NEWS FROM CUNY LIBRARIES
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The World of WIKIs

The Reference Roundtable of LACUNY sponsored the workshop “Wikis as a Reference Tool” on March 3 at LaGuardia’s Library Media Resources Center. Stephen Francoeur, Information Services Librarian at Baruch, and Steve Ovadia, Web Services Librarian from LaGuardia, demonstrated innovative ways to enhance reference work using wikis, a collaborative Web site where anyone can create or edit pages. In most cases, wikis allow freewheeling access to everyone, but in a library setting, they can be password protected. Editing is done in a very simple text language that is much easier to learn and read than HTML. Wiki is a Hawaiian word meaning “quick,” and the essence and spirit of the wiki is in the easy collaboration it encourages.

The workshop, attended by sixteen CUNY librarians, was a hands-on event in an electronic classroom equipped with computer workstations for all and a Smartboard for an interactive demonstration. Steve and Stephen demonstrated how to set up a wiki using a free wiki hosting site called PB Wiki. By the end of the workshop, all of the participants had built a personal wiki by registering for a free account, creating new pages, and editing pages. They learned how to add external links and perform basic text formatting.

The attendees also had a chance to see how wikis are already being used in reference environments within CUNY. At LaGuardia Community College, the Reference Desk Wiki is used as a repository for information and as a communication tool for the reference librarians. It allows librarians to post questions and answers or make announcements and also serves as a knowledge base for accessing reference-related issues. The librarians report that not only has the wiki clearly proven to be a time-saving tool but has also facilitated collaborative design at the reference desk.

At Baruch’s Newman Library, the librarians developed their wiki as a reference handbook with an overview of library services and resources, details of library policies and procedures, and a statement of the library’s reference philosophy. Reference librarians have passwords and can update any entry at any time. The All Pages feature serves as an A-Z index, and there is also a search feature. The wiki is ideal for answering policy questions such as who has borrowing privileges, how to get help for printing problems, etc.

Steve and Stephen built a wiki for the presentation accessible to all at the LACUNY Website at reference-roundtable.pbwiki.com. If you have never used a wiki before, click on All Pages to see what the presentation wiki includes. If you want to try editing a wiki page, click on the Sandbox. For those just beginning to explore the realm of wikis, there are links to background materials including links to sites that let you set up a wiki and a link to the wiki of the METRO Virtual Reference SIG with its list of libraries maintaining wikis.

Louise Klusek (Baruch)
On April 6, eight librarians and IT staff from the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) visited Baruch’s Newman Library. The CBS Library has a staff of sixty and serves a business school with 15,000 students.

At Baruch, they met with Arthur Downing, Chief Librarian; Richard Holowczak, Director of the Subotnick Financial Services Center; Linda Rath, Graduate Services Librarian; and Louise Klusek, Head of Reference. The visit was part of a four-day study tour that included trips to the New York Public Library, the Lippincott Library of the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania, the Business Reference Center at New York University Library, the Watson Library of Business & Economics at Columbia University, and NYPL’s new Bronx Library Center.

According to Rene Steffensen, CBS Library Director, the tour was intended to exchange knowledge, create new collegial networks, and raise team spirit. This was the first time the annual study tour visited the United States. Prior to the visit, the group identified strategic themes for discussion: user education, virtual reference, Web services, and interior design. At the end of the meeting, the group was happy to take away ideas about using new technologies, including wikis, blogs, and chat reference tools.

Joining Steffenson on the tour were Jette Behrend, Mikael Elbaek, Joergen Green, John Hedegaard, Irena Soerensen, Birgit Stoevring, and Marie Wildt.

Louise Klusek (Baruch)
Second Annual LACUNY Dialogues

Virtual Libraries—Face-to-Face Instruction: Outreach, Marketing, and Faculty Partnership

Roughly thirty-five CUNY librarians braved horizontal rain on January 18 to attend the second annual LACUNY Dialogues: A Town Hall Meeting at LaGuardia Community College. This year’s theme was “Virtual Libraries—Face-to-Face Instruction: Outreach, Marketing, and Faculty Partnership.”

After Jane Devine, LaGuardia’s chief librarian, greeted the group, Kenneth Schlesinger (LaGuardia) introduced the speakers: Monica Berger (City Tech), Clay Williams (Hunter), and Madeline Ford (Lehman).

