Our Summer in São Tomé
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GSLIS faculty recently revised the School’s mission statement.
Dean John Unsworth said, “Every so often, the faculty at GSLIS review their mission statement, to see if it still accurately represents our goals and values. The most recent review happened at the fall faculty retreat in August: the discussion was very interesting and constructive, and the result was a completely new mission statement.”

The new mission statement reads:
“People use information for analysis, inquiry, collaboration, and play—and in so doing, change the world. The Graduate School of Library and Information Science is dedicated to shaping the future of information through research, education, and engagement, both public and professional. Our mission is to lead a revolution in the understanding and use of information in science, culture, society, commerce, and the diverse activities of our daily lives.”
This August marked the beginning of my seventh year as Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, even though it hardly seems possible that more than six years have passed since I came to Illinois. Yet many of you—most of you, actually—have a longer history with GSLIS. This was driven home to me this summer, in a series of events I’d like to share with you. A story, you might say.

In June, I visited China for the second time as GSLIS Dean, relying (for a second time) on the expert assistance and translation of current GSLIS doctoral candidate and Illinois Fire Service Institute librarian, Lian Ruan (MS ’90). We were in Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, and Beijing for about eight days, and I talked to a number of audiences in libraries and schools of library and information science. I’m happy to say that GSLIS is well known in these circles as a top-ranked program, but it is still necessary to introduce the program and the University, and many of my talks began with a few slides intended to do that.

Recently, we’ve been working with the University library to scan photographs in the archives that are related to the history of GSLIS, and one of those scanned before my trip was this, from the 1925-26 graduating class:

As far as I was able to determine from the photographic record, this was our first graduating class with a Chinese student. As I went from place to place in China, I would show this picture, in the context of describing the long history of Illinois with international students, and ask—really, not very seriously—if anyone recognized the gentleman in the back row. At my final lecture, at Peking University, I did this, and a hand went up at the back of the auditorium. It was a recent doctoral graduate from their Department of Information Management (formerly known as the Department of Library Science and Information Science). Her name was Fan Fan, and she said she recognized the gentleman as T.T. Yang, an influential figure in early Chinese library science. After the talk, she retrieved a copy of her dissertation, “The Publishing and Academic Heritage of Library Science Works in the Republican Era of China,” and she showed me where T.T. Yang’s Illinois affiliation was recorded. She signed the dissertation and sent it home with me to deposit in our library, which I have done.

Since China is a country of 1.3 billion people, and there are several generations between 1925 and 2009, I tell this story as though it is improbable, but in some way it is not: Illinois has been at the top of its field for a long time, and for many years it has been visible from a distance. Consequently, it has attracted leaders from far and wide. On returning to Illinois later in the summer, I shared this story with Linda Smith and I was reminded of how deep history runs at GSLIS. Without reference to the dissertation, and without my providing the name, Linda’s emailed response supposed that the alumnus in question would be Mr. Yang “after graduation, returned to the post of librarian at the Peking College of Economics and Law. Starting in 1930, he and his wife were librarians at Jiangxi Provincial Library, Nanchang, Kiangsi”—the capital city of what we now call Jiangxi Province, in the southeast of China.

I hope each of you will be in touch with me, or Linda, or Diana Stroud, to share your stories and to help us tell the story of GSLIS—which, happily, is long but still unfolding.

All the best,

John Unsworth
Dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science
The foundation of a healthy democracy requires access to and sharing of information. In this first year of a new presidency, Barack Obama has made it a priority to create the most open and accountable administration in our country’s history. Joining today’s information technology with our Founding Fathers’ visions can create a whole new model for citizen participation in democracy.

“Open government focuses on giving the public more opportunity to understand, learn about and participate in the actions and decisions of its government,” said Jon Gant, associate professor. “It’s based on the belief that citizens and civil society should play a role to ensure governments are open and transparent.”

According to Professor Michael Twidale, President Obama’s commitment to making more government data available to the public through the Internet than his predecessors is a “progression of the great experiment of American democracy.”

“With the Freedom of Information Act, you request information in writing, and people will physically go and look up it up, copy all the relevant information, and then mail it to you,” Twidale said. “That’s definitely better than nothing, but creating a ‘Google for government’ by putting all non-secret government data online so anyone can search for what they’re looking for is a much faster and more efficient solution.”

Citizen Participation

City and state governments also are adopting open government initiatives, said Gant. Washington, D.C., recently held a contest which challenged citizen programmers to create public applications for acquiring information useful to district residents and visitors. According to the web site, 47 web, iPhone, and Facebook apps were created in 30 days. The city paid only $50,000 for the applications that were estimated to cost $2,300,000.

Citizen Participation continues. "If people have free, unfettered access to data, "they can combine it with other data in new ways that we’ve never even thought of, which can lead to new innovations and whole new kinds of industries," Twidale said.

“This can lead to new representations and even new uses for the data. And with some of those innovative ideas, the government may say, ‘Hey, we really want to adopt that.’ So they’ll not just be outsourcing information, they’ll be outsourcing innovation as well. We’ve seen this in the corporate sector, but not as much in government.”

“The government is giving more opportunities for citizens to produce content and share,” said Gant. “The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) recently asked citizens to provide videos relevant to its initiatives.” For its theme on “Radon: Test, Fix, Save a Life,” more than 30 entries were received. The entries are all posted on YouTube and include information from the EPA about home radon testing.

The Costs of Change

In his research, Gant applies business models to analyze the costs of organizational changes such as these. Incorporating new technology is not without some costs, said Gant. “Information technology (IT) plays an important role. There are costs to creating the systems that report the information in a timely fashion, but IT provides a cost-effective means for citizens and civil society to engage government with tools for consolidating and organizing large amounts of data about decisions, actions, and services.”

One of the Obama administration’s mandates is to increase collaboration across the agencies. Providing easily accessible data will provide greater integration across agencies and departments, said Gant.

The effort to provide transparency may call for some organizational changes. “The government will have to be prepared for dealing with the public,” said Gant. “New service models will open the door to more citizen self-service. Citizens will be armed with information and may have questions about it.”

“Openly providing data is a window into an organization,” said Gant. “How clean is the data? Agencies will be making reforms in administrative processes.”

“For example, when government contracts and bidding processes are made available for download with just a few clicks of a mouse, you get more...”
eyeballs looking at these documents, which will lead to someone noticing earlier when things look fishy, which also means something that looks untoward gets kicked up to the mainstream media a lot earlier,” Twidale said.

“If you have a free press, the truth eventually comes out, but it can be years after the fact, when it’s invariably too late to fix.”

**Making Open Access Work**

Gant points to the Obama administration’s Open Government web site (www.whitehouse.gov/Open/) as one example of transparency in government. “They are sharing new metrics on information technology spending and expenditures,” said Gant. “People can see and really understand what’s going on.” Also citizens were asked to brainstorm, collaborate, and draft proposals to create open government.

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways that the Obama administration can increase “openness” in government, Twidale said, is to publish all official data and documents in open, machine-readable file formats.

An open file format, Twidale said, is one whose specifications are public and fully documented, and has no patent or copyright restrictions limiting its use. Proprietary file formats, on the other hand, are usually controlled and defined by private commercial interests and are often unreadable to users who don’t have the correct operating system or software.

Historically, both business and government have chosen proprietary software and proprietary file formats created by corporations over their open source equivalents (think Microsoft Office versus OpenOffice, for example) for market-based reasons: Corporate behemoths and their wares are seen as ubiquitous and too big to fail, and if bought in bulk, “it’s going to be something where the company is invested in that partnership as well,” he said.

