

Diversity Matters

I know diversity matters to the Oregon library community. Numerous Oregon libraries make a difference by providing outreach services to previously underserved communities, diversifying their collections, or recruiting ethnically or culturally diverse staff. Consider these libraries as examples: The Black Resource Center, located in the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library, offers many library materials relating to the African American experience. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library offers “Hora Des Cuentos en Espanol” (Spanish story time) every Saturday. Southern Oregon University Library is developing the First Nations Tribal Collection, a digital collection focusing on the tribes who lived in or near the Siskiyou-Cascade-Klamath bioregion.

Diversity is a part of the Oregon Library Association’s Vision 2010. This statewide call to action urges us to create a “strong and diverse workforce” by drawing on “the broadest range of skills and abilities from people with diverse educational, experiential, and cultural backgrounds.”

While putting this issue of *OLA Quarterly* together, I queried a number of library professionals about why diversity matters to libraries.

John Helmer, director of the Orbis-Cascade Alliance, said: This is pretty simple minded, but for me it comes down to the fact that you just can’t think outside your own head. The only way to get something new in there is to keep your mouth shut for a bit and listen to someone that has a different perspective and background. Even if you forget about the fact that

it is just “right” to respect other people, on a purely self-interested basis, you do better when you draw on a wider range of human experience. The difficult part is making the time, listening, and looking for your own built-in prejudices.

Sheryl Steinke, school librarian for the Eugene 4J school system, told me: ... As a public school librarian I believe that so much of what children learn about ... happens at school. The best schools are those where people of many ethnicities, religions, ages and persuasions learn and work together. In public schools lacking diversity among the people, the books, magazines and other materials in the library can help to introduce the richness of the human condition.

Xe Yu, in Portland State University’s Cataloging Department, wrote: The most important and difficult thing to achieve, of the many dimensions of diversity, perhaps, is ethnic diversity ... Our problem is that libraries are more interested in diversifying their collections, than in diversifying their ranks. Without a major effort in human resources, libraries may not be able to provide good services to all.

Typically, when someone discusses diversity in libraries, we focus on services or collections. We are, after all, a practical profession intent on improving user services. Contributions to this issue of *OLA Quarterly* will satisfy this practical, professional bent. I hope they also will address that side of us that is needful of introspection and inspiration.

In their careful analysis of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender holdings, Gary Klein and Larry Oberg

offer a search strategy and methodology applicable to assessing collections for other subjects. Michael Shapiro explores a best practices model in his evaluation of web-based Spanish language resources offered by five U.S. public libraries. Bridging the emerging generation gap among library staff, Annie Zeidman-Karpinski and Karen Munro examine the virtues of online chat. Examining another type of gap, Jey Wann and Maresa Kirk ponder the value our profession places on educational attainment. Carolyn Avery’s thoughtful piece reminds us that embracing diversity in libraries means incorporating services and collections to support users with visual impairments or physical disabilities. Finally, Sandra Rios Balderrama’s provocative essay anchors this issue. Her vision of diversity bestows new but not effortless levels to which we should aspire—deep change above and beyond the mundane.

While we can be proud of the steps that our profession and Oregon libraries have taken to honor diversity, we should not be complacent. Respecting the diversity of opinions of others can counter political climates that measure someone’s patriotism by measuring one’s level of conformity. Enhancing our understanding of gender, ethnicity, disability, or culture can dismiss notions that make someone automatically suspicious because of physical appearance or religious beliefs. Especially in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, the health and welfare of libraries, if not our nation, may be incumbent on promoting and sustaining diversity.

—Faye Chadwell
University of Oregon Libraries
Guest Editor

A Hitchhiker's Guide to Chat

by Karen Munro
Literature Librarian
University of Oregon

and by

Annie Zeidman-Karpinski
Science and Technology
Services Librarian
University of Oregon

Librarianship is going gray. A 1999 Readex survey, drawing from the same year's ALA Survey of Librarian Salaries, tells us that 45 percent of responding librarians were between 45 and 54 years old. Only 13 percent were younger than 35 years old, which puts Annie (33) and me (29) in the minority camp. And while it's not the years in your life that count so much as the life in your years, it's been interesting for us to compare notes on starting our careers at the University of Oregon. There are some small but noticeable differences between our generation of librarians (we are both 2002 MLIS graduates) and the librarians who are mentoring us. Our mentors may default to print more often than we do, while we turn first to electronic resources, or even the Web. They know bushels about the history of the library, the university, the publishers, our vendors. We know XML. They pick up the phone or type an e-mail. We chat.