Berger started by discussing the Web-spurred democratization of information and its implications for librarianship. She lamented that 84% of respondents to a recent OCLC survey (www.oclc.org/reports/2005perceptions.htm) said that they begin their information quests with a search engine. Only one percent starts with a library Web site. Part of the problem, Berger claimed, is that students fail to appreciate that free information is generally far less useful than information their campus pays for. She wondered how to disabuse students of this prejudice. In other words, what can we do to get potential patrons to use library resources first when they embark on research? Librarians will forfeit their time-honored role as cultural gatekeepers if the public ignores what libraries offer.

Berger went on to speak positively of Wikipedia and the social networks that sustain its reliability. She also mentioned the relatively new phenomenon of “folksonomy,” in the context of Flickr, where users can apply their own subject tags and change others, all without authority control. She closed with a few words about Google, worrying about faculty assumptions that Google is the ultimate tool for student research. However, she urged that librarians reconcile ourselves to the fact that Google will continue to play a major role in student research and that we try to show students how to use it more effectively.

Williams followed, picking up on Berger’s comments on the uncontrolled subject vocabulary of Web resources like Google and Flickr. He warned of the perils of keyword searching without the benefit of authority control. Today’s keywords aren’t necessarily tomorrow’s, and if we rely strictly on keyword searching, considerable valuable information will effectively be lost in just a few years.

Williams also drew on his experience as instruction coordinator at Hunter. He accepted Berger’s claims about the democratization of information and insisted that the trend makes information literacy more important now than ever. Unfortunately, this truth is not self-evident to students. As a result, libraries need to move up the “academic food chain,” exerting more influence on the curriculum. One way to do this is to assert themselves into the syllabus, even in the face of faculty stonewalling. History departments, for example, are ready for the “embedded” librarian. Librarians should also be wary of those campus reading and writing centers which presume to do what librarians do better, for instance, initiating students into proprietary resources. And the new emphasis on information literacy means that we need to measure outcomes of information literacy programs. As Williams noted, assessment of student information literacy “is not a luxury.”

Will we have jobs in the future? Trends in staff reduction and personnel shifting bode ill. However, Williams added that librarians can continue to make themselves useful as long as they are “ready to turn on a dime.”
Ford’s theme was the marketing of libraries and librarians, both of which she averred are here to stay. She offered four Ps for the success of libraries.

1. **Product (Customer Value):** What does the library offer? Well, a lot. We should let folks know.
2. **Price (Cost to the Customer):** Not only do libraries provide much that students and faculty can use, but they offer it cheaply and with increasing ease, as with remote access to databases and online forms.
3. **Place (Convenience):** E-reserves and 24/7 reference are additional ways in which academic libraries can make themselves more convenient to users.
4. **Promotion (Communication):**
   a. Whom do we target? What methods do we use? We need to make sure we know our patrons’ needs and how comfortable they are with technology.
   b. Libraries should have links from all Blackboard sites.

Other ideas Ford offered for promotion included blogs for the public, podcasting, RSS feeds, and discussion lists, as well as more traditional forms of communication like flyers (preferably colored), bookmarks, ads in the school paper, and posters in such locations as the library and the cafeteria. Ford further suggested giving the library a profile in unaccustomed places: reference in the cafeteria, a table at orientation, and outreach for library instruction during dean’s hours.

During the question-and-answer session, one attendee raised the issue of library representation on curriculum committees. At a number of CUNY colleges, the library’s representative on this committee is non-voting. Williams argued that it is important that the library have a vote. After all, no course should become part of the curriculum until it is clear that the library has the resources to support it.

Scott White (LaGuardia) broached virtual reference. He explained that LaGuardia abandoned it because of lack of student interest. Sandra Marcus (Queensborough) remarked that Ask a Librarian at her campus was getting only roughly one question a week, but she nevertheless thinks the service was worth retaining. Williams noted that if virtual reference has been a bust this shows the need to insert librarians into the curriculum.

The group then revisited the question of Google vs. licensed databases. Two attendees sympathized with students, pointing out that Google is straightforward, whereas each vendor has its own search screen with its own idiosyncrasies. And the more databases CUNY acquires, the more frustrating database research becomes for students.

Finally, many offered advice and shared stories about connecting with departments. Ford suggested that librarians choose their battles. They should cultivate those departments that are receptive to working with the library. She mentioned the success that her library has had with Lehman’s sociology department.

Tony Doyle (Hunter)
NASD Foundation Grant to Baruch for Interactive Investment Guide

Recently, the NASD Investor Education Foundation announced a two-year grant totaling $240,829 to Baruch College for the development of an interactive computer-based investment guide for young adults making career choices. The grant was among those selected in 2005 by the NASD Investor Education Foundation.

