PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY, (NEWEST MEANING MOST RECENT PURCHASE)?

I've gained recent access to a CNC router, a laser cutter, and a 3d printer, allowing me to exert the same processes that computer technologies allow onto the real world. It's really interesting to map out the nature of computers onto physical material, which is sort of a reverse process of what has been happening in technology: the concept of a computer 'file' in a 'folder', and so on, was very much about phrasing computing technology in terms of a library, or a bookshelf, which is another technology of organization. Nowadays, you don't ever find someone explaining Twitter in terms of a material analogy, saying that 'it's like a series of small scraps of paper on which you write messages', or so on -- computers and the Internet are understood to have their own dynamic, and these metaphors don't hold up in this new system.



THE HOMELESS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES: AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION

Jonathan Heifetz

For those aspiring to work as a public librarian, there are courses of study in MLS/MLIS programs that have come to be standard, such as cataloging or reference. In these courses, library students learn how to help patrons navigate library reference materials and improve information literacy skills. There is one important skill that is largely unaddressed by library school coursework: how to address the increased presence of homeless patrons in our public libraries. Particularly in “walkable” communities, the public library has been thrust into a role for which many librarians are simply unprepared, that of a daytime shelter for those who lack other comfortable and safe places to spend their day. Homeless patrons are seeking shelter in the public library more than ever before. Nothing is being done systemically that will change this any time soon.

There are two elements to the question of homeless and the public library. The first is outreach, which is Banks’ area of work. Outreach has a goal of making these individuals more comfortable with using the public library, and more inclined to visit it independently. According to Banks, when Child’s Place has reached out to those in family shelters, it has succeeded at driving library visitation.

Carrie Banks is a Supervising Librarian at Brooklyn Public Library (BPL). She received the Fund for the City of New York’s 2010 Sloan Public Service Award for creating BPL’s Child’s Place for Children with Special Needs. She explains the mission of Child’s Place to LM as ensuring “children with disabilities the same access to library services as children without disabilities.”

Child’s Place has found itself working in family shelters because the incidence of learning disabilities is significantly greater among children who live in shelters. It has been Banks’ experience that visiting a shelter will ensure that there are children with learning disabilities to be served. Part of this program is Shelter Storytelling, which enlists volunteers to visit family shelters and bring youth to the library branches. Once in the branch, youth are read to and assisted with finding books by children’s specialists.

The second element is how homeless individuals are treated when they arrive in the library. ALA’s Policy 61 (1990), “Library Services to the Poor,”¹ was published in response to increasing poverty in the U.S. and addresses issues of equal access. Its fifteen points are comprehensive, and promote not only the removal of barriers to access (i.e., fees and overdue charges) but the use of regular library funds to create materials and programs with the poor in mind. All fifteen points are relevant to how librarians should think about the causes of poverty and the information needs of poor patrons, including the homeless. A few will be discussed here.

Policy 61’s second point addresses collection development. It calls for the “publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.” The call to serve the homeless (and all who are poor) goes beyond merely treating all with equal respect. It begins with the materials that are carried on the shelves of a library.

Several points, including the ninth, tenth, and twelfth, strongly suggest that libraries should not operate in a vacuum, but should rather work closely with the poor themselves, with those who advocate for them, and with community organizations focused on poverty to develop programs and make decisions regarding how best to serve the needs of the poor and homeless.

Policy 61’s thirteenth point is particularly bold: it calls on ALA to promote “the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full-employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable daycare, and programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate, poverty itself.” Hence, it is calling on ALA’s base, librarians, to push for systemic change.

When this topic of the homeless and the public library is written about by sympathetic minds, a cliché often emerges: the divide between chronic homeless, or “street people,” and families who have been thrust into homelessness but have attained shelter and are working to “better” themselves. Banks dismisses this divide as “ridiculous,” and notes that many long-term homeless enter their situation as a direct result of their military service to this country.

As a library science student, it is my fear that I will enter the public library world feeling woefully unprepared for the challenges of working with the homeless population. It is possible to complete a MLS program without ever discussing this “elephant in the room,” or being truly aware of its existence. As ALA policy two decades old not only acknowledges the existence of homeless patrons but calls on librarians to advocate for change, why is it still possible for one to graduate from library school with no discussion of this issue?

¹ (<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/61svctopoor.cfm>)