Well, actually, some of our most senior reference librarians chat, and we've been known to use a telephone now and then. So the distinctions aren't really that clear. But online chatting (and text messaging, the analogous form of communication on cell phones and PDAs) is widely considered the hallmark of gadget-loving, tech-savvy, attention-deficient Generation Y-ers, and to a certain extent, this perception may be fair. Online chatting, or instant messaging, as it's also called, evolved in tandem with online bulletin boards, discussion groups, and listservs. Chatting is still a favorite means of communication for millions of college students and their party planners. It's instantaneous, highly informal, and most of the time it requires little to no intellectual investment. It's electronic gossip. A typical workplace chat message is a one-liner fired off to a colleague in the middle of the day, commenting on a problem or asking for some feedback. (I just sent a chat message to Annie, asking how old she is, because I needed to know for this article and couldn't remember.) A

typical recreational chat session is a virtual kaffeeklatsch, during which the conversation may range from international politics to recipes for crême brûlée, and during which any or all participants may be doing several other things at once.

Resistance may not be exactly futile, but chat and similar technologies are here to stay. And there's no disputing chat's usefulness. When one of us worked at a dot-com, our computer screens were visible to all and we had little privacy—chatting was the fastest, most private way to discuss important things like why the CEO was selling stock during a supposed blackout period. In a high-tech courtroom where a friend worked, the judge maintained a chat session with her clerk throughout a trial. The clerk was able to ask the judge procedural questions as the trial was going on, taking advantage of the instantaneous and relatively unobtrusive nature of chatting. Librarians in small institutions may find chat a cheap or even free way of providing digital reference service. And if you use software that permits more than two people to chat at the same time, the difference between e-mail (quick) and chat (instant) suddenly makes virtual meetings a workable reality.

Obviously, chat has both potential benefits and drawbacks. Regardless, it's finding its way into workplaces and universities from the ground up, and we're better off knowing what it is and how our patrons are using it, than we are sticking our heads in the sand. So, in the spirit of eager techie catholicism that is one of the best qualities of Generation Y, Annie and I offer you a highly informal Hitchhiker's Guide to Chat.

ICQ History Log For: 331978649 kmunro
Started on Tue Mar 18 16:36:44 2003
(See Annotation 1)

kmunro 3:01 PM ready when you are, chica.
zed 3:14 PM whoops. i here now
kmunro 3:14 PM excellent! shall we begin?
kmunro 3:16 PM ok, so we wanted to chat
a little to show howit's done.

Annotation 1

Both Annie and I let our typos remain in this chat's transcript to give a better sense of how rapid and informal the exchange tends to be (and how much interpretation can be required).



kmunro 3:16 PM or how not to do it, maybe.
 kmunro 3:16 PM first things first?
 zed 3:16 PM that's right. i set my comptuer up and thenyou signed up and i had to authorize you inorder to get this going.
 kmunro 3:17 PM we're using icq, a free download fromthe internet.
 kmunro 3:17 PM i'm using the lite version, annie's got thefull meal deal.
 zed 3:17 PM after typing each message ihave to click thesend button which i totally hate*ANNOYED*
(See Annotation 2)
 zed 3:18 PM ok the lite version is at <http://www.icq.com/download/>
 zed 3:19 PM i went all out and down-loaded the pro versionfor some functionality.
 kmunro 3:19 PM hang on a second, i've got a colleague here.
(See Annotation 3)
 zed 3:20 PM AIM from AOL is a big product. i jsut hatedoing anthing with AOL. and one of the reveiws of ICQ said it was for the "birkenstock" crowd.;-)
 kmunro 3:21 PM ok, i'm back.
 kmunro 3:21 PM why is icq for birkenstockers?
 zed 3:21 PM no problem. i was actually emailing someone as well. i like that i can do whatever adn when there's a message from you it starts a thingy blinking on my toolbar.
 kmunro 3:22 PM yes, you get the blinky thing because you turned off the sound.
(See Annotation 4)
 zed 3:22 PM no idea why ICQ is for the birkenstock crowd. i like to think it means we're smarter, more discriminating
 kmunro 3:22 PM it's cute, but a little startling.
 kmunro 3:22 PM funny cross-post.
 kmunro 3:22 PM that happens a lot with chat, i find.
 kmunro 3:23 PM i find it's a good idea to over-explain what i'm saying, thinking, doing... while i'm doing it.
 kmunro 3:23 PM and it works better to parse thoughts into smaller bits, send