But for the purposes of public access to data, “you don’t want to be in a situation where the people have to keep paying money simply to have access to data that’s rightfully theirs,” Twidale said.

An added benefit to saving information in an open, machine-readable format is that it allows anyone with a little bit of programming acumen to create so-called Web “mashups,” where raw data from two or more sources are combined, processed, and then visualized using various freely available online services and applications such as Google Maps to create a single integrated Web application.

“The goal is to make government more open, participatory and collaborative,” said Gant.

**eGovernment Course Offered this Spring**

For the first time this spring, GSLIS will offer a course on eGovernment. Associate Professor Jon Gant developed the course, which will be offered online as LIS 490EGL.

Gant examines not only the business model for online government services, but also the service model. “We look at strategies and approaches of how to integrate electronic data with the ‘brick and mortar’ of agencies,” said Gant. The course also focuses on new models of obtaining access to government information, such as phones and other mobile devices.

“We’re examining how civil society interacts with government,” said Gant. “This course is relevant for libraries, museums, and other cultural organizations that work with or use information from the government and that have service as their goal.”
This summer a number of GSLIS faculty, staff, and students traveled to São Tomé, Africa, to work on informatics projects for the island nation. This was the fourth such visit in three years.

The partnership began in 2006 when Paul Adams, director of community networking at GSLIS, accepted an invitation to collaborate with São Toméan resident and GSLIS alum Jorge Coelho (MS ’02). After graduating from GSLIS, Coelho worked for two years in East St. Louis, Illinois, as a technical consultant for the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP). Upon returning to São Tomé, he believed the ESLARP model as applied in East St. Louis would be of considerable benefit in helping his native country achieve their community development goals.

Three major projects were undertaken this summer. Senior Research Scientist and Instructor Martin Wolske led his course, Introduction to Network Systems, on the island. Each semester students in Wolske’s class participate in a service-learning project in which they collaborate with community organizations serving economically disadvantaged communities to recycle computers and develop community technology centers. This semester was the first with an overseas project site; Wolske and master’s students Jeanie Austin, Sarah Jackman, and Damon McGhee collaborated with STeP UP, a local non-governmental organization. They provided train-the-trainer sessions that gave an introduction to the Linux operating system, networking, and servers to teachers at STeP UP’s Technical School.

Work also began on a new project overseen by GSLIS Associate Professor Jon Gant with assistance from master’s students Austin, Jackman, and undergraduate student Danielle Ross. While on island, the GIS team met with key stakeholders in order to assess their needs and create a strategic plan for building GIS infrastructure. They mapped the island using GPS, trained employees of the UN, and met with the president of the Polytechnic Institute who has expressed interest in GIS.

Four undergraduate students, Corey Jackson, Ross, Michael Stein, and Chika Umeadi, joined the trip to São Tomé this year. These students were awarded a grant from the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) program to provide XO laptops and teach computer literacy skills to São Toméan children. Each of the four students is pursuing a campus-wide minor in informatics offered by the Illinois Informatics Institute. Their project was one of thirty chosen to participate in a new student-based, grassroots OLPC initiative called OLPCorps Africa. OLPC received more than 220 project proposals from five continents for the program.

More information and detail on the São Tomé project, including updates from the participants, can be found on their website: http://SaoTomeproject.prairienet.org/index.php.
in São Tomé

Lisa’s masters student Damon McGhee teaches network cable making to teachers from the Step Up technical school as part of his final project work in LIS 451.

Jeanie Austin, Damon McGhee, Martin Wolske, and Sarah Jackman pose for a picture at the summit of Pico São Tomé, the tallest peak on the island, the day before departing for the U.S.

Students in a São Tomé classroom using their laptop computers.

LIS master’s students Jeanie Austin and Sarah Jackman, along with São Toméan community partner and translator Elves Neves, provide an introduction to GIS to UNICEF field workers at the Institute Superior Polytechnica (ISP).
CIRSS Funded for Data Curation Research and Education as Part of $20 Million NSF Award

The GSLIS Center for Informatics Research in Science and Scholarship (CIRSS) will receive approximately $2.9 million dollars as a partner on the Data Conservancy project, a $20 million initiative led by the Johns Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries. The five-year award, one of the first two in the National Science Foundation’s DataNet program, will build infrastructure for the management of the ever-increasing amounts of digital research data. The principal investigator is Sayeed Choudhury, Hodson Director of the Digital Research and Curation Center and associate dean of university libraries at Johns Hopkins. The sub-award to the University of Illinois is led by co-principal investigator, Carole L. Palmer (PhD ’96), director of CIRSS and professor at GSLIS. Other CIRSS researchers include Melissa Cragin (PhD ’09), Allen Renear, John MacMullen, and David Dubin from GSLIS, and Michael Welge from the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA).

The project will begin with data from astronomy, life sciences, earth sciences, and social sciences, developing a framework to more fully understand data practices currently in use and arrive at a model for curation that allows ease of access both within and across disciplines. “Science and engineering research and education are increasingly digital and data-intensive,” said Choudhury, “which means that new management structures and technologies will be critical to accommodate the diversity, size, and complexity of current and future data sets and streams. The potential for the sharing and application of data across disciplines is incredible. But it’s not enough to simply discover data; you need to be able to access it and be assured it will remain available.”

The Illinois team will contribute to multiple aspects of the project, conducting studies of scientists’ data practices and needs, and analyzing how best to represent complex units of data in the repository. “We will be conducting a systematic analysis of the data curation requirements across the disciplines served by the Data Conservancy,” said Palmer. “Our primary interest is in the ‘long tail of small science,’ and how to support collecting and sharing of the highly variable types of data produced by individual scientists and small research groups. Our results will determine data curation and preservation requirements but also policies to guide how the Data Conservancy and other large, cross-disciplinary data repositories are developed and used.” The research led by Renear will develop formal terminology and identity conditions for fundamental data concepts. “Many of the key cross-cutting concepts of scientific data organization remain poorly defined,” said Renear. “Our work will provide the foundation for standardizing how Data Conservancy datasets are identified, described, related, and organized.”

The CIRSS research activities and other Data Conservancy efforts will feed directly into two professional training programs at GSLIS, the Data Curation specialization in the master’s of library and information science and the Biological Information Specialists master’s in the campus-wide bioinformatics program. The award will also support professional development in data curation principles, processes, and technologies.
BRUCE NAMED CENTENNIAL SCHOLAR

Professor Bertram (Chip) Bruce has been named the GSLIS Centennial Scholar for 2009-2010. Bruce is a prominent researcher and educator in the area of community informatics, inquiry-based learning, and education. He is the co-founder of the Community Informatics Initiative at GSLIS, a research and teaching center that works with communities to address their information and technology needs.

“This is an unexpected and terrific honor, from a wonderful group of colleagues! The Centennial Scholar support will enable me to complete a book project on Inquiry-Based Learning,” said Bruce.

His interest in information and communication technologies has led Bruce to explore a variety of questions relating to the nature of knowledge, democratic participation, community, technology, and literacy. This work is discussed in his various books, including Libr@ries: Changing Information Space and Practice (co-authored with Cushla Kapitzke, 2006) and Literacy in the Information Age: Inquiries into Meaning Making with New Technologies (2003).

In 2007, Bruce traveled abroad as a prestigious Fulbright Distinguished Chair for the National College of Ireland in Dublin. He spent one full year at the college, devoting his time to mentoring, teaching, and conducting research. He also contributed to discussions of widening participation in higher education, which resulted in the creation of a third school in the College, the School of Community.

