Reflective Journal

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LI 801- Foundations of Library and Information Science

August 26, 2011

What kind of learner am I prepared to be?

Both in High School and in the lower undergrad classes, I did notice several of these things mentioned in Hansen and Stephen's article. I've always enjoyed learning, but I did experience a bit of the learned helplessness the authors talked about. I was very good at remembering what the teachers said long enough ace the test. I was one of the few that actually enjoyed tests because I had such a good memory, I could remember what they said and regurgitate it at test time. I enjoyed that type of learning until I became an undergrad. It was a bit different there. The instructors were nothing like my high school teachers. In one class, there weren't any tests. I was appalled. All the other students loved it because there were not tests, but I didn't quite know how to function. How was I supposed to prove to the teacher that I actually learned during the class? I was mainly focused on keeping my 4.0 GPA from high school and cared little for actual learning. I managed to get by with a 3.72, but I remember little from what the instructors tried to teach me.

Since I received my Associate's degree, I've had a paradigm shift. I enjoy learning new things and how it stretches my mind. Several of the things I've been learning in the past few years I had never even thought of before. I'm still struggling a little with the learned helplessness I experienced in my younger years, but I'm still working to overcome this. I'm thinking more about the future, about my own experiences, and what I want to be like when I'm older.

Also in my undergrad years, I rarely partook in group or class discussions because I was afraid of what people would think. I often have very different views than others, and while I see now this would help facilitate discussions, previously, I didn't want to ruffle any feathers or get into any heated discussions. I kept quiet.

I never liked group work much, only because I had the mindset of an undergrad described in the article. After realizing that no one was judging me, the entire group wasn't going to get the A when I did all the work, and that they need to learn things for themselves, I've grown fonder of group work. I can't say I quite like it yet, but I don't hate it, and that's a start. I still don't want my grades to suffer for the lack of work others might do.

I'm looking forward to being a better learner, and learning from my fellow students who also want to learn. I've never been an environment like this before. I am prepared to be an individual learner who accepts challenges as they come. I will persevere in the face of these challenges and will never be afraid to have a different opinion than everyone else.

Hansen, E.J., & Stephens, J.A. (2000, September-October). The ethics of learner-centered education: Dynamics that impede the process. *Change, 33*(5), 41-47.

August 27, 2011

What kind of Information Professional am I prepared to be?

When I was a child and someone asked me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I never knew. I knew that I wanted to make a difference, but I didn't know which field to go into. I wanted to change the world. It took me quite a while, but I finally decided that since librarians had made the most difference in my life, that I wanted to be a librarian too. I liked the line on page 124 of Mason's article that says, "Information professionals empower their clients to understand or to know…." I enjoy helping people and empowering people is helping. Librarians, or information professionals, have access to many useful tools. They may or may not use these tools (like databases or the internet) on a daily basis, but they empower others by helping them use the tools. Librarians help patrons find jobs or teach children to read. At a library, patrons have the freedom to access troves of knowledge and discover new ideas. Even if a humble librarian cannot change the entire world, a librarian can change one person by giving them access to this information that helps change a mental model or develop an idea in this single person. Knowing that I helped a single person overcome previous mental models is enough for me, however, I know that that person will go and share what he learned with others, and the new idea or thought will continue to spread. Where would this change be if the librarian did not help the first individual?

Mason, R.O. (1990, Fall). What is an information professional? *Journal of Education for Library Information Science, 31*(2), 122 - 138.

August 30, 2011

The authoritarian Mind-set

I've been reading the article by Fine. It makes the authoritarian mind-set sound so awful. At the beginning of the article, I was agreeing with several things mentioned. By the end, I was a bit upset that the author was saying some of these things about me. Perhaps it is

my strong Christian beliefs and moral viewpoints, but I take offense to much of this article. The author paints the picture of the authoritarian being the bad guy and groups religious people in with the authoritarian. It sounds like she is saying Christianity brainwashes Christians and that what we believe is incorrect. I don't believe that being authoritarian is a bad thing at all. I can see how it can be used as a bad thing, but I do not like the stereo types the author places on "all authoritarians."

The line between selection and censorship is a fine one. I have heard of parents of high school students becoming outraged by the books the school "allows" their child to read. The truth is that it is the parent's responsibility to teach the child what is appropriate to read and what is not appropriate to read. Unless the high school teaching assigns that particular "unappropriate" book, the parent has no right to become angry with the school librarian. Maybe some ways to get past similar situations is to put any possibly questionable books in a special sections in the library - then the parents have to sign off that their child can read the books from this sections before the student is allowed to check a book out of that section. I see both sides of the argument and I don't know what the right answer is.

As a future librarian, I cannot imagine buying copies of the Koran or other books similar to this. I do not believe the information in these books is correct; however, if I go into a library looking for a Christian Bible, and find only Muslim teachings, I would be very upset. I'm trying to figure out how to balance the freedom of knowledge with my rather strong morals and beliefs. It seems impossible right now, but I'm only just beginning on this journey.

I don't believe there is a right or wrong answer for each particular book. There is no line that separates what is appropriate and inappropriate for the whole of society. I believe this line does exist individually. For the man who is battling a pornography addiction, an art book filled with nude portraits is most likely inappropriate. However, this same book is perfectly acceptable for the artist studying the human form. Each person must know where his line rests and be careful not to cross it.

September 6, 2011

Selection, Censorship, and Immaturity

In the Asheim article, I read that the difference between selection and censorship was that the selector overlooked a few negative things if the rest of the content of the book (or whatever it is) is positive. The censor, on the other hand will toss out an entire book for just one line that they don't like. A selector looks on the positive side and the censor looks on the negative side.

This brings me to another topic. In high school, maybe I just wasn't "in the loop" but I don't think that there were any books "banned" from the library. The librarian was actually very liberal, and if anything, she'd ban Bibles and the like. She and I did not get along well, but I do not think she banned the traditional "banned" books. I hadn't even heard of "Banned Book Week" until I moved to Emporia this year. Maybe it's just the different area where I grew up. Maybe it was the librarian who always had these books in the library no matter the fact that they were banned. I've tried to do more research on banned books week --- like who exactly has banned these books, where they're banned from, etc. Several of the books on the list are books that I have read (and some I even own!) Books such as I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou, Forever by Judy Blume, Tarzan by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Brave New World by Huxley, To Kill a Mocking Bird by Harper Lee, The Giver by Lois Lowry, Bridge to Terebithia, My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picult, Freaky Friday, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and several more. (I found the list here: http://www.abffe.com/bbw-booklist.htm)

It seems to me that people are a bit immature when it comes to the topic of censorship and banning books. School libraries do have a certain duty to provide appropriate books for children; however, on the other hand, the parents have a duty to teach their children right from wrong. Perhaps someone who disagrees with Harry Potter could use the book as an example of what is "wrong." Children are still learning and need to make choices (both good and bad) for themselves. Granted, I do see the point in not wanting sexually explicit books in an elementary school, but I see nothing wrong with them in a high school -- as long as they are labeled as such so the student knows what it is before checking it out. I'm thinking of a novel that I checked out once. When I got home and started reading it, I was so appalled that books didn't have ratings like movies. This one would have been rated R for sure! I returned it right away and for a while only read familiar authors until I dared venture out again. However, if someone knows what they're about to check out has explicit details in it; I see no reason why they should not be allowed to read it.

