

Spring Wavelinks

Great things are happening at TBLC this spring. Excellent new staff have joined us - Jennifer Sullivan as Virtual Reference Coordinator and Tracey Reed as Resource Sharing Coordinator. The Ask a Librarian program is reaching out to K-12 schools and students. The Cultural Heritage /Digitization project is moving from planning and preparation to implementation. We are adding a new Group Purchase, downloadable audio books, to help member libraries provide this exciting new product to their users. And somewhere along the way staff were able to upgrade the training lab and give it a bright new look.

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TBLC Hires New Staff

Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC) has hired two new staff members – Tracey Reed as Resource Sharing Coordinator and Jennifer Sullivan as Virtual Reference Coordinator.

Tracey will coordinate the overall operation and promotion of iBorrow/Alleycat, TBLC's user initiated Interlibrary Loan System that allows users to simultaneously search participating library catalogs and request books. Tracey will also present training on TBLC technology based services and help the organization and its members learn about and adopt new technologies.

Before joining TBLC, Tracey worked as a Trainer, Webmaster, and Systems Analyst at Clearwater Public Library. At Clearwater, she trained patrons, coordinated the staff- training program and assisted in planning for technology in Clearwater's new 90,000 square feet main library.

As the Virtual Reference Coordinator, Jennifer will primarily be training, scheduling, and providing day-to-day support for participants in the statewide reference chat service, Ask a Librarian. Jennifer will also coordinate with our partners, The College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) to chart the future success of Ask a Librarian.

Before coming to TBLC, Jennifer was an Adult Services Librarian at the Manatee County Public Library and was heavily involved in the Ask a Librarian project. As a local site coordinator, Jennifer managed Manatee County's local participation in the service. Jennifer also has been a leading member of the project's Quality Assurance Workgroup and a member of the Ask a Librarian Advisory Committee.

Ask a Librarian Adds K-12 Focus

Ask a Librarian continues to grow and now reaches over 1000 users a month, through 85 Florida Libraries. Ask a Librarian has now begun to work with school systems throughout Florida. Palm Beach County was the first school system to sign up and will be going live in May. Janeen Pelsler, the Site Coordinator for the School District of Palm Beach County, is very excited to be able to provide students in her district with the opportunity to chat with a librarian and receive expert help with online resources and research. She comments, "The kids are already using chat at home; this brings the librarian into their space where we can communicate with them and show them the resources available."

In the coming months, Jennifer Sullivan will be working with CCLA and the marketing team for the Florida Electronic Library to continue efforts to market Ask a Librarian to various school districts and libraries throughout Florida. Ask a Librarian can help students with research, evaluating online resources and finding facts. Ask a Librarian is also a great tool to increase students' information literacy and technology skills.

For more information on Ask a Librarian, visit its information site at: <http://info.askalibrarian.org/> or check out the article "*Ask a Librarian Gives Florida Libraries Something to Chat about*" (<http://info.askalibrarian.org/pdf/wppl.pdf>) in the March/April 2005 issue of Public Libraries.

TBLC Moves Forward on Digitization

TBLC is excited to begin a Cultural Heritage/Digitization project with eight member libraries in 2005. The participating libraries are: Bay Pines VA Hospital, Heritage Village of Pinellas County, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Lake Wales Public Library, Largo Library, Mote Marine Laboratory, Stetson University College of Law, and the University of Tampa. A shared database located at the TBLC offices will house digitized images and descriptive metadata records. Initially the database will include mainly historical photographs and documents, but as the project continues other types of digitized resources will be included.

Project implementation is proceeding. Staff from several participating libraries have been trained in creating metadata records and scanning materials from their collections. Richard Bernardy and Walter Rowe of USF Tampa's Digitization Services Department are assisting in the project implementation and providing training for library staff. Bernardy designed the database software being used for the project.

Scanners and PCs have been purchased to loan to libraries for use in the project. Setup of the database will be complete in May, and libraries will begin adding resources to the database. The searchable database will be web-accessible.

We hope to continue the project in the 2005-06 year and add content from additional libraries. If you are interested in participating in the TBLC Cultural

Heritage/Digitization project, please contact Ellen Cannon at 813-622-8252 or cannone@tblc.org

TBLC Training Lab Gets New Look

The March 30 class, Weblog Boot Camp taught by Shirl Kennedy was the first to use the newly renovated training lab at TBLC. With brightened walls and new PCs and furniture, the new look gives the training room both a professional and airy feel.



Downloadable Audio Books Available Through Group Purchase

TBLC has an exciting new group purchase opportunity - downloadable audio books. Working with OverDrive to offer access to our members, users will be able to download audio books from their home PCs. OverDrive carries a growing collection of popular unabridged audio titles in a variety of genres.