them one bit at a time, so i don't get too far behind in the flow of htngs.
 zed 3:23 PM jeez. smaller bits?
 kmunro 3:23 PM also, most chat apps don't let you send huge chunks of text all at once. or they slow down, at least.
 kmunro 3:24 PM smaller bits, yeah.
 kmunro 3:24 PM like this. one thought at a time.
 zed 3:24 PM you ran into a text limit once. right? how many lines, you think?
 kmunro 3:24 PM the text limit on icq is a character limit, i think. i could try to hit it...
 zed 3:25 PM well...the suspense is killing me. how many lines?
 kmunro 3:25 PM ok, jsut did it. it's 450 characters.
 zed 3:32 PM if you were a student asking a reference question. and I used a database like, lexis, when I showed it to you the i'd have to explain more about lexis, which form exactly i'm using, how i'm getting in, and so on. we could co-browse.
 kmunro 3:33 PM or browse simulta-neously, at least. i think co-browse is an imprecise term to use here.
 zed 3:34 PM co-browsing/simultaneous browse would be good, unless there were network problems or whatever. can be painfully slow. and other technical issues, like authentication, log in, etc.
 kmunro 3:34 PM well, i was just thinking that if we're already chatting, as a student and a librarian, it would be simple for us both to go to online sources and for the librarian to walk the student through them.
 zed 3:35 PM let's say i asked for an article from *The Oregonian*
 kmunro 3:35 PM for instance, i could tell you that i'm in Lexis Academic (and walk you through getting into it in the first place), and tell you that I chose Western News Sources and specified *The Oregonian*
 zed 3:35 PM librarian can walk student through them, but it can be time consum-ing. helps to ask student. describe what

Annotation 2

In our actual chat, this was a graphic emoticon; a picture of a person looking annoyed, that Annie included by clicking on it in the ICQ menu of emoticons.

Annotation 3

An interruption is another common event in chat; from "RL," or "Real Life." It's considered good etiquette to explain what's going on if you're going to be distracted for more than a minute or two.

Annotation 4

ICQ provides audio alerts when another chatter sends you a message.



Annotation 5

Chat slang for “Lots of Laughs” or “Laughing Out Loud,” meaning the chatter is amused.

Annotation 6

There are a variety of ways of sending folks your contact information. Chat software makes it easy to exchange the numbers and screen names of friends. Some people even put this information on their business cards—both the paper and electronic PDA versions.

you see... so you know they are on the same page you are.

kmunro 3:36 PM yes, exactly, getting the student lead the safari is a much better mode.

kmunro 3:36 PM on the bright side, you can do things like paste in the lexis disclaimer:

kmunro 3:36 PM Access to certain freelance articles and other features within this publication (i.e. photographs, classifieds, etc...) may not be available.

kmunro 3:36 PM easy-peasy.

zed 3:36 PM we are also using a lot more complete sentences and grammar than most folks.

kmunro 3:37 PM plus, our speling is beter. *GIGGLING*

kmunro 3:37 PM but chat can be fun adn useful for librarians to do P2P as well.

zed 3:37 PM is P2P different from f2f?

kmunro 3:37 PM not just as a teaching or reference tool, but as peer support. i, for instance, have used icq to get your opinion on several things recently.

zed 3:38 PM yeah. i sometimes i even respond! LOL

(See Annotation 5)

kmunro 3:38 PM hee. i misused p2p, i think. i just meant in the general sense, peer relationship building. not file-sharing.

kmunro 3:38 PM your responses have been wonderfully helpful, actually.

kmunro 3:38 PM you've reviewed a Web page I was working on, in real time as i made changes.

zed 3:39 PM you can use chat as email, really.but faster. still, if i'm not at my desk, you'd be in the same situation.

kmunro 3:39 PM true, if you're not at your desk i could send your cell a text message using icq or another chat software

kmunro 3:49 PM icq is nice because it's pretty light, pretty trouble-free, but there are always snafus. and because chat speeds up teh interaction, waiting for the computer to unfreeze can seem really...long.

zed 3:50 PM or for teh student to stop emailing or chatting with someone else or....the lag time can be really annoying
kmunro 3:50 PM one of the joys of the reference desk.

zed 3:53 PM in my other job, folks found that except fot he delays, bad grammar and typos doing reference this way was a lot like any reference interview.

kmunro 3:53 PM and you can vary your font size, style, and color (and use the emoticons, if you're bold), for emphasis and so on. as in a conversation.

kmunro 3:54 PM you can also change the background of the field where you type your text in. mine's a restful taupe.

kmunro 3:56 PM so, we set this up by downloading the free software and installing it on our ocmputers.

kmunro 3:57 PM all right. and then we were assigned an icq number. mine is ***** [9 digit number]. it's not easy to remember.