Asheim, L. (1953, September). Not censorship but selection. *Wilson Library Bulletin, 28,* 63-67. Reprinted and available from American Library Association website at http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/basics/notcensorship.cfm

September 24, 2011

Shawshank Redemption

I recently watched the Shawshank Redemption. I found it quite interesting. Red was much more of a librarian than Brooks or Andy, yet he did not hold the official job as librarian in the jail. I wonder if it had anything to do with the fact that he's African American.

Andy did a very good job at getting the books. Writing letters every week for 6 years (then every two weeks for several more years). He had persistence, but I don't think persistence is the most important part of being a librarian. I believe at the beginning of his time in jail, when he asked for a pickaxe (or whatever it was) that He had a plan to escape. From the beginning, he used his poster to cover up his hole, and hid the tool in his bible. How smart is that. He got on the guard's good side and waited all those years for the perfect opportunity. That shows his perseverance and his persistence. Before he got all the books and money from the government, there wasn't much intellectual freedom in the prison because they were stuck with the same old books they'd always had.

As I said, I believe Red was more of an information scientist than Andy was. Andy kept most of the information he learned, while Red was the researcher, he'd find out information and share it with others. The guards did not know who the information came from, but all the inmates did. Red had a very good user service. He found the need, figured out a way to meet the need, and then met it. I found it interesting how the inmates hid the transfer of information and contraband from the guards. They had their own silent code that somehow, everyone knew and abided by.

When the young man came to jail who helped Andy figure out who killed his wife, the warden killed him because he was too free with his information. The Warden was afraid to lose his "personal assistant," Andy. That was a horrible scene, but it showed that information still wasn't as free as the inmates thought it had become. And that there was a price to be paid.

September 26, 2011

I guess I can see both sides to almost every coin. Open Access is no exception. On one hand, I believe it is good to share all information freely to anyone who wishes to use it. How awesome would it be to access any database, any article, any information you need with simply a click of a button? No more annoying abstracts of enticing articles that you have to pay $50 to read. Would it include free books? How awesome would that be to have free books that when you finished with them you could just take them to a central location for someone else. It would be sort of like a library but with no late fees and sort of like a Netflix for books with no usage charges.

Of course, on the side of the publishers, authors and libraries, I can see how these charges are necessary. With the fragile economy the way it is now, who would want to write a book only to share the information they know? Ideally, sharing information is just something people would do because it's good for society. People today are selfish. Even I wouldn't want to go through that much trouble to research, write, proofread, revise, search for a publisher,

publish, and not receive a penny. If I do that much work, I would expect to be paid something! Publishers would at least need to be reimbursed for their paper and ink even if they volunteered their time for the betterment of society.

It wouldn't work to have entirely free information. It would be nice, yes, but it's not practical. Even just having open source databases probably wouldn't work. Even if it's an entirely online journal, someone has to do the work to compile the articles, put them in a logical order, make sure they look good, and submit them. Unless the world grew a lot more giving and willing to help society just to help, it will never happen.

September 28, 2011

I was reading a blog this morning that I found rather interesting. The Brooklyn Public Library either has or wants to get (I believe it's the latter) a small library branch that has no books. At first, I was confused, but after reading the post, It made perfect sense. The branch is in a strategic location -- right in the middle of a busy commercial district. Space is limited there, so they will only provide electronic resources. Books are available through the catalog, and if a patron wants a particular book, the library will send it to this small commercial branch for a patron to pick up. They will have extended hours for all the patrons working during the day. They also have an exhibit area where the will have special exhibits showing different things relating to the community or current needs. There might also be performances, lectures, concerts or even meals at this exhibit area.

This small branch or "Outpost" as Nate Hill calls it provides more information and knowledge and less books. We have found an almost bookless library. The blog post does also mention that it is not their goal to completely do away with books all together, just in this particular branch. The needs in this area are not for books, rather for information. With such a small building, not having books frees up quite a bit of space for other events like lectures, classes, and other information giving events.

This post also talks about locations of the other branches. Knowing nothing about Brooklyn, I had a bit of trouble following it, but I gathered that the other branches were built many years ago, and since then, the types of communities have changed, people have moved, and the needs are entirely different. It is hard to move a library, however, with this small Outpost, there are no books, so it would be much easier to move if the needs changed in that particular area of Brooklyn.

Interesting idea. I'm glad they're not holding back thinking that they must have books to have a library. It will be interesting to see how this plays out.

http://natehill.wordpress.com/2008/03/15/library-outposts-a-new-service-model-for-urban-public-libraries/

October 4, 2011

E-Books

I've been reading a lot about e-readers, e-books, DRM, and other related things for my Ethics group. I've found several articles interesting. One in particular was called "E-readers in an academic library setting." by Mark Zimmerman. I learned that e-readers have been around for 10 years at least. I didn't know that. I learned that there are several brands of e-readers. I didn't know that either. I thought there were only Kindle and Nook. (I didn't count iPad because it does more than just read books). Samsung has an ereader, as does Sony. There are several other brands that I did not recognize too. Most of them use a different format for their books. That's one of the reason I'm not too interested in buying one. If I buy a Kindle, but then someone gives me a gift certificate to Barnes and Noble, then I won't be able to buy the Barnes and Noble e-books for my Kindle. I've been playing with the iPad from ESU's library, and found the iBook app useful. I've downloaded several pdf's for my classes from databases and have been reading them while waiting at the Laundromat for my clothes, while walking to work, and even while I'm at work. I'd rather have paper copies so I can highlight and write on, but I tend to misplace things and not be able to find which article I want, when I want it, so it is useful this way -- but only because I can read the pdf's. I was surprised to learn that Nook and Kindle do not allow pdf's. I didn't realize that each e-reader had its own special format. I'm not really sure what I thought, but I just knew that files couldn't be shared or interchanged between them.

Another reason I don't want an e-reader is that I never buy new books. I buy used textbooks from eBay or amazon; I frequent used bookstores and yard sales. When I finish with a book, I resell it. In the long run, each book doesn't cost very much, if anything at all. Sometimes I even make money from some books. With an e-reader, you can't buy used books at yard sales, you can't share the book with your friend, and you can't resell the book once you're finished. If there's a book that I want to keep, it's because I find it useful and I like to write notes in it, underline things, highlight, etc. With e-readers, (I think) it's impossible to do this. At least I know it is with iPad's pdf files. Maybe I'm just cheap, but I'm not going to pay $100 for an e-reader then buy each book for $10-$20. That is expensive considering if I just continued to buy physical books; I could resell the books, and get them virtually free. I do enjoy the convenience of the iPad's size. I enjoy having only one device with several pdf's on it instead of 100 pages of articles to carry around with me, but It's not worth the cost.

One final thing I found interesting was the fact that libraries are trying to add e-books to their library. Good for them. However, they're treating them just like regular books. There's a specified time limit for check out then the e-book simply disappears from your e-reader. Only one person can check it out at a time, so if there's an e-book needed for a class, only one student gets it, or the library has to purchase 30 copies of the same e-book. I know with DRM and other issues that this is a tough situation to be in. I don't know how to solve their problems. Treating an e-book like a physical book just doesn't seem like the way to do things though.

October 7, 2011

During my professional interview, Rose (a circulation librarian from Missouri State University) and I began talking about the ALA and other professional organizations. She said that she was not a member. I remember during our first class weekend that there was quite a bit of information about the ALA presented and every one said how good it was to stay informed in the library world and to join ALA or another professional organization. I was surprised when she said she wasn't a member. After much discussion, I learned that she had been a member in the past, but found she was volunteering for way too many projects through the ALA and found herself slipping in her actual paying job duties. She said she really enjoyed being a member of both the ALA and the MLA (Missouri Library Association), but she was unable to keep up with both the professional organizations and her job. Since she got paid for the job, she kept it. It does seem to me that being an active member of the ALA is a lot of hard work. I haven't joined yet due to this fact. I don't want to get a bad name in the library world for being "lazy" and not participating in anything in the professional organizations. I want to wait to join until I have a bit more free time to devote myself 100% to this professional organization.