When the Baruch grant application was submitted, a letter signed by Kenneth Schlesinger, of LaGuardia Community College, then president of LACUNY, was among supporting documents submitted. Other letters of support were from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the Career Services Association of the City University of New York, and the Business and Finance Division of the Special Libraries Association.

The project, entitled Young Investor Online Guide, will encourage young people to consider investment opportunities when making career decisions and will enable users to test investment strategies. The guide will be offered online and in a CD-format at college career-development centers and libraries, including CUNY libraries that decide to participate, and through members of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Since its inception in 2003, the NASD Foundation has awarded more than $4.5 million in grants to support innovative research and educational projects providing investors with the tools needed to understand better financial markets and the basic principles of financial planning. NASD is the leading private-sector provider of financial regulatory services. It believes that knowledge is the best investment against financial fraud.

During the spring of 2005, I read about the NASD Investor Education Foundation grant programs. Based in part on my experience of not knowing much about investing or financial planning when I graduated from college, I thought it might be possible to gather from among the Baruch community people interested in applying for a grant to help young investors think about their investment future as they consider their career choices. I first ran the suggestion by other librarians, including administrators, who encouraged me to talk with the Sponsored Programs and Research office. Soon discussions were underway with it, Career Development, and Kognito Solutions, LLC, an educational software developer.

I also approached James Coyle, a Baruch marketing professor, who became the project principal. Working under a tight deadline, he drafted the grant proposal for submission to the NASD Foundation’s Investor Education for the Nation’s Young Adults grant program. As the library’s liaison to Baruch’s department of accountancy, I also forwarded information about the NASD Foundation General Grant Program and another program specific to research projects. The NASD Foundation, in grant-making partnership with the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE), announced the 2005 awards in late December.

The NASD Investor Education Foundation has announced details of its 2006 General Grant Program and a Life-Cycle Investing RFP. To learn more about the Foundation’s grant programs and other new initiatives, including its newsletter, visit www.nasdfoundation.org. I would encourage you to bring this grant program to the attention of your faculty, if you think it is appropriate. If you want to learn more about the Baruch project as it develops, please e-mail me at rita_ormsby@baruch.cuny.edu.

Rita Ormsby (Baruch)
Library Faculty Recipients of PSC-CUNY 37 Awards

As in prior years, the current PSC-CUNY-37 grants to CUNY Librarians illustrate the diverse and multicultural nature of their research. What other CUNY departments can provide this fascinating array of subjects? Librarian interests are wide-ranging indeed: from Anatolia (Turkey) to Mexico to Uganda; from the Neolithic age to the nineteen century to the present day; from sports to fiction to executions; from students to libraries to our very own library organization. We look forward to the publication of the results of this research in the near future. Look for updates on the Web pages of the LACUNY Professional Development Committee: lacuny.cuny.edu/committees/pdcom.html.

Linda Roccoss (Staten Island)

- Ellen Belcher, Assistant Professor, John Jay College. Panel: Art History. A Comparative Study of Late Neolithic Figurines from Central Anatolia (Renewal)
- Ching-Jung Chen, Assistant Professor, City College. Panel: Art History. The Wentworths: A Story of Two Conversation Pieces
- James Kaser, Associate Professor, College of Staten Island. Panel: Library. Chicago in Fiction: An Annotated Bibliography (Renewal)
- Jeffrey Kroessler, Assistant Professor, John Jay College. Panel: Library. Greater New York Sports Chronology
- LaRoi Lawton, Assistant Professor, Bronx Community College. Panel: Library. The Library Association of The City University of New York: Its Past, Present and Future Impact on CUNY Libraries
- Katherine Parry, Assistant Professor, Hunter College. Panel: Library. Libraries for Development: Community Libraries in Uganda
- Catherine Perkins, Assistant Professor, College of Staten Island. Panel: Library. Why College Students Are Using Public Libraries for Their Research (Renewal)
- Linda Roccoss, Associate Professor, College of Staten Island. Panel: Library. Bibliography for the Archaeology Study Collection at the College of Staten Island
- Román A. Santillán, Assistant Professor, College of Staten Island. Panel: Spanish. An Ephemeral Arch and Spectacle in Puebla, 1696 (Renewal)
- Katherine Shelfer, Associate Professor, Baruch College. Panel: Library. Open Web or Library Databases: What do Students Really Prefer?
- Antony Simpson, Professor, John Jay College. Panel: Library. Witnesses to the Scaffold: First-hand Accounts of Public Executions by English Literary Figures
Professional Development Workshop
Setting a Professional Development Agenda: Individual and Organizational Needs

On April 28, twenty-seven CUNY librarians attended the LACUNY Professional Development Committee’s workshop, “Setting a Professional Development Agenda: Individual and Organizational Needs,” at Baruch. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Jana Varlejs, Associate Professor in Rutgers’ School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies.