(See Annotation 6)

kmunro 3:58 pm but you get to choose your own icq name, right?

zed 3:58 PM yeah. you get a name. actually i think you can even use ones that are taken now. not sure.

kmunro 3:59 PM the ID number and online name of the person you're chatting with appear at the top of the ICQ window while you chat. the ICQ window only takes up a small part of your screen, so you can see other programs at the same time.

zed 3:59 PM make sure you keep everythign as private and generic as possible. otherwise you'll be getting a lot of bored folks “chatting” with you. and with those fun blinking things on your toolbar [and beeping uh-ohs] it can be annoying to get rid of someone trying to sell you 6 months of viagra

kmunro 3:59 PM your own ICQ number displays on the little window that disappears into the taskbar. it's like the control panel.

kmunro 4:00 PM now...can anyone icq you



if they know your number, or do they have to be authorized?

zed 4:01 PM anyone can try to chat with me, but first i'll have to authorize them. its a setting too.

zed 4:02 PM comes as a "system notice"

kmunro 4:02 PM can you block people from icqing you?

kmunro 4:02 PM the way you can block email addresses from sending to you?

(See Annotation 7)

zed 4:02 PM uh. wait. until i authorize, i think i don't see even a message. and you can block folks from chatting with you.

kmunro 4:03 PM so there's a balance of privacy and accessibility. can you de-authorize someone who gets out of line?

zed 4:03 PM yup. and you can send folks other icq numbers.

kmunro 4:05 PM okay, that's so you have easy access and can just click on our user names to start chatting with us, right?

zed 4:07 PM you can put folks on an "ignore list" to boot them off.

kmunro 4:08 PM keep me posted. brb.
(See Annotation 8)

kmunro 4:20 PM ok, just to recap (without ever having closed out this chat session), we're recording the session by....? annie? how are you doing this? the full version of icq has better transcript capacity than the lite version, i think.

zed 4:21 PM in the "pro" vesion i actually have a history button in the middle of this chat screen. and when i click it i see our conversation, but in reverse. very surreal actually. I can then save this as a text file.

kmunro 4:23 PM and can you email the transcript to someone?

zed 4:25 PM yup. its now on my desk top. i'll email it to you.


kmunro 4:26 PM great. i just got your email, and i have the entire log of the chat.

kmunro 4:34 PM don't know. anything else we should cover?

zed 4:35 PM nothing i can currently remember. see ya!

kmunro 4:35 PM cu.

(See Annotation 9)

zed 4:35 PM okcubye 

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Retrieved April 2, 2003, from <http://www.icq.com/feelings/gestures.html>.

Annotation 7

There are actually several different ways to avoid folks, everything from total banishment to fluctuating "visibility" depending on user preferences.

Annotation 8

Chat slang for "Be Right Back."

Annotation 9

Chat slang for "See You."