October 13, 2011

I really enjoyed chapter 7 in Rubin. Figure 7.1 really stood out to me. I like seeing charts and graphs and to finally see Library Science or Information in a chart form was refreshing. I also decided the "information seeker" that I had been interviewing for my 802 class is actually an "information gatherer" because he's not satisfying an immediate need, rather just collecting information for future use.

Also while reading this chapter; I began to think of a research topic for my 810 class in a few semesters. I haven't really heard much about the class other than "It's really hard" or "you have to do research" but I've got some ideas for a survey to figure out why students at ESU use the library, and why other students don't use the library. Maybe it's related to the location of the William Allen White library. It's on the very southwestern corner of campus. The location is not convenient for students on the opposite side of campus. I know myself, I don't like going all the way to the HYPER building or even to the campus safety office because it's so far away. I

stick to the southwestern corner of campus. I wonder if the library was moved to a more central location if more people would, use is.

I also found it interesting to finally read a simplified definition between data and information. In our 802 textbook, there wasn't much differentiation. I learned here that data is things like letters, words, music notes, etc. Information is sentences, paragraphs, an entire song, etc. Data is the tiny little things that make up information.

Also on page 288, I found a question that was interesting. It says, "Do librarians censor materials because they regard some authors or publishers as low cognitive authority?" I was shocked because I didn't think librarians were allowed to censor materials.

I think my favorite section in this entire chapter started on page 294. It was entitled, "Emerging fields in Information Science." After reading this section, more specifically, the subsection of "Information Architect," I realized that I already enjoy doing many of those things. I enjoy building websites, but I don't usually do that good of a job with actual content. Information Architects focus more on the layout and visual design of a site. They make sure it is easy to use and interact with. There is a very close link between Information Architects and graphic designers, but graphic designers usually just focus on the actual design of the website and the graphics. They only sometimes focus on the usability and ease of use. I also really liked the box on page 297 labeled "Web Site Evaluation Criteria" It was very helpful to me, as a website designer, to figure out how to improve my skills and web sites that I create.

October 15, 2011

From Gatekeepers to Gate-Openers by Steven Bell outlines almost every reason why I long to be a librarian. Making information accessible is only slightly important to me. As Bell mentions, it's a limited goal. In my opinion, people can usually find most of the information they're looking for on their own. Librarians and libraries need to be redefined. Until the common person has this paradigm shift from libraries as simple book storage places that will never happen. Bell mentions meaningful relationships with community members. Right out of high school, I worked at a library for a few years. After I left the library, what I missed the most wasn't the books or the periodicals or the information. What I missed most were the patrons. I missed talking to them, learning about what they do for a living, what their kids do, etc. I missed our relationship.

Ever since I was very young, when someone asked me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I said something like, "doctor" or "teacher." It wasn't until later when I realized what I really wanted to "be" was someone who helped others. Both doctors and teachers help

others, but I faint at the sight of blood and I don't have the patience to teach children. After I began working at the library, I realized that librarians help people. Their job isn't just to put away books and to make the library neat and organized, it's to help patrons. Yes, we help patrons find books, but it's more than a clerk at a grocery store pointing a customer to the correct aisle for the bread. This help was different. I couldn't explain it, but I knew it was. It took me a while to realize why. Finally, I realized it was the relationship. A grocery store clerk doesn't care why you need bread. It doesn't matter if you're making sandwiches, French toast or even bread pudding. Bread is pretty much all the same. The clerk doesn't talk to you or ask questions they just say, "Aisle 6" and you're off to find it. If you ask a librarian for a book about bread, they could just point you to the cookbooks. Usually though, we ask "what about bread are you looking for?" or "What kind of bread?" "Are you looking for how bread is made, the origins of bread, or things to make with bread?" Each of these books is most likely in the same aisle, but as the librarian asks questions, she knows how better to serve the patron. A relationship is formed and the patron may come back with a fresh baked loaf of bread or a story about how the recipe she tried failed miserably.

The patron will ask for help again next time he needs something because of the positive experience he had the first time. I've been to stores were I ask for help and the clerk just said "Aisle 6" I got to that aisle and what I needed wasn't there. I had to ask someone else for even more help. The next time I needed help, I didn't ask the first clerk for help – he'd had the wrong answer the first time and he might have the wrong answer again. The second clerk actually stopped what she was doing, walked me to the correct aisle and actually picked up the item and handed it to me. That was an enjoyable experience.

I like to do that for others when they come to the library. I'm never too good to actually go out into the books to help a student find a book. I'm more than happy to leave my chair at the desk and go help someone figure out how to print. Some librarians simply say, "Oh, that book is in 340.2." or "To print, just click print." They don't actually teach anything or have a relationship with the patrons. I really liked Bell's quote on page 53, "Focus on the value delivered, not the product or service." Yes, the service may be to get the patron to print something, but the value is the fact that they learn how to do it for themselves. They have a sense of achievement and leave the library with a good experience. Patrons like this are the ones who continue to return to the library.

October 17, 2011

I just began reading James Gleick's The Information. So far, I've found it very eye opening. I never thought of binary communications existing as far back as ancient Greece. I always thought binary was something that was developed along with computers. Gleick

mentions that the fire beacons of ancient civilizations were binary systems. there were only two options. "Fire" or "No fire." Fire meant something (usually, "we're being invaded, send help!") and no fire meant there are no problems. Paul Revere also used the binary system. One lantern meant the British were coming by land, and two lanterns meant they were coming by sea. After reading these descriptions of binary communication, I began thinking of Morse code. It's binary, right? only dots and dashes. I flipped the page, and sure enough, Gleick started talking about Morse code too! Apparently, it's not binary because there are four characters: a dot, a dash, a short space separating each letter, and a longer space separating each word.

In communication systems like Morse code, messages are short, brief and to the point. In another example the author used, African drum communication, communication was very redundant and added numerous extra clauses for clarification. It was interesting to read about the African drums. Information could travel around 100 miles in an hour and it didn't matter what language the receiving tribe spoke, the drums were a universal language and all (okay, most) who heard could understand them.

I'm still in the process of reading it and trying to figure out what how it relates to librarians. One thing mentioned in the section I just finished was very good. It was an idea by Socrates. His idea was that writing ideas and knowledge down separates the writer from the learner by both distance and time. Being from such an oral community where people learned directly from others, this was a bad thing. Little did he know how much of an impact these ancient writings would be on future generations.

Looking for Alaska

October 22, 2011

When I first heard about the book, Looking for Alaska, (during our first class meeting), I didn't know anything about it. All I knew was a controversial book. When it comes to the side of controversy, I usually go with a more conservative approach. In this case, before knowing much about the book, I had decided to to not allow it in the library. However as I did more research on the book, I realized that I found no problems with the book. The Wikipedia page didn't have very many detrimental things in it. Bad language, drug use, school pranks, suicide/death and even some sexual content were all that it mentioned. While I personally don't believe in using bad language, drugs, or sexual relations between minors, I have read many fiction books that include these. Some of them are quite enjoyable.

I believe it is the parent's responsibility to raise a child with the proper values and knowledge to know that this is a fictional book. It's simply a story. It is not an instruction book

for how to perform oral sex or where to get drugs. I highly doubt any high school student looking for information about how to perform oral sex is going to check out this particular book. They will most likely look at the internet first or talk to experienced, older friends. They may happen to stumble upon it in this book, but just because they find the information in the book does not necessarily mean they're going to go out and find someone to do this to. (Unless that had already planned on it prior to reading this, and in that case, the book had nothing to do with it.)