Bruce also has participated in the Fulbright Inter-country Lecturer’s Program, visiting Cyprus and Turkey to present information on the use of technology for both learning and literacy. He described these experiences as “a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about educational systems, libraries, and community building in the fascinating eastern Mediterranean region, with its complex history and diverse cultures.”

In addition to his appointment in GSLIS, Bruce also holds teaching appointments in Curriculum & Instruction, Bioengineering, the Center for Writing Studies, and the Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies at Illinois.

The Centennial Scholar award is endowed by alumni and friends of GSLIS, and is given in recognition of outstanding accomplishments and/or professional promise in the field of library and information science.

Haythornthwaite Awarded Visiting Professorship

In recognition of her academic standing and achievements, Caroline Haythornthwaite has been awarded a Leverhulme Visiting Professorship for the 2009-2010 academic year. Sponsored by The Leverhulme Trust, the award selects distinguished faculty to spend three to ten months at a U.K. university in order “to enhance the skills of academic staff or the student body within the host institution.” Haythornthwaite will visit the Institute of Education at the University of London.

According to Haythornthwaite, the objective of her visit is “to increase the critical mass of researchers engaged in empirical and theoretical exploration of new trends in learning.” These new trends can be brought together under the simplified label of learning networks. This phrase encompasses overlapping themes of computer networks, social networks, and online learning, each of which is to be explored during the term of the professorship through mutual inquiry with students and faculty.

“This an exciting time to be working on learning, knowledge exchange, and networking because of the rapid changes being facilitated and impelled by the Internet,” said Haythornthwaite. “I greatly appreciate the opportunity provided by The Leverhulme Trust to share and learn together with faculty and students at the University of London and across the U.K. as we explore these new twenty-first century learning practices.”

The Leverhulme Trust was established in 1925 under the Will of the first Lord Leverhulme. It is one of the largest all-subject providers of research funding in the UK, distributing funds of some £50 million every year. For further information about the schemes that The Leverhulme Trust funds, visit their Web site at www.leverhulme.ac.uk.
BRINGING BROADBAND TO CU

When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law in February, the Federal Communications Commission was asked to create a national broadband plan. This plan, due to Congress in February 2010, will outline the ways in which federal, state, and local governments can ensure that all Americans have high-speed access to the Internet.

Over seven billion dollars has been set aside under the act to fund grants that support broadband development. GSLIS has formed a collaboration with Illinois’ Campus Information Technologies and Educational Services (CITES) and the cities of Champaign and Urbana to apply for $36 million of these grants. These four partners have formed an intergovernmental consortium called UC2B, or Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband. If their federal grant proposal is approved, this group will implement the broadband plan, ultimately supplying broadband service to 137 critical anchor institutions such as police stations, schools, hospitals, and libraries as well as to an initial 2,500 households in Champaign and Urbana.

GSLIS Professor Abdul Alkalimat worked on the grant application in partnership with Mike Smeltzer, director of networking for CITES. According to Alkalimat, the grant application covered both the physical and social aspects of broadband adoption. A “below-ground” grant will provide funding for physically laying down the broadband fiber, and “above-ground” grants will provide personnel and resources for creating new public computer centers across the two towns, as well as augmenting those resources currently available.

GSLIS Assistant Professor Kate Williams, who also helped on the grant, recently testified at a meeting of the FCC in August to discuss the adoption and utilization of broadband service. “Broadband is in some ways the newest digital divide, and the U.S. is on the wrong side of it, slipping behind,” she said. “Our community informatics research combined with new federal policies is part of the solution.”

Smeltzer said, “The Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B) project is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the University to seriously extend its technology expertise beyond the edge of campus. By partnering with the cities of Urbana and Champaign, the University can bring vastly improved fiber-based Internet connectivity to every local resident and improve the educational and employment opportunities throughout the community. Big Broadband will be a magnet for the students and faculty that the University seeks to attract and retain.”

The state of Illinois has passed a resolution in their 2009 capital budget providing UC2B $3.5 million in matching funds that can be used if the federal money is awarded. Award announcements will be made in November.

HEIDORN TO LEAD ARIZONA LIS SCHOOL

Associate Professor P. Bryan Heidorn has accepted a new position as director of the University of Arizona School of Information Resources and Library Science. He will begin his new post in October 2009.

Heidorn has been a member of the GSLIS faculty since 1995. His research areas include natural language processing, text mining for metadata, and information retrieval particularly in biodiversity literature and museum informatics.

In December 2007, Heidorn took a position at the National Science Foundation as program manager in the Division of Biological Infrastructure where he worked with a number of programs including Advances in Biological Informatics (including CAREER), Biological Informatics PostDocs, Assembling the Tree of Life, Cyber-enabled Discovery and Innovation, INTEROP, DataNet, Data Working Group, the Dimensions of Biodiversity Working Group, and the Plant Science Cyberinfrastructure Center (IPlant). During this time he continued his active research program at GSLIS.

“Bryan Heidorn has been a key player in developing GSLIS participation in informatics activities across campus and beyond, especially in the area of bioinformatics. His research into biodiversity, using informatics tools and techniques, is particularly distinctive, and even though we know his contributions to the field will continue, his contributions to the School and the campus will be much missed,” said GSLIS Dean John Unsworth.

“It was my privilege to be a faculty member at GSLIS where the faculty, staff, and administration are universally supportive not only of students but of each other. I have benefited greatly from this mutual respect that allows everyone to grow and expand their skills while enjoying the fresh perspective that students and colleagues bring each day,” said Heidorn.
Strategic Reading

by Phil Ciciora, University of Illinois News Bureau

The revolution in scientific publishing that has been promised since the 1980s is finally about to take place, according to two University of Illinois experts in information science.

Allen H. Renear and Carole L. Palmer, professors of library and information science at Illinois, say that as techniques originally designed to organize and share scientific data are integrated into scientific publishing, scientists’ long-standing practice of reading “strategically” will be dramatically enhanced.

“Although it’s natural to think that scientists search online to find individual articles to read, that isn’t usually what’s going on,” Renear said. “Researchers actually try to avoid reading as much as possible, relying instead on indexing, citations, and peer recommendations as indicators of scientific relevance.”

“Scientists skim journal articles to discover valuable information. They scan for terminology, segments, diagrams, and summaries of particular interest. But they don’t read individual articles left-to-right, top-to-bottom.”

As the quantity of information that must be covered grows rapidly, Renear says efficient strategic reading becomes increasingly critical in scientific work.

In today’s electronic environment, powerful new tools are emerging that support strategic reading, allowing scientists to work with large numbers of articles simultaneously without having to read them in their entirety.

These tools are possible thanks to ontologies, which the authors describe as “structured terminologies for representing scientific data.”

Originally designed to support the sharing and analysis of data, ontologies can provide information such as unambiguous identification of terms and relationships, and implicit background knowledge, the researchers say.

Scientists using these tools will be “speaking a language that can also be understood by computers, so computers can assist them as they make their way through text,” Renear said.

The change in reading practices among scientists also will shape the future of scientific publishing.

“The way most journal articles are currently reproduced in electronic form is still as more or less non-functional versions of printed pages – basically, just a piece of paper lying dead on the screen,” Renear said.

Instead of the electronic version simply imitating the print version of the article, integrating ontologies into the online versions of scientific literature will create many possibilities, including allowing text, diagrams, and data in documents to be connected to databases of contemporary scientific knowledge.

The networked journal article will become a rich interactive representation of current scientific knowledge, available for automatic computer processing and optimized for the rapid and high-volume strategic reading scientists actually practice, Renear said.