Ebsco ad to go here



Ten Things To Know About Chat

1. Check your perfectionism at the door. Chat is a rapid-fire, by-the-seat-of-your-pants medium. Users rarely bother with capital letters, punctuation, or proper grammar. This can be a shock to the system, but it can also be relaxing to know you're not being judged by your typos.
2. Don't take it personally. Remember that chatting is usually fast and informal, and people may not bother with some finer points of etiquette. While most chatters are polite and respectful, it can take time to get used to the speed of the exchange, the shorthand usages, and some of the slang.
3. Learn to duck and cover. If you use chat with co-workers, you may want to master the art of the "away" message. Chatting is great, but sometimes you want to focus on a task without interruption: At those times, an "I'm not here" message is your best friend. If you use chat for reference, make sure you know how to set up a message that tells patrons the service is closed.
4. Be realistic. Chat works best for short, relatively simple reference questions. For longer, more complex research, nothing beats good old-fashioned face time.
5. Play the field. Experiment with more than one chat application to compare features like privacy, browser support, spam protection, and add-ons. See the *College and Research Libraries* article cited at the end of this article for an idea of some criteria that a real-world library used in deciding what software to adopt.
6. Be a good host. If you're using chat to provide reference service, make sure you're comfortable with your role as "moderator" of the exchange. Remember that your patrons can't see or hear you, so all your cues will have to come through what you type. You may feel that you're over-explaining what you're doing, but it's better to do that than to leave a patron hanging in cyberspace, wondering what's going on.
7. Play to chat's strengths. Remember that you can use chat to cut and paste URLs, boilerplate, standardized responses, and other useful information. (Remember copyright restrictions though!) Chat can also be a great medium for people with hearing loss.
8. Protect your privacy. Just as you wouldn't give personal information out at the reference desk, keep your chat reference transactions professional. Chat handles don't carry a domain name the way e-mail addresses do, so it's impossible to see whether the patron you're chatting with is a student, a fellow employee, or someone else entirely. Libraries that use chat for reference may set up generic librarian accounts for employees to use.
9. Learn to block. We hope you'll never have to do it, but knowing how to ban, block, or ignore another chatter's messages is crucial if you use chat for reference (or even just within the workplace). Problem patrons (and Viagra salesmen) exist online just as they do in the real world.
10. Have fun. Learn to use the shorthand, the emoticons, the slang. Your chat experience will probably be a lot more satisfying if you know that "<bg> ty tfn" means "Big grin, thank you, ta ta for now"—in short, it means you've made someone's day, and they're off to make good use of what they've just learned from their favorite reference librarian.



With All Due Respect

by Maresa Kirk
Mark O. Hatfield Library
Willamette University

and by

Jey Wann
Oregon State Library

In the library world, we've been committed to diversity since before it became popular. We take pride in maintaining diverse collections, treating all patrons with respect, and providing users with equal access to information

When we think about diversity within the workplace, we probably think about relatively recognizable categories such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, or disability. We've all had training and know that we must not discriminate on the basis of these characteristics.

Most libraries have built-in divisions: management and non-management; librarian and support staff; public services and technical services; salaried staff and volunteers. Within these groups, there may be further divisions, such as reference and circulation, acquisitions and cataloging, etc. Beyond these are less formal divisions based on personal style, interests, and educational background.

Because we are members of the Oregon Library Association's Support Staff Division (SSD), we became curious about the educational attainment of library support staff. A 1997 survey by the Support Staff Interest Round Table of the American Library Association found that paraprofessionals hold a wide variety of degrees. (See http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Our_Association/Round_Tables/LSSIRT/Strategic_Plan3/Issues_Survey/Results.pdf.) Of the 2,089 respondents, 64 had a master's in library science (MLS), 116 had another master's degree, and 10 had a Ph.D. An informal survey of the authors' paraprofessional co-workers and SSD colleagues found educational attainment ranging from high school to multiple bachelor's degrees. Two respondents had three bachelor's degrees each and there were also various vocational certifications and associate's degrees. Some individuals are working towards their bachelor's degree or towards their master's degree. Several had earned master's degrees, and one person had both an MLS and a Ph.D.


With these informal data in mind, we wondered whether we are guilty of being less respectful of coworkers based on their educational level. Are we guilty of being

education snobs? Of not paying closer attention to suggestions from colleagues without a college degree? Or are we reverse-education snobs who discount the suggestions of coworkers with undergraduate or graduate degrees?

Those of us who work in libraries value diversity. We also value literacy and knowledge. Consequently, we value formal education. Positions that include the word "librarian" in the title are generally not open to those without an MLS. Some non-librarian positions may require a bachelor's degree. Other times, job applicants may substitute college education for work experience. Respect for education is built into our workplaces. Although it makes sense to pay attention to educational background, we need to be careful about giving it more value than it deserves.

One thing that unites us is on-the-job learning. The longer we've been in the workforce, the more likely that we have learned skills on the job. Many skills we use every day—from book repair to designing Web pages to applying for grants—we learned on the job. We probably learned these skills informally from co-workers, in-house, at workshops sponsored by library associations, or in classes that are not part of a formal degree program.

If we look at all of our co-workers, from volunteers and student assistants to library directors, we are amazed at what they know and can do. This knowledge and these skills make library staff everywhere dynamic. They allow us to keep up with the demands of our field.

To continue meeting challenges, and to foster the diversity that libraries affirm, we must treat all of our colleagues with respect, regardless of the level of formal education they have attained. We are not suggesting that libraries alter position requirements; nor are we assigning value to anyone's level of education. We are saying that the most important thing is what we do, not how we learned to do it. 