I have not personally read the book, but I might in the future. That may change my decision. I surprised myself on how easily I decided to accept this book into the library. Yes, it mentions immoral things, but so does the rest of the world. Supplying only moral books would become very boring, very quickly. Some of my favorite books are books that include magic, wizards, unicorns, and dragons, and while those things aren't immoral, they are often frowned upon by certain religious groups for "promoting witchcraft" or something.

I think the reason this decision came so easily for me (the decision to accept the book into the library) was the fact that it's a fiction book. "The Joys of Gay Sex" may be a bit more difficult for me to accept into a library. I think I would have to see the book, look at it, possibly read it before deciding. Yes, I know the ALA supports making all materials available to all patrons, but I'm still struggling with the some non-fiction issues.

Librarianship and Democracy
October 24, 2011

There was a quote in chapter 9 of Rubin that I wanted to make a comment about. It was "Intellectual freedom is based on a fundamental belief that the health of a democratic society is maintained and improved when ideas can be created and disseminated without governmental, political, or social impediment." I guess my issue with this is that it's focusing only on democratic societies. Just because I was born and raised in, a democratic society does not mean that I'm going to remain in a democratic society for my entire life. What if I move to another country that have another form of government? Will I still be able to be a librarian there? Is what I'm learning now, in this democratic society going to help me in a monarchial country like Morocco or Denmark?

Why is everything so focused around democracy? Just because I was raised in, a democratic society does not mean that I agree with democracy. Why is one of the core values of librarian "democracy?" Why is one of the librarian's obligations to "protect the rights of citizens in a democratic society" (Rubin p. 379)? What if I don't want to be the first amendment

police any more than I want to be a copyright cop? Why is librarianship so centered around a democratic society and why is everything focused on that democracy?

October 25, 2011

Today I read two articles. One was entitled "collaboration for Point-of-need library instruction" by Chuck Malenfant and Nora Egan Demers and the other was "Reference futures: outsourcing, the web or knowledge counseling" by Jo Bell Witlatch.

I enjoyed Malenfant's article. I believe this is mostly because ESU's library has several required library instruction sessions for Composition students (as well as numerous voluntary sessions). I am one of the instructors for these library sessions and this helped give me ideas of things to do next time to improve learning. I liked the idea of an online tutorial that the students can access on their own time. That way if it takes longer than a class period to complete, they could finish later, on their own time. I started thinking after he mentioned online tutorials that I've been wasting too much paper. I printed off several copies of a quick tutorial that I made for the students but it was about four pages per student. When you have 8 classes of around 20 students each, paper adds up quickly. He talked about both beginning level instruction and "Tier 2" instruction that offers a deeper understanding. I liked the fact that in the classes he taught, the library assignments were mandatory so the students took it more seriously. At ESU, the assignments the librarian gives are not worth many (if any) points so the students don't try their hardest with them. If they did, then they would get more out of it.

Another point that I enjoyed was from Witlatch's article. She said that for reference librarians to survive and thrive in the future, they must have staff training and continuous feedback. I agree that this is true of every field, not just librarians. I enjoy learning more about my job and how to do it better. Staff training is something I've always liked. It helps employees stay on top of the game, and if it's optional, then it helps some employees pull away from the other employees and they're more likely to keep their jobs in the future. I recently attended an iPad seminar about the future of iPad's in the library. It was very interesting.

One thing that I want to learn more about is again from Witlatch. She mentioned that SLIM programs should require classes on marketing. As an undergrad, I took a few marketing classes and at first I didn't see how marketing really relates to being a reference librarian, but I understand now. Marketing is important to bring in more patrons, to show them what the library can offer, and to get the word out.

Malenfant, C., & Nora, E. D. (2004). Collaboration for point-of-need library instruction. *Reference Services Review, 32*(3), 264-273.

Whitlatch, J. B. (2003). Reference futures: outsourcing, the Web, or knowledge counseling. *Reference Services Review, 31* (1), 26-30.

October 27, 2011

As I continue to read Glieck's "The Information," I begin some interesting chapters. The one I just started is on information theory. One man who I found most interesting is Claude Shannon. He's often called "the father of information theory." The idea that I found most intriguing was his idea of probability and the English language. I've not quite grasped everything yet, but he has this idea called word approximation that takes the 26 letters and a space and randomizes them several times until he can make something resembling English! The first time it was randomized is "zero-order approximation" the next time is "first order" and there are more e's and t's and less q's, z's and j's. The words are also readjusted to look more realistic. The "second order" focuses on letter pairs like *th, er, an,* and *he.* The "third order" forms slightly smaller words. The next level is called "first-order word approximation." By then the letters have been randomized into actual English words like "representing" and "natural." The last one is called "second-order word approximation" and re-orders the words so they look more natural with regular frequencies. For example, in first-order word approximation one of the phrases is "here the a in came the to of to." In second-order word approximation, this is fixed and gives something more normal like "the head and in frontal attack on an English writer." It still doesn't make much sense, but it very closely resembles English. Shannon did not continue past this level because he said it was too complex and time consuming. (Gleick p.228)I don't blame him!

He wrote several articles that I want to read including "Mathematical theory of communication." This is said to be his greatest work. I'm also interested in learning more about his unbreakable vernam cypher and his maze with his robot mouse.

Another familiar phrase I saw was "n-grams" I'm not exactly sure what they are, but I do remember seeing Google had a new n-gram feature that was fun to play with. I plan to look more into this too. It could prove to be a very useful tool. (Google Ngram viewer)

I did find it odd that he quoted scriptures (Gleick, p. 262) since it was said previously that he was atheist. I'm not sure he understood the meaning and history behind the verses he quoted.

Gleick, J. (2011). *The information: a history, a theory, a flood*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Google Ngram Viewer. (n.d.). *Google Books*. Retrieved October 27, 2011, from http://books.google.com/ngram

October 30, 2011

In Oakleaf's article, "Instructional Strategies for Digital Reference," I found several interesting points. The first one was to think aloud. I've noticed that when I'm helping people search for a book on the library catalog, Sometimes I tend just to look at the titles and scroll down because they are the wrong ones. Some students ask me about this. I've been catching myself lately and telling the student why I'm skipping those, or what exactly I'm looking for. This way, they know how to do it on their own next time.

I also liked the point of "Catch them being good." I always try to compliment something the student did right when they come to me asking for help. If they want to know where a book is and they wrote down the complete call number, I be sure to tell them, "Good job. Most people miss this part of the call number. Let's go look for this book together." Since most of them don't like asking for help anyway, this helps them feel better about it so they might ask again at a later date.

This article didn't list much information for point 8 -- "Share Secret Knowledge". I'd like to learn a bit more about this. Maybe I already share secret knowledge without recognizing it as "secret."

There were many interesting things a few other articles I read. What I found most interesting was the fact that many students used Google before any other resource. Another thing I found interesting was Case's differentiations between knowledge, information and data. In the Gambridge's article, it is said that students are "less likely than their counterparts at other universities to ask for help from librarians." (511) They use the library for the special collections and inter library loan features. It also mentions that when these students need to do research, they go to the internet (more specifically, Google) before they go anywhere else such as the library or trusted professionals. The Google and internet searches are used at least twice as often as more traditional methods. This shows that we are becoming more and more of a technological based society and will depend more and more upon the internet in coming years.