Although automated information extraction and text mining of scientific literature, which also are supported by ontologies, will be increasingly important techniques for dealing with the information explosion, Palmer says they won’t replace reading altogether.

“Narrative text will not disappear; the context it provides is too important,” she said. “There will still be authors, and there will still be readers.”

But within the sciences, the researchers say, reading will continue to be more and more strategic, and with the emergence of new reading tools, strategic reading will be more and more effective.

“Scientists want to read more, faster,” Palmer said. “They want to read, relate, and annotate research articles, strategically. Search and retrieval functions are important, as are automated information extraction and text mining. But tools for reading help scientists with the vital, everyday work of understanding and using the literature.”

Renear and Palmer’s findings were published in an article titled “Strategic Reading, Ontologies, and the Future of Scientific Publishing” in the August 14 issue of Science.
The blond, wisp of a girl laughs uncontrollably as she tries to keep her hand still while wielding a camera pointed at her subject. She is standing outside of White Hall on the now defunct Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois, a decaying structure that was once the largest building owned by the Department of Defense. Her subject, a Rantoul High School student, laughs with her, unable to concentrate on the task at hand.

What is supposed to be an introduction to a video-documentary on White Hall, a place that even Rantoul’s mayor describes as the city’s “white elephant,” has turned into a laugh track of guffaws, chortles, and video footage of sneakers, pavement, and an out-of-focus window. There is even a glimpse of one of the students primping in preparation for his shot, licking his fingers and sliding them across each of his eyebrows.

Yet, what seems more like a melee than an educational experience is actually what GSLIS Professor Bertram “Chip” Bruce and his team of graduate and research assistants are hoping for—youth ingenuity. The children are producing youth-driven media, capturing economic depression, race relations, and even environmental hazards in their community on film, and they are learning how to utilize multimedia tools and the library while they work.

The Youth Community Informatics Project (YCI), a program funded by the Institute of Library and Museum Services, is barreling into its third year of existence, and youth across the state, from Chicago to East Saint Louis, and even in the back yard of GSLIS in Urbana-Champaign, are documenting their communities through a youth lens.

They are creating digital spaces online, developing radio snippets, and of course, laughing along the way. The program, intended to steer youth from traditionally disenfranchised communities into the field of library and information science, is more than a program for recruitment. It is becoming a means for youth civic action.

“I think beyond the kids learning how to conduct research and play with a bunch of technologies, they are realizing that they are part of the community, and they are part of a larger cultural and social context,” said Chera Kowalski, a GSLIS master’s student and graduate assistant with YCI. Kowalski works with the Peer Ambassadors, an intervention and youth leadership program, which is currently focused on youth within the juvenile justice system. They are working on building a library within the Champaign County Juvenile Detention Center.

“YCI looks for opportunities to do programs with groups broadly focused on multimedia production as a way of promoting literacy,” said Chris Ritzo, a former graduate assistant with the project who now works with the University as an information management specialist at the Career Center, a unit of Student Affairs.
CITIZEN PROFESSIONAL TOOLKIT

Part of the Youth Community Informatics mission has been to enhance access to and knowledge of digital technologies. One of the primary ways that it has accomplished this goal has been through the development of its Citizen Professional Toolkits. The kits are the brainchild of Martin Wolske, senior research scientist with the Community Informatics Initiative. Wolske is a veteran of community-focused technologies and scholarship of engagement since 1995 when he joined the staff of Prairienet Community Network, a community outreach program of GSLIS.

The Citizen Professional Toolkits are a mish-mash of media tools. These 15-pound, red backpacks have small netbook computers tucked away inside them as well as editing software that could turn any fourteen-year-old into a budding George Lucas. The kits also come with video cameras, microphones, digital cameras, and a number of accessories, including the Joby, an innovative tripod that can clasp a camera to anything the user sees fit. One of the research assistants even managed to attach one to his head and film a sequence down one of the long hallways inside of GSLIS.

The kits have recently been deployed in a number of regions, including Chicago and East St. Louis. During the Summer Academy held this summer, students used the kits to map coordinates on a jazz trail and to learn video-editing software. Ultimately, the goal is to create kits that are available at the local library for youth to use, and once they are deployed, to create digital representations of their communities as well as original research, whether it be through community journalism or attaching a camera to one’s head. The success depends on the use. In the end, it is what they create that matters, and that probably could never fit inside of a 15-pound backpack, because imagination can be quite weighty.

INGENUITY

“YCI looks for opportunities to do programs with groups broadly focused on multimedia production as a way of promoting literacy.”

“YCI is giving graduate students the opportunity to write and produce programming and create literacy programs through a number of organizations like schools, community organizations, and non-for-profits,” he notes. “The opportunity to have that experience is just really cool.”

During the past two years, the group has organized workshops in Virginia, Illinois, a community with a high school that is looking to increase the multimedia literacy of its students by using GPS and GIS to document water levels in a local creek. YCI students and faculty are working as well to bolster thriving progressive learning environments such as the Pedro Abizu Campos High School in Paseo Boricua, located in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago.

This past summer, the project organized its second Summer Academy, bringing together youth from across the state to share and learn from each other while creating original research through contemporary music. Songs about the Buffalo Soldiers by Bob Marley, or about political perspectives by the rock group Bright Eyes, provided a backdrop and foundation for research based in the community and the library. Youth participating in the academy-created zines, small image-laden magazines often produced and disseminated for free, videos, and maps based on the music they researched.

Bruce, who is inspired by Jane Addams and John Dewey, is committed to the central concept of YCI—community-driven action. Youth are an integral part of such action, he says, and providing them with the right tools, the right opportunities, and the ability to engage within their own communities, fulfills a number of central tenets of libraries.

However, it is all too often that libraries find themselves not catering to the communities and youth that need additional support. Recognizing that librarians, as well as teachers or guidance counselors, can often be beacons of progression, Bruce and his team of YCI researchers want to provide them with the foundation and the tools to connect with underserved youth.

“The effect on people will be the lasting impression,” said Bruce. “We demonstrated for the LIS community both the importance and feasibility of working with multiple organizations that focus on underserved youth.”

The YCI project is now focused on creating lasting narratives of its work. The YCI group, which includes GSLIS Associate Professor Ann Bishop and U of I Extension Specialist Lisa Bouillion-Diaz as co-PIs, is busy creating evaluations of their work and developing chapters for a book.
New and Recommended
by Sue Searing, LIS Librarian

Although the LIS collection is no longer housed in a single location, the University Library continues to acquire print materials to complement electronic sources. We call your attention to some intriguing new acquisitions:


The Medical Library Association sponsored this excellent, reassuring guide for reference librarians faced with questions from patients. Michele Spatz (MS ’77) emphasizes the behavioral and interpersonal aspects of providing consumer health information, including verbal and nonverbal communication, ethics, legal issues, serving diverse individuals, and dealing with difficult patrons. Vignettes illustrate the practice of “compassionate reference” while assisting information-seekers who are anxious, confused, or angry about a diagnosis. The final chapter acknowledges the stress that librarians experience in these encounters and suggests methods for emotional self-care. Another volume from MLA, *Answers to the health questions people ask in libraries* (2008), provides accurate facts and data for commonly asked questions.


Reading aloud to children is a basic skill required of youth services librarians. This confidence-building book covers the basics of planning and conducting storytime programs for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Peck suggests activities and books for each age level and explains how to incorporate music, crafts, storytelling, puppets, and movement into the program. She also covers bilingual programming and the use of volunteers. An appendix recommends books for more than 75 themed storytimes.