Gay-Themed Books in Oregon Public and Academic Libraries:

A Brief Historical Overview

by Larry R. Oberg
University Librarian
Willamette University

and by

Gary M. Klein
Management/Economics Librarian
Willamette University

Introduction

The publication of gay-themed books that document the everyday lives and history of gay men and women and their place in this and other societies has witnessed enormous growth over the past few decades. In 1950, a young person who came to an Oregon public or academic library to write a paper or seek answers to troubling questions about sexual orientation would have found fewer than 20 titles listed in any subject catalog in the state, and, in many, none at all. The listed books would have presented homosexuality as a medical or psychological condition, something to be repressed or, better yet, “cured.” Asking for help at the reference desk might have turned up a few additional titles available elsewhere, but the stigma attached to the topic most often ensured that our young patron’s search would be limited to a furtive glance at the card catalog and the “h” volume of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

In most medium-to-large Oregon libraries today, patrons find listings for hundreds of gay-themed books under a wide range of relevant subject headings. They also find knowledgeable and enthusiastic librarians to help them pursue searches in large consortial catalogs and other Web-based resources. Were the librarian to guide today’s patron to OCLC’s WorldCat, they would discover nearly 25,000 unique English-language titles on gay-themed topics classified under no fewer than 240 relevant subject headings. Librarians today have a wide range of professional and bibliographic resources at their disposal to ensure that they become informed guides to this literature.

This study does not answer all of the questions librarians might ask about building collections and providing services in support of the gay community, but it does provide a current snapshot of gay-themed collections in Oregon libraries. It also offers suggestions and a rationale for building these collections and lists resources of use to librarians.

Study Design

The present study is designed to assess the strengths of gay-themed collections in Oregon libraries and to determine if libraries of different types, sizes, and locations share common collecting patterns. The authors also sought to understand how Oregon libraries are responding to the needs of Oregon’s GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender) communities and, by extension, to the rapid growth of the literature on gay-themed topics over the past decades. The authors did not include periodicals, videos, and other non-book materials within this survey’s scope. Nor did they seek to determine the proportion of pro- to anti-gay titles or the “quality” of these collections. Because of the subjectivity involved in determining if a novel is, or is not, a “gay” novel, fiction is also excluded.

Methodology

Using a single search statement for each of the 60 libraries and library systems surveyed, on March 26, 2003, the authors queried OCLC’s WorldCat database to determine how many of the English language book titles these libraries held cover lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender topics. Working through the FirstSearch platform, they used the WorldCat database to obtain uniform access to the libraries’ holdings. The combination of the WorldCat database and the FirstSearch search engine made possible the use of a single, albeit complex, search statement of more than 100 characters, a search string that would not have been executable on most online public access catalogs. Unlike local catalogs, which can include unique or undocumented processing options, the WorldCat database offers a consistent protocol for searching bibliographic records.

To facilitate comparison, the libraries surveyed were divided into five categories: state-supported academic libraries, private nonreligious colleges and universities, private religious colleges, community colleges, and



public libraries and library systems. Several of these institutions (George Fox University, Lewis and Clark College, University of Oregon, Willamette University, and Portland Community College) had multiple OCLC holding codes in WorldCat. Database queries for these institutions were performed against all of their OCLC symbols.

To minimize false hits, the search string adopted was tested extensively by performing keyword searches of the subject headings field using wild cards to capture variations of major words. By focusing on subject heading fields, it was possible to avoid retrieving such non-GLBT phrases as “the gay nineties” which appear frequently in title and contents fields. The query statement also incorporated a tool to minimize possibly including personal authors whose first, middle, or last name is “gay.” The search formulation is: (su: gay* or su: lesbian* or su: bisexual* or su: transsexual* or su: transvesti* or su: transgender* or su: homophob* or su: homosexual* or su: heterosex*) not (pn: gay) and ln= “eng” and dt: “bks.”

The authors used the WorldCat

database to separate the records retrieved by publication dates and group them by decade from the 1940s forward. (Earlier imprint dates are consolidated as “pre-1940s.”) In order to facilitate comparisons, the authors sought current enrollment statistics for each academic institution and current population statistics for each public library and library district.

The authors required that every library or library system selected for the survey 1) serve an Oregon institution of higher education, or serve the citizens of Oregon as a public library; 2) hold current membership in the OCLC consortium; and 3) store their bibliographic holdings information in OCLC’s WorldCat database. Because a large number of public libraries in Oregon do not place their bibliographic holdings directly in WorldCat, the authors chose 18 public library systems, with holdings listed in WorldCat, to represent the state’s 143 public libraries and library systems. This is a search strategy and research methodology that would lend itself to replication, not only for GLBT literature, but in many other subject areas as well.