In Chapter 3, Case mentions that data, information and knowledge are basically the same thing and are often used interchangeably. However, he goes on to describe the differences. A person gets information by being told the facts – either verbally by another person, reading it, or by directly observing them. Knowledge comes from thinking about the

information. (64) Data is simply the raw numbers. After reading this, I still think data and information are very similar.

Although Case's descriptions of information were very detailed, one thing I'd like to learn more about is the study of information behaviors. I never thought much about information or the behaviors surrounding it. There were many facts in the text and I enjoyed learning what I understood. I didn't quite understand everything Case mentioned, but I look forward to using what I have learned so far.

Case, D. O. (2007). Looking *for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior.* 2nd ed. Wagon Lane, Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Gabridge, T., Gaskell, M., & Stout, A. (2008). Information Seeking through Students' Eyes: The MIT Photo Diary Study. *College & Research Libraries,* 69(6), 510-22.

Oakleaf, M., & Vanscoy, A. (2010). Instructional Strategies for Digital Reference: Methods to Facilitate Student Learning. *Reference & User Services Quarterly,* 49(4), 380-90.

November 3, 2011

I recently attended an Ipad Seminar in the library. It talked about uses for the ipads in the libraries and mentioned both benefits and costs of adding Ipads to your library. I found it very impressing that these three individuals did so much research on ipads and were willing to share it with others. They did a lot of research and had so much information that it was hard to fit into two 2-hour sessions. They could have done four or five sessions. They talked about the different type of mobile devices, not just Ipads (but Ipads are the most common, that's why I call it an Ipad seminar.) They talked about Blackberry, Androids, Sony, Motorola and several other devices similar to Ipads. They mentioned why we should use tablets in the library (opposed to netbooks or laptops). Pilot programs were important as were roving reference librarians. They even gave an example of library tours via iPad. Students would scan various barcodes around the library with library ipads or their own personal devices and a quick video would play, telling them about each area of the library.

I bring this up now because all the research they did. Their research was important and I can see the benefits of it. In reading Chatman's article, she did a lot of research too. However, I do not see the point in her research. It seems to me that the only things it confirmed was that the theory can be used for information as well as other things, and that there needs to be something done about low income individuals looking for permanent jobs. The theory of information diffusion seemed like common sense to me. Of course people are not going to

adopt a new idea if they don't see it helping them or it's too hard. They're not going to tell others to adopt this practice either unless it's successful to them. I don't understand why these researchers study something that seems so much like common sense. The women researching the ipads were searching for information, and to compare and contrast several different devices to see which was best. They also researched apps and other programs to install on these devices to adopt one system into their library. They used the information diffusion, but they did not research it and try to understand why they did each particular action they did.

Chatman, E.A. (1985). Diffusion theory: A review of a test of a conceptual model in information diffusion. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 37*(6), 377-386

Miller, R., Moorefield-Lang, H., & Meier, C. (2011, September 27). iPads and Tablets in Libraries. Retrieved November 3, 2011, from http://tabletsinlibraries.tumblr.com/

November 6, 2011

A General in the Library by *Italo Calvino* This is a very short story (about 6 pages long) that tells about a library that was shut down by the military for censorship. The General, some lieutenants, ad several soldiers made all but one humble librarian leave. This remaining librarian was to explain to them how the books were arranged so they could go through them. Their search started out according to their plan, but as they began reviewing and reading books, they got interested in the subject matter. They began asking questions and the librarian began to share with them all the knowledge that could be found in the countless books they were trying to remove from the library. The general's reports to his superiors grew more and more infrequent and eventually stopped all together. When the general finally gave his report, his supervisors were amazed. First it was at his lack of compliance, second it was because he began to teach them all that he had learned. They were still afraid of all this new information and fired the general and the four lieutenants. The story ends with the five men in the library, learning.

This story both shows how a simple librarian can change the minds of others, and nicely demonstrates the uncertainty principle as mentioned in Kahlthau (2004 p.92). First the men were confused by the new facts they were learning, then they began to assimilate their newfound knowledge into their own. Their eyes were open to all sorts of new and complex world.

Gloss on a decision of the Council of Nicaea by *Joann Greenberg:* This short story tells of a white librarian who protested access to the libraries for everyone (including African Americans). She was thrown in a jail cell with 7 African American girls. The girls tell her about a

young black man that she's been checking out library books to. (She checked the books out to herself then let him borrow them.) This young man was described as a "bootlegger of knowledge" because he read the books, turned them into brief skits and began acting them out for others. They all thought he was in trouble for making money off the books. the librarian, Myra, didn't mind that he charged ten cents per person to watch the skit. She was happy that he was sharing his knowledge.

The story continues to tell about the women's experience in jail. It ends with the librarian writing a letter to the council of Nicaea - a group of theologians. It doesn't say what the letter says, or what becomes of the women. I liked it though, that the librarian was standing up for what she believed in. In this case, it was open access to the library for all users despite the color of their skin.

Calvino, I. (2003). General in the library. Cart, M (Ed), In the stacks: short stories about libraries and librarians (pp. 14-17). Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Greenburg, J. (2003). Gloss on a Decision of the Council of Nicaea. Cart, M (Ed), In the stacks: short stories about libraries and librarians (pp. 24-39). Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Kuhlthau, C. C. (2004). *Seeking meaning: a process approach to library and information services* (2nd ed.). Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited

November 8, 2011

I just read "The Library of Babel" by Jorge Luis Borges. It sounds like an awful place. An infinite number of books, containing all the information in the world, but it's all scrambled up! How helpful would that be? No knowledge can be found. It reminds me a bit of the internet. Everyone knows the internet contains a large amount of information, yet few can actually find the right knowledge that they're looking for, when they're looking for it. It's interesting how similar this book is with the internet. It was written long before the internet was even thought of.

James Gleick compares the Library of Babel to Wikipedia. Wikipedia contains information about pretty much everything in multiple languages. Knowledge is there, but it is not very scholarly knowledge. Some of it is, but Sometimes users write more about "Britney Spears or the Simpsons" (Gleick p. 381) than scholarly topics. With only a few paid staff members, it is difficult to assure that all the information on each page is correct. Incorrect information leads to a lack of good knowledge, similar to what is present in the Library of Babel.

Borges J. L. (2003). The Library of Babel. Cart, M (Ed), In the stacks: short stories about libraries and librarians (pp. 24-39). Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press.

Gleick, J. (2011). After the Flood. The information: a history, a theory, a flood (pp. 373-397). New York: Pantheon Books.

November 10, 2011

I was surprised this evening. I was watching a movie with my husband; it was called "The Final Inquiry." It's about a man sent by the emperor in 33 AD to investigate the death of "a common criminal" Jesus of Nazareth. The emperor had felt a strange earthquake and darkness in the middle of one day. After much research on his part, he found a possible link between this and Jesus. The man was sent to Jerusalem. At first, he went to Pilot, the man in charge there. Pilot denied knowing anything about Jesus, then hired some men to pretend to be Jesus's followers, removing his body from the tomb and taking it out to the middle of the desert to burn it. The investigator saw right through that and started looking elsewhere for information.

It reminded me a lot of what I've been seeing every day at work. One person (or source) would give a little bit of information, but the information seeker would have to go on to another source to get more information. As this man traveled around the town, he was in denial. He learned lots of things about Jesus that he didn't match certain things he knew to be true. He even found some mis-information from a few Pharisees. This mis-information better matched what he knew, so he believed it. After he kept getting information that clashed with his existing knowledge and the information from the Pharisees, he started believing it. He went to Simon-Peter in Galilee and asked for help to heal a friend of his. He claimed he still didn't believe, but he was only asking for help because the friend believed.