In these recessionary times, librarians must be adept money-raisers, especially if they aspire to build new buildings or launch new programs. Ken Dowlin draws on his experiences as a public library director (including the San Francisco Public Library) to provide practical advice about strategic fund development, couched in the metaphor of a cookbook and penned in a conversational style. While other books provide more straightforward introductions to the subject of library fundraising, this one condenses a career’s worth of wisdom that will benefit directors of libraries both small and large.


With nearly sixty chapters on a wide range of subjects, this hefty volume addresses many aspects of digital library development. GSLIS professor Michael Twidale co-authored a chapter, “Computational Sense for Digital Librarians.” Other chapters address topics as diverse as metadata interoperability, personalization, sound and image retrieval, interface design, and digital reference services. The mix of state-of-the-art overviews, case studies, and technical papers assures that any reader who works with digital libraries will discover something of interest in this handbook.


In the growing body of literature on the “library as place,” this book focused on children’s library spaces is unique. Aimed at both architects and librarians, this book takes the reader through the process of building or remodeling a public library space for young readers, from the initial vision and needs assessment through the selection of furnishings. The author includes helpful guidelines, black-and-white photographs of exemplary libraries, case studies, a directory of suppliers, and more.

The first International M-Libraries Conference must have been a stimulating event, judging from the two dozen papers gathered in this volume. The authors explore the technical, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions of library applications for mobile information devices. Important themes include the use of mobile technologies in developing countries and in higher education. In the latter vein, Jim Hahn (MS ’07), orientation services librarian in the Undergraduate Library at Illinois, explores the use of cell phones for orienting new students.


Among the recent spate of books on readers’ advisory services, this volume stands out. Jessica Moyer (MS ’03, CAS ’04) pairs reviews of the research literature with essays by working librarians. The chapters cover many topics: adult readers; nonfiction; audiovisual materials; children and young adult readers; book groups; romance and genre readers; the readers’ advisory interview; professional tools; cataloging; and collection development. Joan Bessman Taylor (PhD ’08) contributes the research review on book groups; all the others are written by Moyer, who possesses a commanding overview of the field. Each “librarian’s view” is written by a different public librarian. Among the contributors are GSLIS adjunct faculty member Mary Wilkes Towner (MS ’88) and several more GSLIS alumnae.


The first International M-Libraries Conference must have been a stimulating event, judging from the two dozen papers gathered in this volume. The authors explore the technical, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions of library applications for mobile information devices. Important themes include the use of mobile technologies in developing countries and in higher education. In the latter vein, Jim Hahn (MS ’07), orientation services librarian in the Undergraduate Library at Illinois, explores the use of cell phones for orienting new students.

**Coming Soon!**

The 2009 Guide Book to Gift Books will be available on November 1. This annual publication includes brief annotations for over 300 of the best books for giving (and receiving), with over 100 new additions since last year’s guide. Entries are divided by age group and include author, title, publisher, and the current list price.

The Guide is compiled by Deborah Stevenson, editor of *The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books* and assistant professor. She said, “I’m making the guide, we draw on the last three years of our reviews to compile a selection of books that offers high quality, broad variety, and a lot of fun.” The Guide is free and downloadable in a PDF format that allows you to print out and use the guide right away.

**http://bccb.lis.illinois.edu/gb2/**

**Blake, Efron Join GSLIS Faculty**

Associate Professor Cathy Blake and Assistant Professor Miles Efron have joined the GSLIS faculty as of the fall 2009 semester.

Blake studies information retrieval in the context of health sciences, with a particular emphasis on accelerating scientific discovery by synthesizing evidence from text. She worked most recently as an assistant professor in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she taught courses on information tools, databases, data mining, and text mining.

Blake received her Ph.D. in information and computer science from the University of California at Irvine in 2003. In addition, she holds a master’s degree in information and computer science, also from Irvine, as well as a master’s degree and bachelor’s degree in computer science both from the University of Wollongong in Australia.

Efron’s teaching and research focus on information retrieval. He studies the statistical properties of human language in efforts to improve the effectiveness of search engines. He comes to GSLIS from the University of Texas at Austin, where he taught in the School of Information since 2004.

Efron received his Ph.D. in information and library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2003. He received his master’s degree in information science from the same institution in 2000.

Efron’s wife, Jessica, has joined the University Library as a cataloger.

**Academic librarians may believe themselves immune to the ugly censorship challenges that affect public and school libraries. But as this engaging book clearly shows, the campus library plays a central role in upholding the mission of higher education to nurture free intellectual inquiry. Author Barbara Jones, on whom GSLIS bestowed its Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award in 2007, explains how the concept of academic freedom affects library practice. Case studies from both public and private colleges illustrate issues that can arise regarding collection development, internet access, exhibits and programs, and privacy and confidentiality. A companion volume on school libraries has been published, and one on public libraries is forthcoming.**
In response to several inquiries, I have terrific news to share regarding the Brilliant Futures Campaign at GSLIS. To date, we have raised nearly 85% of our $15M goal—an accomplishment which reflects the commitment and generosity of our alumni and friends. Please be sure to follow our progress by visiting our Web site at www.lis.illinois.edu as we update the figures each quarter.

I want to extend a special “thank you” to those who made the extra effort to make a gift this past fiscal year. Through your support, we are doing well despite tough economic times. We take great pride in being the number-one school of library and information science in the country and strive to maintain this tradition.

In the spirit of partnership that makes our school the best, I would like to challenge each of you to make a gift to the Annual Fund this fiscal year (July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010). Each year, you receive letters and calls asking you to support GSLIS. You might be surprised to know that of our 7,216 living alumni, only 11% gave to our Annual Fund last year. We also saw a 15% decline in Annual Fund dollars raised. These two numbers are significant during a time of tight budgets and limited state support.

To highlight the Annual Fund as a meaningful giving option, I want to help you understand more about it. These gifts, in the amount of $5,000 or less, provide the School with a valuable source of discretionary spending that supports urgent needs. For recent graduates, an Annual Fund gift might be $25; for others, it might be $100, $200, or more depending on career path and stage of life. Many individuals choose to make regular electronic transfers either weekly or monthly. Every contribution matters!

Collectively, the Annual Fund makes a tremendous difference in our School’s ability to enhance the educational experience. These gifts provide regular discretionary funding to support student awards, scholarships, and groups; student participation in Alternative Spring Break and travel to professional conferences and meetings; and a variety of other activities at GSLIS. The Annual Fund makes all of these activities possible for our students and enhances their education while at GSLIS.

Alternative Spring Break is a good example of the value of the Annual Fund. To send a student to Washington D.C. for one week to work with a librarian at the Library of Congress, we use $300 from the Annual Fund, and the student covers the remaining cost. I can’t tell you enough what this type of experience does for our students and how it enhances their resumes. Last year alone, we received requests from fifty-five students to participate in Alternative Spring Break in Washington D.C., Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and central Illinois. Students applied for support based on their needs, totaling $12,000, which was awarded through the Annual Fund.

Making a gift to the Annual Fund is something alumni do every year, even though they may also contribute to endowment funds designated for specific purposes. Over time, I hope you also will consider increasing your support of the Annual Fund as you are able.

Watch for more information and stories about how our Annual Fund is used as we continue throughout the year. When you receive a letter or call, please remember its value and make a gift!

Diana Stroud
Assistant Dean for Advancement & Alumni Relations
dstroud@illinois.edu; 217-244-9577
Couple’s Support Extends Reach of CCB

Mary Stewart has a lifelong love of books. So when she heard Betsy Hearne, former director of the Center for Children’s Books (CCB) and professor emerita, speak about literacy and children’s books in St. Louis, she felt inspired to get involved. Soon afterwards, she and husband Bill visited GSLIS and met with faculty and staff.