Dr. Varlejs led participants through a series of exercises designed to encourage librarians to create professional-development agendas to support themselves and their institutions. Often, the tasks on librarians’ to-do lists take priority over long-range planning for professional development, learning new skills, and tackling new projects. The purpose of the workshop was to help librarians identify things they would like to learn that can benefit both the individual and the institution, create lists of resources to help them learn new skills and carry out new projects, and prepare a learning plan to facilitate achievement of new projects and goals.

Each participant created an inventory of personal and organizational goals and challenges. After the inventory was completed, participants formed small groups to compare their inventories and create posters listing professional and organizational goals and challenges. Many similarities among items listed on the posters sparked a group discussion about setting institutional priorities as well as completing individual projects. Each participant then completed a learning plan, a chart on which goals were plotted with timelines and resources required to achieve the listed goals. The workshop concluded with a discussion of the many options for independent learning when a formal class or training is not available. An online resource for the professional development of librarians recommended by Dr. Varlejs is the Yale University Libraries’ learning plan: www.library.yale.edu/training/stod/learningplan.html.

Anne Leonard (City Tech)

Milestones

Appointments

Devin Feldman (Queensborough) was named Acting Chief Librarian in January.

Luis J. Gonzalez (Hunter) was appointed Deputy Chief Librarian in January. Luis was previously associate director of New York University’s Waldmann Memorial Dental Library. He has an MLS from Queens and a MPA from Baruch.

Kenneth Krepp (York) was appointed Adjunct Assistant Professor in January.

Kevin Reiss (Graduate Center) became Systems Librarian in March. Kevin was previously at the Rutgers University Law Library in Newark. He has an MLIS from the University of Illinois, Urbana.

Promotions

Philip Barnett (City) has been promoted to Professor.

Miriam Laskin (Hostos) was granted tenure in December.

Philip Swan (Hunter), head of the School of Social Work Library, was promoted to Associate Professor in January.
Awards and Grants

Janet Munch (Lehman) received a Digital METRO New York Grant to digitize the Bronx Chamber of Commerce Collection. The collection is featured on Lehman’s Bronx Business for Everybody site: www.lehman.edu/provost/library/BronxBusiness. Yi Sheng (Lehman) was technical coordinator for the project Web site. Janet was interviewed about the project on the cable television station Bronxnet on March 31. She also received a grant from the New York State Education Department for the conservation and reformatting of three-hundred Bronx oral-history interviews conducted during 1982-1991.

Monica Berger (City Tech) is a facilitator for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant received by City Tech on "Retentions and Transfigurations: The Technological Evolution and Social History of Five New York City Neighborhoods." The grant was one of nine issued by NEH and runs for one year beginning in April.

Professional Involvement

Tony Doyle (Hunter) participated in Information Ethics Roundtable at the March 22 Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Portland, Oregon: www.sir.arizona.edu/ier. He commented on “Ethical Issues in Trade Secrets for Professional Services,” a paper presented by Mark Alfino of Gonzaga University. Tony argued that the costs of allowing corporations to protect trade secrets indefinitely are considerable, restricting employee mobility and the flow of ideas.

Caroline Fuchs (Graduate Center) has begun the 18th-Century Reading Room Speaker Series. The series began with Carol Berkin discussing her book Revolutionary Mothers and will continue with at least three fall speakers. Caroline’s blog appears at 18thcenturyreadingroom.blogspot.com.

Louise Klusek (Baruch) was interviewed for a Library Journal article about the growing use of electronic reference resources. “The E-Ref Invasion” appeared in the November 15, 2005 issue.

Kenneth Schlesinger (LaGuardia) organized the plenary “Hiding in Plain Sight?: ‘Lost’ Plays, Rediscovered Masterpieces, and Performance Reconstruction” at the American Society for Theatre Research conference in Toronto in November. He also organized the LACUNY Dialogues—A Town Hall Meeting “Virtual Libraries—Face-to-Face Instruction: Outreach, Marketing, and Faculty Partnerships” at LaGuardia in January.

Polly Thistlethwaite (Graduate Center) was co-leader of a delegation of ACRL librarians to China March 5-20.

Amy Wolfe (City) began a satellite reference service at the downtown campus of City College’s Center for Worker Education. This service provides reference two nights a week, as well as on-site instruction.