By the end of the movie, this man had found enough answers. He sent his response, along with a resignation, back to the emperor and stayed in Jerusalem where he became a believer and married a lovely woman. I believe he changed his name as well, because Roman soldiers continued to look for him and kill him for sending back this information that conflicted with the emperor's view of the world.

He went through the process of learning and research that we've read about several times in class. Although this movie is religion based, it includes a lot of information science and library aspects scattered throughout. I didn't know this when we started watching it, but It was fun for me to notice these things somewhere I wasn't expecting them.

November 13, 2011

I recently read People of the book by Geraldine Brooks. It gave me a new perspective on books and professions related to books. The character Hannah is a book restorer who was hired to restore a very old lost Jewish book. She finds several interesting things in the book while restoring it such as an insect wing, a small wine stain, and missing clasps. Brooks then details the story of how each clue got into the book. Although I don't normally read historical fiction, this book was refreshing. I'd never read a book about a book before. This is not a book review, so I won't go into those details. She does mention several times that the best place to hide a book is in the library. This is completely true for older libraries. Now that libraries are better cataloged, (and this cataloging takes place digitally) it is much harder for a book hidden in the library to stay hidden for long. Most libraries go through the inventory process at least occasionally where all books are checked. If a book is in the wrong place, it will be put in the correct location.

This book, explains how libraries really can be keepers of culture. There's a blog called Forgotten Bookmarks. The writer is an owner of a used bookstore. Everything he finds in the books is scanned or photographed and put on the site. I'm sure he doesn't do DNA testing on the hairs or keeps things as small as bug wings, but the things he finds are quite interesting. Greeting cards, business cards, old photos and maps, drawings, and other notes are all things that can be seen here. Another article I read recently by Timothy Dickey showed how, just by looking at the number and types of books being published by a certain country during a specific time, you can generally tell what was happening with that culture at that time. There's a graph that I found useful. It shows the number of books being published by Germany each year from 1880-2010. In the mid 1940's, publications drop to almost zero. If you didn't know that was during WW2 under Hitler, you would be able to tell something drastic was happening in Germany at that time.

Brooks, G. (2008) People of the book: a novel. New York: Viking Adult.

Dickey, T. J. (2011). Books as Expressions of Global Cultural Diversity: Data mining for National Collection Analysis. *Library Resources Technological Services*, *55*(3), 148-162. Retrieved November 1, 2011, from Emerald.

Popeck, M. (2011) Forgotten Bookmarks. Retrieved November 12, 2011, from http://www.forgottenbookmarks.com/

November 14, 2011

I just read a rather unique article. In it, David Bryant argues against multiculturalism. Bryant sees multiculturalism as a bad thing that further alienates people from each other. He said, "Multiculturalists...are often intolerant of other cultures." (p.54) He backs it up with an example of a young girl with a Hispanic sounding surname being automatically put into ESL and Spanish classes at her local elementary school. He also mentions how many people come to the US to become "well paid professionals...proficient in English" (p. 54) and proficient in researching in "libraries that offer English-language materials." (p. 54) Bryant argues that multiculturalists ignore this and continue to offer and sometimes force cultural materials on patrons that look like they need these particular materials.

 found the article laughable. It is a bit outdated, but it's eye opening to see how people used to think about multiculturalism. I do remember a few people in my hometown who were mad that certain colleges were offering scholarships for African American students. They thought it was reverse racism. What they didn't understand is that there were probably four times as many scholarships for white students and if African American students didn't get a scholarship, they might not get to continue their education at all.

Bryant was worried that if "multiculturalism wins" then librarians will be suggesting books to the patrons "based on the race and dress of the patron, not his individual intellect, interests or needs." (p. 54). He follows that up by a story about an African American man asking for information about harpsichords. The librarian instead gives him books about African drums. My only thought in that situation is why didn't the librarian give the man what he asked for? Maybe she could talk to him a bit and learn why he's asking for that particular book then she would learn that he doesn't want or need a book about African drums just because he's black.

Bryant does sum up his article very nicely saying, "Honor each visitor" and ignore the way the look or dress and help them just like you would any normal patron.

Bryant, D. (1994) Multiculturalism: The New Racism. Library Journal, 119 (2), 54

The un-findable book

November 16, 2011

I recently had an exciting encounter. Someone came to me and asked, "How good of a librarian are you?" I told him that I was just beginning to study librarianship, but that I'd worked at several libraries before. I also asked him why he asked that. He told me about a book that he had been looking for. He had asked several librarians at several different academic and public libraries. Their answer was always the same - that the book may exist somewhere, but it was

out of their reach to get. He wanted to get it through interlibrary loan, but if that wasn't possible, he was even willing to buy it.

When I heard his story about the un-findable book I was intrigued. I told him that I would find his book for him before Christmas. I didn't think the other librarians were inferior in some way for not being able to find the book, but I wanted to give it a shot. I mean, how hard can it be to find a book? That was before he told me more about the book. It was written in the 1650's. Okay, so it might be a little harder to find since it's so old, but if he had learned about it somewhere, surely it couldn't be too hard to find. Then he told me it was written by a Japanese swordsman. This meant it would be in Japanese, but not just any Japanese, the ancient Japanese that even people who were born in Japan can't read. That's when I started to worry. What had I done?

He told me the title and the author. I began in the only place I knew where to begin: the library catalog at ESU's library. There were no results for either. The next thing I did was look on World Cat; again, there was nothing. I was not going to give up after only 3 minutes of searching, so I tried my next idea: Google. I found a Wikipedia page about the author. According to it, he did indeed write this book in the mid-17th century. I also learned the English translation of the title of this book. I thought that would be helpful in my search, so I wrote it down as well. The only other thing that I could find was a few people asking about the book. Apparently it had been referenced on a popular Japanese anime and people were looking for it with no luck.

Because I can neither speak nor read Japanese, I didn't really have many more ideas. Amazon didn't have the book, neither did Ebay. I know a rare book collector so I asked him about it. He had a few ideas about where to look, but we found nothing. I was starting to think that this book was indeed "un-findable" as the patron mentioned.

Since I work at a library with lots of librarians who are much more experienced than I, I decided to ask them. They had the same ideas as me: first check the catalog, second check WorldCat, third check Google. This was reassuring to me. I had taken all the right steps to find this book. Everyone I asked gave up after those three searches failed.

Finally, I saw the patron again. He jokingly asked me if I'd found anything yet. I told that I had looked everywhere I could think of, but I could not find anything. I told him that I didn't know where else to look. He chuckled and said, "I know where the book is, I just don't know how to get it." I'm sure I had a very confused look on my face then because he started laughing again. He told me that in Japan, they use ancient manuscripts sort of as rites of passage in their martial arts school. This book was about martial arts, and the man who wrote it was a samurai.

I didn't know about the schools using ancient documents as rites of passage or as "degrees" as the patron mentioned.

With this information, I decided to try something else. I looked up the author's name. After remembering that in Japan, the first name listed is the Surname, I easily found a martial arts school named after this man. The school had a website; this could be good. There was an English page and a Japanese page. I read the English page with great interest. There was nothing mentioned about the ancient book. It wasn't until I opened a new browser (Google Chrome) and had the Japanese page automatically translated into very rough English, that I found something. What the patron had called a book wasn't really a book at all. It was a scroll. It was fairly short: about 30 pages. In addition, it had been translated from ancient Japanese into modern Japanese in 1967. It was published in an anthology.