“When Bill and I visited the Center, it seemed like a place that was so alive and vibrant,” she said. “The interests and goals of the people we met were on the same wavelength as ours, and there was such a family-like feeling.”

Given that the rich programmatic and research initiatives of the Center closely aligned with the Stewarts’s values, a natural partnership emerged: the Stewarts generously funded a graduate assistantship position devoted to outreach. “We wanted to ensure that children continue to know about the printed word, which is key to developing healthy imaginations,” she said.

Master’s student Corrie Ball, who currently holds the assistantship, has used her creativity and enthusiasm to extend the reach and scope of the Center into the community. She has developed continuing education workshops for teachers; served on University-sponsored event committees, such as the Youth Literature Festival; and organized storytelling events at local community centers.

“I’m so grateful to the Stewarts for making this position possible, and I’m honored to be the first CCB outreach graduate assistant,” said Ball. “As a future school librarian, the skills I’ve learned will help me better implement new ideas and organize activities for a wide range of audiences.”

According to Christine Jenkins, associate professor and current director, “Having a graduate assistant devoted to CCB outreach has enabled us to increase our visibility on campus and in the larger community of librarians, teachers, parents, and others who share our interest in young people, literacy, and literature. Increased visibility has meant increased opportunities to collaborate with community groups, to share our unique resources with researchers and practitioners, and to promote quality children’s and young adult literature. Corrie’s outreach activities fuel the Center’s continued growth.”

Bill Stewart earned his bachelor of architecture degree and master’s degree in architectural engineering from Illinois in the 1950s. He is a retired architect who founded the St. Louis architectural firm of Stewart, Schaberg & Turner. Mary is a graduate of Colorado College and a retired school teacher. They recently celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a gathering of family and friends, including their two children and four grandchildren. Bill is an avid cyclist, runner, and Illini sports fan, and they both are active in the St. Louis community.

By supporting the activities of the Center, the Stewarts are able to share their love of books and reading beyond their immediate family. Their thoughtfulness extends not only to children in the local community but also to the many students, scholars, teachers, and librarians who benefit from the Center’s outstanding research and resources.

Annual Fund

GSLIS Fiscal Year 2010 Annual Fund Campaign Kicks Off

July 1, 2009 was the start of our new fiscal year. Watch for our Annual Fund mailing or phone call, and join your fellow alumni in helping to ensure that GSLIS maintains its number-one ranking!

Your gift to the FY10 Annual Fund Campaign is critical. Through the generosity of GSLIS alumni and friends, our students receive training from the nation’s top-ranked library and information science graduate school and can participate in extraordinary professional experiences like Alternative Spring Break, and service learning projects in Champaign, Paseo Boricua (Chicago’s Humboldt Park), East St. Louis, and São Tomé & Príncipe in western Africa.

You can make your gift one of three easy ways: by mail, online, or through electronic funds transfer.

For more details, visit: www.uif.uillinois.edu/storydetail.aspx?id=42#eft
Five for Four

With their unrelenting passion for the field and their noble goals for the future, GSLIS students never fail to surprise, impress, and inspire. We hope you’ll enjoy this new feature created to give you a glimpse of today’s GSLIS student.

Fredrick Kiwuwa Lugya
BLIS, Makerere University, Uganda
MS student
Currently a graduate assistant at the Undergraduate Library

What made you decide to pursue a degree in library and information science?
After my advanced secondary level, I knew nothing about LIS, not until I was offered a government scholarship to pursue a LIS degree. Given the perception of LIS in Uganda (my home country) it took me a while to accept and make a final decision; however, after constant career guidance I believed that is my profession and the best to have; otherwise, I had a dream of being a pharmacist.

What surprises you the most about the field of LIS?
Because I wanted to be a pharmacist, I can still be a science reference librarian and work with scientists, meaning that I have not lost my dream, but rather I have built it stronger and become more useful in the science field.

What do you hope to do with your degree?
With the knowledge and skills acquired all through, I am more than armed to encounter any challenge in Uganda. I would like to create a library for my community and name it after my father, Remigous Kiwuwa.

Silvia Lu
BA, Literature and Government
Claremont McKenna College
MS student
Currently a GA for Reference, Research, and Government Information Services in the Main Library

What made you decide to pursue a degree in library and information science?
In fourth grade, I interviewed my school librarian for Career Week and made up my mind about my future profession. With the exception of a few detours (lobbyist, fairy princess), I’ve been preparing for this degree ever since.

What surprises you the most about the field of LIS?
I am not so much surprised, as impressed, by the field’s commitment to innovation and discovery. It is as though we are always collectively asking: “What’s next?” I am surprised by how often LIS has to refute the idea that it is an outdated, or soon to be obsolete, pursuit (I’m equally surprised that the same is said of books!).

What do you hope to do with your degree?
I want to help people find the information they need to do or create amazing things. More specifically, I’m looking for positions in academic libraries with a reference and instruction component.

Hakim A. Murphy
BA, Music Business
BA, Music Composition
Columbia College Chicago
MS student
NILRC 21st Century Librarian Grant recipient; Illinois State Training Grant recipient, current librarian assistant at the Maze Branch Library

What made you decide to pursue a degree in library and information science?
About seven years ago I was looking for work and decided to fill out an application to be a librarian assistant. I got the job and over the years the wonder of my librarian grabbed my attention, and it went from there.

What surprises you the most about the field of LIS?
The variety of job opportunities available to librarians.

What do you hope to do with your degree?
I’m torn on my dreams; I hope to work at a community college library with collection development, reference, and instruction responsibilities. I also would love to work as a music librarian at a university.

What one technology do you wish were available now?
Teleportation, to travel across long distances instantly would redefine the meaning of the weekend getaway trip.

Where is your favorite library in the world?
The Newberry Library in Chicago.

What one technology do you wish were available now?
A technology that would allow me to tell me how far a book is from where I am standing so that I do not have to look over the shelves.

Where is your favorite library in the world?
The Chicago Public Library.
I recently returned from Italy, where I presented a paper at an international conference on “The Library as Space and Place.” My paper was a case study of the transition of LIS library services at the University of Illinois from a traditional physical facility within the Main Library to a combination of a virtual library and face-to-face services at GSLIS. The conference provided me with a unique opportunity to reflect upon and write about the enormous changes of the past year.

The LIS Library, housed in the Main Library since the 1920s, closed its doors on May 15, 2009. This step was taken after a careful planning process, and it was just one component of a sweeping initiative to align the University Library’s services with the nature of scholarship and information seeking in the twenty-first century. We didn’t go out with a whimper, but with a big, noisy “retirement” party for the library space. There were heartfelt speeches, of course, a small display of vintage library equipment, and cookies iced with Dewey numbers. GSLIS doctoral student Chris D’Arpa and library employee Lucy Moynihan (MS ’09) compiled a timeline of library milestones and unearthed old photographs of the library and its staff from the University Archives. Obsolete library stamps were distributed as party favors.

After the party, the hard work of moving the collection and clearing out the library began in earnest. The books and journals found new homes in other campus libraries. Contrary to rumors, we’re still actively collecting print resources in LIS—and will do so as long as they’re published. To facilitate browsing in the Main Library stacks, where many of the core LIS books now reside, we selected older, seldom-used, and/or fragile books for transfer to the Oak Street Storage Facility. Books shelved at Oak Street circulate upon request; requests can easily be initiated through the online catalog.