Figure 1
Number of unique titles of gay-themed books written in English,
cataloged in OCLC, by year of publication
 (compiled March 26, 2003)

	<i>all years</i>	<i>2000-03</i>	<i>1990-99</i>	<i>1980-89</i>	<i>1970-79</i>	<i>1960-69</i>	<i>1950-59</i>	<i>1940-49</i>	<i>pre1940</i>
(percentages are computed separately for each time span)									
43,659 libraries worldwide									
in OCLC	24,128	3,735	11,120	4,199	2,812	1,483	336	81	362
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
all 60 institutions surveyed									
in Oregon	6,224	977	3,523	1,073	454	109	52	10	26
% of OCLC holdings	25.8%	26.2%	31.7%	25.6%	16.1%	7.3%	15.5%	12.3%	7.2%
ORBIS consortium members									
in Oregon	4,291	587	2,362	797	366	100	48	8	23
% of OCLC holdings	17.8%	15.7%	21.2%	19.0%	13.0%	6.7%	14.3%	9.9%	6.4%
OPALL consortium members									
in Oregon	499	32	202	133	95	23	12	0	2
% of OCLC holdings	2.1%	0.9%	1.8%	3.2%	3.4%	1.6%	3.6%	0.0%	0.6%

The complete dataset for all 60 institutions surveyed is available as an Excel spreadsheet from:

<http://www.willamette.edu/~gklein/GLBT-details.xls>

Study Results

- The libraries included in this survey collectively own 25.8 percent of all English-language gay-themed books cataloged in the OCLC WorldCat database.
- State-supported academic libraries, as a class, provide access to 15 percent of the English-language gay-themed books cataloged in the database. Larger Oregon libraries own disproportionately more gay-themed books than smaller libraries. (This finding holds true in each of the five categories of libraries surveyed.)
- Private religious college libraries in Oregon, in the aggregate, own fewer gay-themed books than any of the other four categories surveyed.
- Individual community college libraries in Oregon, on the average, own fewer gay-themed books than libraries in the other four categories. (The average community college library owns 69 gay-themed books. The averages for other categories are: private religious colleges, 86; public libraries, 206; private nonreligious colleges and universities, 250; state colleges and universities, 508.)
- The size of the gay-themed book collections owned by individual Oregon libraries varies greatly within each of the five categories surveyed. (This continues to hold true when population size and institutional mission are taken into consideration.)
- A comparison of the publication dates of the gay-themed books held by Oregon libraries confirms a dramatic increase in this literature over the past several decades.

Conclusions

Academic and public libraries located in traditionally liberal areas, Portland, Corvallis, Eugene, and Ashland, for example, tend to have the largest gay-themed collections. Libraries in traditionally conservative areas tend to have the smallest. A few libraries, however, do not conform to this pattern and have surprisingly large collections for their size, category, or location. Two-thirds of all gay-themed titles in the private nonreligious college and university category, for example, are held by a single library (Willamette University) and 35 percent of the titles owned by the private religious colleges are held by one library (University of Portland). It may be hypothesized that these libraries are conscientiously choosing to develop these collections or that individual librarians and faculty selectors are leaving their mark.

It is significant that although Oregon accounts for only one percent of the nation's population, its libraries hold 25 percent of the nation's gay-themed books. Like the collections themselves, access has improved greatly since our young student first searched the subject catalog back in the 1950s. Today, consolidated access to branch, satellite and departmental collections facilitates local searching; online access to other library catalogs in the region, state, and nation is commonly available; and regional consortial catalogs, Pioneer, OPALL, and Orbis, for example, assure rapid delivery of vast quantities of common holdings. To depend upon "the kindness of strangers" in order to avoid collecting these materials locally, however, is a violation of our professional obligation. If we do not systematically and adequately collect gay-themed materials, we ignore a literature of growing importance and the immediate needs of a considerable segment of our user community.