With the help of a friend from the University Archives (who just happened to be able to speak Japanese), we figured out the name of this anthology, the publisher, and the editor. Within 5 minutes of getting that information, I had found the "unfindable book" at KU's Asian library. I couldn't wait to see the patron again and tell him. I was so happy when he came into the library again that day. I told him and he immediately requested the book on Interlibrary loan.

The book came in today and he showed it to me. He was very happy. I was confused. He cannot speak nor read Japanese but he was happy that he got his book. I was happy that I had helped him in a way no other librarian could help him. He mentioned that he was learning Japanese so he could read the book. He planned on making a copy of the story so he could read it later. Apparently, his interest in Martial Arts was so great that he's even willing to learn another language to learn more about it. I wish there were more patrons as involved in their studies as he is.

I think what this means is that the very brief reference interview does not go into as much depth as it possibly should. It seems like librarians are almost afraid to get involved with their patron's questions. There have been several times where I've been helping someone find a book, they write down a few call numbers then go off looking. I don't stop looking myself, and often times, I may write down a few more call numbers for them and take it to them where they are, or go pull the books myself and when I see them walk by again, I'll show them. I'm not afraid to do this. Considering this patron has had so many bad experiences with librarians not being able to help him find his book, he was a little leery about asking questions of librarians. He knew this book existed; he just couldn't get his hands on it. He was very frustrated with library staff in general. I was able to help him change his opinions and perspectives of the librarian for the better.

It was also interesting that at first, I didn't ask enough questions of this book. I just assumed that he'd given me all the information that he knew. After I saw him the second time and he told me a bit more, I was able to find what he was looking for fairly easily. I don't know if that was just something I forgot to ask about, or if the reverence interview is lacking in some way. I asked him about the book, his interest and purpose for the book, the author, the title, and a few other things. I spoke with him more than I'd spoken with any patron in a while (over just one book.) Maybe this is something to think about on my part. Perhaps I need to get more involved in the lives of the patrons to help them change their attitudes of the librarians that "just use Google and then stop looking because it doesn't exist" (words of the patron).

Stand and Deliver

November 11, 2011

I recently watched Stand and Deliver. I believe I have watched this movie before because several things were familiar to me. In this movie, the computer-turned-math teacher was assigned a large group of Hispanic students. No one believed in these students and the teacher was supposed to teach basic math because that's all they could learn. The teacher, however, knew that the students would only accomplish as much as they were expected to do. He said to them very early on:

"*This classroom is my domain. Don't give me no gas, or I'll jump on your face and tattoo you chromosomes... If the only thing you know how to do is add or subtract, you will only be prepared to do one thing: Pump gas....There will be no free rides, no excuses. You already have two strikes against you: your name and your complexion. Because of those two strikes, there are some people in this world who will assume that you know less than you do.* Math *is the great equalizer. When you go for a job, the person giving you that job will not want to hear your problems; ergo, neither do I. You're going to work harder here than you've ever worked anywhere else. And the only thing I ask from you is ganas [Spanish for desire].*"

By the other faculty only expecting basic math, that's all they were going to learn. After the first few days, he began teaching his students Algebra. They were all very bright and caught on quickly. So quickly in fact, that he decided to teach them calculus next. This teacher believed in his students when no one else did. He went so far as to prepare them for the AP calculus test, which gave them college credit. Each and every one of his students passed the test, not only once, but twice.

This film opened my eyes to several things. First was stereotypes. Just because the students were Hispanic did not mean they were stupid or incapable of learning something as

hard as calculus. I need to remember that just because I see someone who, at first glance I think is less intelligent than I, I need to remember to treat them with as much respect as I'd like from them and to always encourage them because I might be the only one who ever will give them that encouragement. Another things that I gleaned from this video is sort of like intellectual freedom. This teacher taught his students Calculus despite the fact that his superiors didn't want him to. No one believed he'd be able to do it and they were all laughing at him behind the scenes. Everyone deserves a chance to learn anything they may or may not be capable of. Who cares if a 5 year old is not able to understand molecular biology? If he wants a book about it, then I'll help him find it and even help explain big words (if I know them) to him. Maybe in 20 years, he'll be a top molecular biologist because I took the time to help him in his earliest studies. The third thing I found interesting in this film was the quality of life in society. This instructor didn't necessarily try to improve the quality of life for everyone; he simply focused on the small class that he had access to. In return each of these students had a much happier, more confident life and they probably went on to help improve the lives of others.

I really enjoyed this film, but I wish there were more people like the teacher in this world. He's an awesome guy who never gave up on his students. If we had more teachers like that, we would be a much happier place. As a librarian, I want to strive for that determination that he had.

November 22, 2011

I recently started following several blogs via Google reader. I've found it quite informative. One of the posts that I read today talked about how libraries should function in this low economy. The author, Lucas Kavner, poses the question, "What is in store for [the library's] future?" He then goes on to explain several possible outcomes and what the librarians, patrons, and community need to do to save the library.

He says that the library is taken for granted and that most people don't realize how much they need it until it's gone, closing, or having reduced hours. Some people have misconceptions about the library. Some people may think that all the books are donated by publishers, others think that the only things librarians do is put away books. (Kavner). I wish books were all donated by the publishers. That would be very cool. Some people don't realize that the library is free. Others think it's only for those with low income. If more people were aware of the library services, more people might use the library. We shouldn't have to remind them of the incredible resources that the library has.

I don't understand why people wouldn't use the library if they knew about it. As Kavner mentioned, the library is a place where you can go, get free Wi-Fi (opposed to Wi-Fi only

available after you buy a "four-dollar latte" (Kavner).) The library usually offers quiet and private areas to work on the computer, meet with friends, and read newspapers, magazines, and most importantly: books. Libraries also offer free, yes I said FREE, movie rentals, free book rentals, and free access to a professional willing to answer just about any question you wish to ask them. This sounds like an excellent place to me. Free movies? Why do I need a Netflix account or to rent movies from the local Family Video? Free books? Why do I need that expensive Amazon Prime membership that offers free shipping on all books (and other merchandise)? Why not just free books from the library! Why do I need to pay for expensive internet connections at my own home when I can get that free from the library as well? Okay, I do see why people might still choose to have their own internet at home but that's not the point. The point is that so much money could be saved by people using the library. I say if you want to spend all that money, why not donate it to your local library? There's a link at the bottom of this post to a library money saver calculator that can tell you how much money the library can save you each month.

Kavner mentioned that it is up to the librarians to let their community know what the library offers. I think we need to seriously think about this. If we don't we'll have to begin relying on volunteers and donations to keep the doors open. I personally think that we could just turn out all the lights and the air/heat and possibly all electricity then put a note on the door "Due to budget cuts, you must now bring your own flash light to the library in order to find books in the shelves." It we turned off all electricity, we could also tell them to bring their own generators if they want to use the computer. That would open their eyes and see that something must be done!

Library Foundation. (n.d.). *Support HCLIB*. Retrieved November 22, 2011, from http://www.supporthclib.org/involved-calculator.html

Kavner, L. (2011, November 16). Library Budget Cuts Threaten Community Services Across Country. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved November 22, 2011, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/16/can-the-american-library-_n_1096484.html

November 22, 2011

Blogs

I read several different blogs in hopes to find something astounding to reflect on and write about. After searching for several blogs, I found some that were vaguely amusing.

"Judging he Books" was pointless and annoying. It just showed several covers of books that someone found flawed in some way.

"A Librarians guide to etiquette" was not helpful. All it did was list random one-liners that the author thought to be catchy, witty, or otherwise useful. I found it pointless. I feel sorry for the 6583 people who "liked" the page on Facebook.