A key element in the new service model is an embedded presence in the GSLIS building. In my last column, I described my “librarian’s office hours.” This fall, I quadrupled the number of hours I spend at GSLIS each week. Another important element is a more robust online information environment. The web-based LIS Virtual Library is still growing; expect new content and features to be added throughout the coming year. One much-appreciated new feature is the LIS Easy Search, a federated search of the three major LIS journal indexes, which my colleagues at the Grainger Engineering Library programmed. Our popular Virtual New Book Shelf has a new look, too (and enhanced software running behind it). The LIS Virtual Library aims to be a resource for information professionals in the field as well as students and researchers. Please explore it!

The process of closing the LIS Library was at times painful. Fortunately, we were buoyed by the support of library users. Many alumni contacted us and told us how central the LIS Library had been to their education. Regardless of whether they protested the decision to adopt a new service model or applauded it, their support for me, Sandy Wolf, and Lori Miller as professionals never faltered. At the annual ALA conference in Chicago in July, the Library School Alumni Association presented the three of us with its Distinguished Service Award. When I gaze at the plaque that now hangs on my office wall, I’m not only reminded of the things we accomplished in the LIS Library in its heyday. I’m also aware that expectations haven’t diminished. Over the coming year, the new service model will be tested, tweaked, and assessed. LIS library services will continue to evolve and will be impacted by big changes in other departments of the University Library. Without a doubt, it’s an interesting time to be a librarian at the U of I!

— Sue Searing, LIS Librarian

Related links:

The LIS Virtual Library:  
www.library.illinois.edu/vlx

History of LIS Library services:  
www.library.illinois.edu/su/about/history.html

Searing, Susan E. (2009) “The ‘librarian’s library’ in transition from physical to virtual space: A case study of the Library & Information Science Library at the University of Illinois, USA.”  
https://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/handle/2142/13753

University Library, New Service Models: Programs  
www.library.illinois.edu/nsm/

What made you decide to pursue a degree in library and information science?
I student taught in a third grade classroom during my undergraduate days, and realized that if I was going to be confined to a single room in a school, I’d much rather have it be the library.

What surprises you the most about the field of LIS?
Its diversity—while there are some traditional paths to take in our field, there’s enormous flexibility and creativity in the kinds of things we do.

What do you hope to do with your degree?
I plan on finding a middle/high school that will embrace me as a teacher-librarian, where I can do all things that I love—teach, read, teach kids to love reading and use information well, create a supportive environment for teachers and students, and much more.

What one technology do you wish were available now?
I wish that all schools and students had the same access to and skills with technology that only a few select do. But it’s not about what technology is available, rather what you do with what you have.

Where is your favorite library in the world?
I actually haven’t found my favorite library yet! I do find many things to love in the libraries that I frequent, but I can’t say that I have a favorite.
1970

Erik Blomstedt (MS ’73) recently retired from Three Rivers Library District (Channahon & Minooka, IL) after 32 years of service. June 20th was declared Blomstedt Day in both communities and the state of Illinois.

Barbara J. Ford (MS ’73) received the Chinese American Librarians Association’s 2009 President’s Recognition Award. The association honored Barbara for her engagement and support of library and librarians’ activities and exchanges on an international scale.

1980

Alana (Ferguson) Callender (MS ’80) completed her Ed.D. through Fielding Graduate University in September 2008. She is the senior director of the Palmer Foundation for Chiropractic History in Davenport, Iowa.

1990

Carrie Bissey (MS ’99) moved to the Atlanta area and is working as a prospect research analyst at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta.

2000

Morris Levy (MS ’00) is the senior music cataloger at Northwestern University and has been offered the 2009-2010 John M. Ward Fellowship in Dance and Music for the Theatre from Houghton Library, Harvard University, to do research on the 1838 Neapolitan ballet Furio Camillo, choreographed by Salvatore Taglioni with music by Robert Gallenberg.

Leslie Owens (MS ’01) and her husband are happy to announce the birth of their little boy, Nicholas, on March 3, 2009. They are living in Boston and Leslie is an industry analyst covering search and taxonomy at Forrester Research.

Louise T. Svehla (MS ’02) has been accepted to Synergy: The Illinois Library Leadership Initiative 2009. She is “so honored and thrilled to be part of Synergy this year!”

Currently, she works as a reference and reader services librarian at the Plainfield Public Library District.

Emily Knox (MS ’03) entered the doctoral program in the Department of Library and Information Science at the Rutgers School for Communication & Information in September 2008. Her research interests include intellectual freedom and religious censorship. She recently completed a manual on running a small interlibrary loan and document delivery department which will be published by Neal-Schuman in the fall. Emily is also the resident student blogger on the Library Garden blog (librarygarden.net).

Carissa Holler (MS ’04) has won the 2009 Achievement in Academic Business Librarianship award given by the Special Libraries Association Business & Finance Division. The award is for academic business librarians who have been in the profession 3-7 years.

Jim Obst (MS ’04) is digital services lead in the Knowledge Center at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. He is managing a retrospective digitization project of the bank’s employee publications as well as preservation projects for motion pictures and videotapes. He’s also developing an archival management system for the bank’s historical collection. Jim is part of the team overseeing the Fed’s intranet portal and is currently chair of the organization of Federal Reserve archivists. In addition, he is a Special Advisory Board member of the Metropolitan Library System and began serving as an LSAA Director in 2009.

Karen Pardue (MS ’05) received the Outstanding Faculty Award for 2008-09, University Library, at Colorado State University-Pueblo. She also has been appointed chair of the Department of Information Management.

Kayleigh Van Poolen (MS ’05) graduated from DePaul University College of Law with her Juris Doctor in May 2009; she was acknowledged for her contribution to work on behalf of the underserved with an award for pro bono and community service hours donated as well as for her overall service to the college of law community. The Supreme Court of Louisiana and the Louisiana Bar Association also acknowledged her efforts in rebuilding the Gulf Coast. Her plans are to work in policy and legislation development addressing issues of poverty, education, and social justice.

Parmit Chilana (MS ’06), currently in the doctoral program at the University of Washington iSchool, recently won the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) doctoral award from her home country, Canada.

Sarah Miller (MS ’06) is the librarian at the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia.

Cynthia Ehret Snyder (MS ’06) started a new position as a reference/instruction librarian at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, in June of 2009.

Mary Aquila (MS ’07) is a reference librarian at Vanderbilt University’s Central Library. She is “extremely happy in [her] new position and also ecstatic to be closer to family.”

Joshua Finnell (MS ’07) is the humanities liaison librarian at Denison University in Granville, Ohio.

Josh Lupkin (MS ’08) has accepted the position of humanities research librarian at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. In the context of a broader role of
liaison with students and faculty in several humanities departments, he will assume collection development responsibilities and provide reference and instruction services.

Sherry (Van Treuren) McElhannon (MS ’08) is a library/media specialist and also running a library services co-op and the Instructional Media Center at the Education Service Center in Texas.

Laurie Lee Moses (MS ’08) has accepted a position as archivist and digital librarian at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago. She is “truly excited to bring together all my intensive interests—music and performing arts, technology, information modeling, and archives.”

Jodi Schneider (MS ’08) is starting the PhD program at the National University of Ireland, Galway. She has accepted an assistantship to work at DERI, and her research will be in online arguments and discourse.

Vandana Singh (PhD ’08), an assistant professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, was recently awarded an Early Career Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, in the amount of $321,178 to conduct research on comparing open source software technical support with proprietary software support. Singh was recently named Scholar of the Week at UTK.