Announcements

ScienceDirect has a feature listing the twenty-five most downloaded articles from each of its journals. In the May listing, three of the top six articles are by CUNY librarians: “Alternative Strategies for Promoting Information Literacy” by Jeanne Galvin (Kingsborough); “The Evolution of Academic Libraries: The Networked Environment” by Alan Bailin (Baruch), with Anne Grafstein of Hofstra; “Beyond Google: The Invisible Web in the Academic Library” by Jane Devine and Francine Egger-Sider (LaGuardia).

Announced in April was a $55-million appropriation from the New York State Senate to LaGuardia Community College. A portion of the funds will be used to expand the library.
Presentations


At the same event, Charles Keyes, Steven Ovadia, and Alexandra Rojas (LaGuardia) presented “Web-Based Collaborative Learning Outside of Blackboard: The Role of Wikis in the Classroom”; Kenneth Schlesinger (LaGuardia) presented “Innovations in Mobile Technology—Portable Laptop Wireless Classrooms: Innovation, Flexibility, and Pedagogy”; Flor Hernandez and Sidney Eng (Borough of Manhattan) presented “The Library Presentation: Instructional Technologies in Libraries”; Alex Rudshteyn and James Liu (Brooklyn) presented “Handheld Devices in a Library Setting”; Howard Spivak, Danielle Lahmeyer, Lawrence Albrecht, and Nicholas Irons (Brooklyn) presented “The Library Café at Brooklyn College: An Interactive Discussion”; Teresa McManus, James Watson, Herman Stein, and Anthony Durante (Bronx) presented “Developing Instructional Resources: Opportunities for Collaboration”; Steven Kowalik and Barbara Rockenbach (Hunter) presented “Using ARTstor as a Teaching Tool”; Judy Xiao (Staten Island) presented “Enhancing Students’ Learning Via Blackboard: Using Blackboard to Extend One-Shot Library Instruction.”

Janey Chao and Joseph Hartnett (Baruch) presented the poster session “The Digital Media Library (DML) Collection at Baruch College” at the Nylink Information Showcase in Syracuse on November 17. Janey was the featured guest on Talk Tonight, KTSF-TV, San Francisco (www.ksf.com) on April 17. She discussed Chinese surnames and fielded calls from viewers during the live Chinese-language broadcast, available with English subtitles through Baruch’s Digital Media Library (www.baruch.cuny.edu/dml). Janey also presented “Chinese Names and the Genealogical Records for Jiapu” on April 28 at the Asian American/Asian Research Institute (www.aaari.info)

Louise Klusek (Baruch) presented “The Process of Developing an E-Learning Resource: A Case Study” at Baruch’s Teaching and Technology Conference on April 7.

Miriam Laskin (Hostos) presented, with Loreto Porte, Hostos’ director of information technology, “Plagiarism and How to Avoid It: Using Turnitin and Library Workshops to Combat Plagiarism” at the General Education Conference at Queensborough Community College on May 5. At the same event, Monica Berger (City Tech) presented “Growing Aware: Framing Information Literacy in the Context of Student Professional Aspirations.”

Laroi Lawton and Teresa McManus (Bronx) presented “Assessing Student Learning in the 21st Century: The ICT Literacy Assessment” at the Innovations 2006 Conference in Atlanta on March 21. Teresa also presented “Innovative and Creative Uses of Technology in Diverse Cultures” on May 2 as part of Bronx Community College’s Student Life speaker series.

Patricia Woodard (Hunter) presented “Sanctifying the Parlor Song: Mary Dana Shindler (1810-1883)” at a joint March meeting of the Society of American Music and the Conference on Black Music Research in Chicago. Shindler published collections of sacred songs, borrowing many of her melodies from the era’s parlor-song repertoire.

Exhibitions

Suzanna Simor and Alexandra de Luise (Queens) organized the following exhibits at the Queens College Art Center (qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/Library/art/artcenter05_06.html): “How We Use Land: Photographs of Queens County by Paul Anthony Melhado,” February 8-March 30, 2006; “Light Listened: Art and Glass by Ellen Mandelbaum,” April 6-July 31.
Publications

Michael Adams (Graduate Center) contributed entries on Woody Allen, Warren Beatty, Dustin Hoffman, Al Pacino, Robert Redford, and “The Films of the Seventies” to The Seventies in America (Salem Press, 2006). He has also written 77 brief biographies of novelists, playwrights, screenwriters, and graphic novelists for EBSCO’s Literary Reference Center.


Watch for the Fall 2006 issue of

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