The Laughing Librarian was a bit better, but only listed jokes related to libraries. It was also very outdated.

By this time I was fed up. I clicked on "Free Rage Librarian." It hurt my eyes. Far too much text and the text was in a strange font that I didn't like. I didn't read much before deciding to try yet another blog.

I'm sure "The Original Warrior Librarian" would have been better, but after seeing photos of what looked to be a candy bar covered in several different types of medicines and pills, I didn't stick around to see how that related to libraries.

librarian was sort of good, but I'm really getting sick of checking these dumb "librarian" blogs, so I didn't read very many of the articles (but I did check out the mobile apps for librarians!)

Next I clicked decided to look at the Lipstick Librarian. The first thing I read was, "I have a confession to make: I don't read librarian blogs." (with a link to the same top 50 librarian blogs that I used to get to her). That got my attention. I skimmed the post until I found a link to Emporia's SLIM program. That got my attention! Apparently the Lipstick Librarian spoke at graduation a few semesters back. In her speech, she made several points.

Librarians are empathetic. Librarians worship continuity. Librarians Share. Librarians think about long term. After reading her short descriptions of each, I can see how each is true and important. Librarians need to empathize to think like he patrons and know how they feel and treat them right. Boring "continuity" is valuable because it helps bring patrons back to the library. Sharing was obvious to me at first, but it's always good to re-emphasize it. Librarians do indeed share everything from thoughts to smiles to knowledge. Long-term thinking is also important because if we only think about the present, libraries and librarians might not exist in the distant future. No one will protect our future librarians and thus they will not exist.

Other than this post, I didn't find many others useful from his blog, so I continued looking.

I also checked "Hey Jude" after that. I'm going to add this one to my RSS. Very interesting posts. I'm going to have to read more about Google Verbatim. I'll definitely post this to the discussion board to share with everyone else.

What I learned about Librarian blogs from this little adventure is that librarians need to actually write about librarian related things if they're going to advertise their blog as a "librarian" blog. Not doing so is like a doctor having a blog and then posting random things like vacation photos, tennis matches, sewing patters or football scores. I don't like it. Also, librarians seem to need to take some sort of design course. Several of the blogs were plain white. Some didn't have headings or separators of any kind. All the text was just the same size in the same font and it was hard to read. Some of them rarely posted anything once every month was about all that I saw. Some had far less.

November 27, 2011

Librarians and Lady Gaga
Why Librarians should be more like Lady Gaga!

When I first saw the title for this article, I was a bit confused. What does Lady Gaga have to do with librarians and libraries? After I read it, it made a bit more sense. This article talked about how library budgets all across the country are being cut by school boards, city councils, governments, and by their patrons. During this time of recession, librarians need to do something drastic to show that their library is still worth it. Lady Gaga is "innovative, risk-taker, a change agent, an early adopter and she's cool!" (Jones) She's also big on "self-empowerment." (Jones). The author of this article doesn't mean that we should all wear crazy

outfits and stand out, but at the same time, she is saying that we should be more visible so that our library would be less likely to be taken away. We just need to step up and fight for what we want. Don't just be good at our jobs, but be "awesome at our jobs" (Jones).

This sort of makes me a bit leery about being a librarian. I did not expect to come into my career fighting! I didn't sign up to be in a battle, and yet, I have no interest in backing out now. Librarians are "guiding the minds of students...to be life-long learners, curious searchers, and good digital citizens." (Jones).

Jones, G. A. (2011, July 14). Why Librarians should be more like Lady Gaga. *Washington Post*. Retrieved November 27, 2011, from www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answersheet

November 28, 2011

E-books vs. print books

A coworker and I were talking about Kindles today. Maybe I'm just old fashioned, but I don't think they're all that great. She just purchased a Kindle Fire. She's trying to convince me to at least try it out. I looked up some pros and cons of Kindles and this is what I found, along with my opinions in the brackets.

Pros:

Kindle books are cheaper than regular books. [this can be highly debated. Most Kindle books are about $6-$10. That is cheaper than brand new books, but I rarely buy new books. I usually buy used books for anywhere from 25 cents to $5.]

It's easier to get eBooks (download vs. buying online or in a store). [okay, I do give it that. Easy to download -- but what if your kindle crashes or gets outdated? Can you re-download them onto a new kindle or transfer them to a newer model? Books (not the information in them) never get outdated]

With Kindle you have a portable library. [Okay, that's true too, but why do you need to carry around 100 different books with you all the time? You can only read one or two at a time]

Kindle doesn't hurt your eyes like a computer screen. [Yeah, but with physical books you're not hurting your eyes on the computer screen either.]

You can do research as you read. (Kindle lets you take notes and it has a built in dictionary.) [You mean I can't open two physical books at once and look up a word? I can't write notes in the margins of regular books? Wow, that's new.]

You can change the font and background colors of your book [This is pretty fun to change the fonts around, but it's more of an aesthetically pleasing feature than an actual benefit.]

Cons:

It's an expensive piece of technology that is not water resistant. [Exactly. Books are much cheaper, and they're not water resistant, at least if you drop a book in the bath you're not losing your entire library, just one book.]

You can't share ebooks. [Apparently, this has been changed and you can loan books, but you still can't re-sell them.]

You can't get full web access with a Kindle. [If it's a book, why do you need web access? -- I understand if you use it for something more -- like a tablet, and in my opinion, those are a bit more worth it because they do more than just read books.]

There is a limited selection of books [but that is changing quickly.]

Easier to impulse buy and end up with a bunch of books that you don't want. [E-commerce is like this. I've done it myself several times. At least with physical objects, you can return them for a refund. I doubt you can return an eBook]

It only allows you to read certain formats. [It would be great if all eBooks were just in pdf format, that way everyone can read them... that's just my opinion.]

Kindles and other e-readers might be worth the cost in a few years when they do more than just read. The iPad for example: it can read books using an app, it can connect to the internet, you can listen to music on it, you can watch videos on it, and you can check email on it. It's like a mini computer, but due to its smaller size, it's more easily transported, however, it's still too big to fit in your pocket, so it's pretty hard to just put it in your pocket and go like you can with an MP3 player or cellphone. I did recently have a chance to play with an iPhone, and the screen was very small, and hard to read, but with the 3G access, it was a lot better than the iPad I've been using from the library that only has Wi-Fi access.

http://www.life123.com/technology/home-electronics/kindle/kindle-pros-and-cons.shtml

December 1, 2011

This class has been an interesting experience. I know I've used the word "interesting" quite a bit in these journals, but honestly, I don't know what other word to use to describe my feelings. "Engaging" doesn't quite fit, nor does "entertaining." What I'm feeling seems a bit less than engaging and a bit more than entertaining. It gets my attention and makes me think. It's been a learning experience. It's been a unique and new environment. I've never had an online class that was seemingly so unstructured before. I really learned quite a bit from the weekend class meetings. It would seem better if we had more meetings. Graduate school is such a different experience than anything else. I wish I had been a bit more prepared. I don't know what I was really expecting. Perhaps I should have spoken to a student from SLIM before joining - and to ask them what they experienced their first few semesters. During my acceptance interview, I wasn't really sure what to ask. I didn't realize it would be much different. I asked as much as I could ask, but I didn't think to ask to speak with a fellow student.   I know that I'm not the only one who's been struggling this semester. In fact, after midterms, I'd been speaking with a few more students and they seem to be struggling more than I did.

I've quite enjoyed these journals (after I got them started), and I think I might miss journaling like this. Perhaps I'll keep it up during the rest of my time here. I've learned a lot about myself through these journals.