Aleksandra (Wlodarska) Pitner (MS ’03) was hired as the library director for Florida National College in January 2009. She and her husband welcomed the birth of their first child, Leopold, in July 2008.

Melissa Bowles-Terry (MS ’09) has accepted a position as instruction and assessment librarian at the University of Wyoming.

Michelle Chronister (MS ’09) is a Presidential Management Fellow for the Office of Citizen Services at the General Services Administration in Washington, DC. In this position, she serves as a content manager for the USA.gov website and project lead on social media initiatives.

Kaye Korwits (MS ’09) is the librarian at the International Academy of Design & Technology in Chicago. She is responsible for the daily management of the library including reference and instruction for students and faculty, staffing, budgeting, acquisitions, and purchasing.

Erica Voell (MS ’09) has accepted the position of youth/teen coordinator for the Bonner Springs City Library in Bonner Springs, Kansas. She’ll be serving youth and teens from 1st through 12th grade.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT W. ORAM

Robert W. Oram (MS ’50), who died in Austin, Texas, on July 24, will be remembered warmly by the GSLIS community. He was at Illinois in the years between 1950, when he received his library degree here, and 1979, when he became library director at Southern Methodist University. Over nearly three decades at the University, Bob rose through the circulation department to become acting university librarian from 1973 to 1976. “Books in Review,” his radio program on WLL, is still warmly recalled. He was also board president of the Urbana Free Library, the motivating force behind the University of Illinois Library Friends in its earliest days, an officer of ILA and the ALA publishing program, and a sympathetic presence working with students and faculty in days when the library school was in the University Library building. His voracious reading made him a formidable intellect; his gregarious ways made him a delightful colleague. He was a man we should be proud of.

—Professor Emeritus Donald Krummel

DECEASED

Ruth Rothenburger Ferguson (BS ’30)
Frances Louise Bassett (BS ’37)
Else Marie Kelly (BS ’38)
Ina L. Broe (BS ’39)
Severine L. Langelan (BS ’39)
Martha Louise Heath (BS ’40)
Ellen Schultz Johnson (BS ’41)
Elizabeth Reuter Usher-Scar (BS ’44)
Richard E. Chapin (MS ’49)
Bernard Gill (MS ’49)
Charlotte Fanta (BS ’50)
Robert William Oram (MS ’50)
James Bayly Woy (MS ’50)
Alice Elizabeth Johnson (MS ’52)
Karl O. Gandt (MS ’55)
Mary E. Harrison (MS ’56)
Archie Green (MS ’60)
Lorene Edna Pixley (MS ’60)
D. Dean Willard (MS ’60; PhD ’73)
Stanley Frank Dunnettski (MS ’61)
Harriet E. Wallace (MS ’62)
Joan T. Hicks (MS ’65)
Margaret Norman Martin (MS ’65)
Mary Eleanor Sauer Price (MS ’65)
Thomas Hickok Ballard (MS ’71)
Warren A. Williamson (MS ’71)
Mary H. Salrin (MS ’72)
Jeanne Ann Gittings (MS ’73)
Dorothy Ann Vickers-Shelley (MS ’75)
Bonnie J. Froehlich (MS ’76)
Kirk Brashear (MS ’78)
Theodore J. Skok (MS ’78)
Carol J. Gillman (MS ’80)
Felicia G. Sworsky (MS ’89)
Scott Van Jacob (MS ’87; CAS ’98)
Roslyn Katrina Berry (MS ’04)
Jonathan Alfred Lorig (MS ’04)
Kathryn J. Skhal (MS ’04)
IT’S NOT GENERATIONAL

by Erin Silva (MS ’08)

Those of us born roughly between 1980 and 2000 are known by several names: Millennials, Generation Y, Generation Next. Much has been written about our learning habits and our use of technology in all aspects of our lives. Less attention is given to us in our capacity as working professionals.

In library school, my classmates and I were told repeatedly that we were the future of the profession, that we would be the generation to usher in a new type of library, one extending beyond the bound book to include social learning spaces and new educational technologies. But I discovered differently on entering the workforce.

A new library

In early August 2008, I started my first job as a librarian at the University of Nevada, Reno. Though the university was unknown to me when I came upon the job posting, I quickly became enthralled with the prospect of working there, especially because of the brand-new library facility it would soon be opening.

Housed in a five-story, 295,000 square foot building, the $75 million Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center officially opened its doors on August 11, 2008, and it is today the gem of the campus and one of its main hubs of activity.

But it is neither the Knowledge Center’s newness nor its size that makes it worthy of attention—it is that the library has successfully merged traditional library services with cutting-edge technologies, thus allowing students to process information in dynamic new ways.

Among the library’s highlights are a state-of-the-art media lab, software for data visualization and analysis, an automated retrieval system, group study rooms outfitted with large-screen monitors, video conferencing rooms, smart classrooms, an abundance of tables and lounge chairs, a café, and so much more.

The library of the future

In a 2003 D-Lib Magazine article titled “Visions: The Academic Library in 2012,” university librarian James W. Marcum presented the range of responses elicited from a 2002 essay contest on the future of librarianship. Increased reliance on multimedia formats was the most popular prediction. A few essayists envisioned “librarians as technologists, working with tools that utilize artificial intelligence and multitasking to assist learners in creating individualized information portfolios.”

The Knowledge Center is doing all of this...now.

Organizational culture

While in graduate school, I researched generational distinctions within the information profession, and everything I learned led me to believe that only the young—with our easy grasp of technology, our vision, and our capacity for generating new and innovative ideas—could realize such a futuristic project.

One of the things I’ve been pleasantly surprised to learn in my time as a blooming professional is that the generation to which you belong does not determine how forward-thinking you are. The Knowledge Center’s faculty and staff span the generational spectrum, yet they all contributed to the creation of this great space. While others were merely thinking about the library of the future, my new workmates were actually building it.

I believe the driving force behind the creation, completion, and subsequent success of the Knowledge Center is its organizational culture, which encourages people of all ages to contribute their ideas, approaches, and experiences.

All of my colleagues work in their own unique ways to, in the words of the Knowledge Center’s stated mission, “stimulate and sustain innovation.”

The power of synergy

My observations and conversations with my co-workers have taught me that the foundation of this organizational culture stems from synergy. At the University of Nevada, the libraries and instructional technology and information technology units operate under the same direction. The result is a culture that fosters a collaborative approach to learning, information, and technology.

And we’re not the only ones to do this. Library schools across the country have undergone similar mergers, the most prominent example being the iSchool Caucus, born of a merger among 24 information schools with similar missions. These schools recognize the important relationship among people, information, technology, and the act of knowledge creation. Having attended one such school myself, I can attest that the curriculum really does offer students the tools to become skilled professionals in an interconnected information field.

Moving forward

We members of this profession will always be trying to anticipate how our users’ needs will change. But looking forward is different from moving forward.

My experiences thus far have taught me that, however old or experienced you are, and especially if you work together, you have the potential to move beyond speculation to action.

This story was originally published September 15, 2009, in Library Journal.
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The Fifth Annual iConference brings together scholars, professionals, and students who come from diverse backgrounds and share interests in working at the nexus of people, information and technology. The 2010 iConference theme addresses IMPACTS. As the Obama administration brings new potential for our field to effect change, particularly through investments in education, broadband, and scientific research, it also is providing a moment for critical reflection on the impacts of the iSchool movement (research, teaching, profession, industry, and service) within and outside our community. In this theme, we thus consider such questions as: What are the broad impacts (actual and potential) of the iSchool movement? How can impact be defined, identified, measured, and communicated to key audiences?

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