Patrons can listen via PC/notebook, burn to CD, or transfer audio files to over 500 devices, including many popular MP3 players. OverDrive supports both dial-up and broadband users and includes accessibility features for blind and visually impaired. OverDrive provides free software for audio book management, listening, transferring, and burning to CD.

OverDrive Audio Books was recently featured in The New York Times and on NBC Nightly News, and is now being offered by dozens of public libraries across the

nation. OverDrive offers thousands of popular audio books titles in digital format that can be downloaded by patrons from their homes, schools, or offices.

Over 30 leading audio book publishers are now offering their titles as part of OverDrive's Digital Library Reserve service. They include best-selling unabridged fiction, children's titles, and non-fiction from Brilliance Audio, Blackstone Audiobooks, Books in Motion, Penton Overseas, McGraw-Hill Audio, and dozens more.

For more on OverDrive and to see a list of other participating libraries, visit: <http://www.dlrinc.com>. To be a participating library, the cost is \$4400. This cost includes:

- Integration of titles to your online catalog
- Chance to be part of selection team
- Opening collection valued at \$12,500

To be part of this group opportunity, complete the purchase order and library profile form at: <http://www.tbtc.org/technology/eresource.shtml#group> by April 29, 2005 or contact Diana Sachs, sachsd@tbtc.org.

Something's Always Buzzing...

You've heard it whispered in the stacks; pages in the staff room murmur the word. The morning news teases the story until you leave for work – and you miss it. Your kids come home and rattle off about the latest *something*, but you don't quite catch it.

Well, strain no more – welcome to *Something's Always Buzzing*. The place to learn a little about the technological buzz and how it can work for you & your library. In this issue: *Blogs and the Blogging Bloggers who Blog Them*.

FLA was buzzing with them. The wireless connection at Computers in Libraries and ACRL allowed for “real time blogging”. So, what exactly is a blog?

A blog, or web log (or weblog), is essentially a web page that gets updated frequently. Often, there's a place for people to leave comments about what has been added. So why the big deal? Well, because they are easy to update, much of the current news and hot information is available there first. They have a personal spin as well, which allows people to identify with, or rail against, the blogger (AKA the writer of the blog).

So what does this mean to libraries? Two things come to mind:

- 1) It's a quick way to get the word out to your users of interesting programs, news and other events/items of interest *and* allow them to respond to you and each other.

- 2) It's a way to stay current with what's happening around the library world on a more personal level than the journals. Often, blogs work as a complement to email groups.

Starting a blog is as easy or as difficult as you want to make it. Sites such as LiveJournal (www.livejournal.com) and Blogger (www.blogger.com) allow you to create free blogs and update them via the web. For those who wish to have more control than these free services will give, programs such as Moveable Type (www.sixapart.com/movabletype) and WordPress (www.wordpress.org) are used on your own servers to create blogs. As with everything, there are pros and cons to each type and each vendor.

Libraries are starting to use blogs and the best example I've found recently is from Lansing (IL) Public Library (www.lansing.lib.il.us) where they have blogs for Adult, Teen, Youth and New On This Website news. Librarians have been blogging for awhile – one of the first (if not **the** first) is LISnews.com (www.lisnews.com). When I last counted, there were over 100 more U.S. library-related or librarian blogs out there. Find one (or more) you're interested in at Library Weblogs (www.libdex.com/weblogs.html#us).

Send comments or questions about *Something's Always Buzzing* to Tracey Reed at reedt@tblc.org.

Mark Your Calendar

Several big events are on the horizon this year. TBLC's annual meeting date will be on November 3 at the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota. More information will be available soon.

The annual VIP (Very Important Paraprofessional) Conference is on Friday, May 13th at St Petersburg College St. Pete/Gibbs Campus. The event will have hands-on computer sessions, panel discussions and presentations on over 30 topics. For more information please visit the web site at: <http://www.spjc.edu/webcentral/btw/VIP.htm>.

Upcoming Workshops

Several exciting workshops have been added to the TBLC training calendar. TBLC bring the LITA Institute *XML in Libraries* (http://www.tblc.org/ws_info.php?ws=114) to members on May 25th at TBLC. This institute will cover the structure and utility of Extensible Markup Language (XML) with an emphasis on the relevance of XML to libraries. We will discuss the role XML plays in diverse applications such as web design, content management, descriptive metadata; how to use XML to achieve the separation of content and presentation on a web site; and how to use stylesheets to tie together XML-based components for building web-based applications.

Further, invited back by popular demand Jack Wolf PhD, CPT will present a program on Lifelong Learning and Leadership. Jack has presented at various TBLC locations always receiving rave reviews for content, interactive presentation style and creative

ideas for our professional and personal lives. This program was created for managers and leaders who are ready to jumpstart their employees into higher levels of communication and performance. To register for the May 10th and/or June 14th program, http://www.tbhc.org/ws_info.php?ws=161.

For a full list of TBLC workshops visit the TBLC Workshop page at <http://www.tbhc.org/training/training.shtml>