Figure 2
 Number of unique titles of gay-themed books, written in English,
 cataloged in OCLC (compiled March 26, 2003)

	<i>Fall 2001 enrollment</i>	<i># gbt books</i>	<i>% of OCLC</i>		<i>Population served</i>	<i># gbt books</i>	<i>% of OCLC</i>
<u>State supported institutions</u>	73,375	3,556	14.7%	<u>Public library systems</u>		3,703	15.3%
Eastern Oregon University	2,971	147	0.6%	Albany PL	41,650	284	1.2%
Oregon Institute of Technology	3,070	53	0.2%	Chemeketa Coop Reg L	n/a	125	0.5%
Oregon State University	18,013	1,272	5.3%	Coos Bay PL	26,301	415	1.7%
Portland State University	20,024	1,543	6.4%	Corvallis-Benton PL	79,000	1,369	5.7%
Southern Oregon University	5,465	683	2.8%	Dalles-Wasco Co PL	21,017	0	0.0%
University of Oregon	18,956	2,597	10.8%	Deschutes Co PL	122,050	382	1.6%
Western Oregon University	4,876	199	0.8%	Douglas Co L	101,200	307	1.3%
				Eugene PL	140,550	1,272	5.3%
<u>Private nonreligious colleges</u>	13,366	2,501	10.4%	Hood River Co PL	7,000	10	0.0%
Lewis & Clark College	2,947	816	3.4%	Jackson Co L	184,700	587	2.4%
Linfield College	2,542	458	1.9%	Josephine Co L	76,850	189	0.8%
Marylhurst University	937	159	0.7%	Klamath Co L	64,200	208	0.9%
Nat'l Col. of Naturopathic Medicine	459	13	0.1%	Lib Info Net Clackamas Co	n/a	821	3.4%
Oregon Graduate Institute	see OHSU	0	0.0%	Lincoln Co L Dist	n/a	283	1.2%
Oregon Health & Science Univ.	1976	65	0.3%	Multnomah Co L	666,350	2,484	10.3%
Pacific University	2,293	312	1.3%	Salem PL	139,320	724	3.0%
Reed College	1,420	599	2.5%	Tillamook Co L	24,600	177	0.7%
Western States Chiropractic Col.	331	1	0.0%	Washington Co Coop L	n/a	1,094	4.5%
Willamette University	2,437	1,667	6.9%				
<u>Private religious colleges</u>	9,869	864	3.6%				
Cascade College	330	3	0.0%				
Concordia University	1,040	97	0.4%				
George Fox University	2,637	214	0.9%				
Mt Angel Seminary	155	170	0.7%				
Multnomah Bible College	844	100	0.4%				
Northwest Christian College	480	58	0.2%				
University of Portland	3,087	331	1.4%				
Warner Pacific College	571	66	0.3%				
Western Baptist College	725	34	0.1%				
Western Seminary	n/a	118	0.5%				
<u>Community colleges</u>	85,468	1,034	4.3%				
Blue Mountain CC	2,143	56	0.2%				
Central Oregon CC	4,452	155	0.6%				
Chemeketa CC	10,762	110	0.5%				
Clackamas CC	6,715	89	0.4%				
Clatsop CC	1,522	63	0.3%				
Columbia Gorge CC	793	88	0.4%				
Lane CC	10,737	133	0.6%				
Linn-Benton CC	4,747	87	0.4%				
Mt Hood CC	8,771	37	0.2%				
Oregon Coast CC	416	8	0.0%				
Portland CC	24,882	486	2.0%				
Rogue CC	4,343	41	0.2%				
Southwestern Oregon CC	3,194	31	0.1%				
Treasure Valley CC	550	31	0.1%				
Umpqua CC	1,441	60	0.2%				

Fall 2001 enrollment data from Oregon Student Assistance Commission, Office of Degree Authorization.

http://www.osscc.state.or.us/oda/enrollment_2001.html

Population data obtained from "Directory of Oregon Public & Volunteer Libraries, 2002."

<http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/pldir.htm>




Recommendations and Resources

The following are recommendations and resources for building a collection of gay-themed materials. Depending upon the size of the gay community served, the curriculum of the school, and the research needs of the community, a few or many of these suggestions will be appropriate to a particular library.

- Conduct an environmental scan to determine the need for gay-themed materials that satisfy community, curricular, student and research requirements.
- Add GLBT literature to the collection development policy statement.
- Allocate resources for the purchase of gay-themed materials.
- Assign responsibility for the selection of gay-themed materials to selectors held accountable for filling gaps and building the current collection.
- Remember that available gay-themed materials are highly diverse. Consider the various types and their importance to your clientele, e.g., the coming out process, guides for parents of gay and lesbian children, gay history, fiction that treats GLBT topics.
- Build awareness of the GLBT literature amongst subject selectors.
- Solicit suggestions for the purchase of gay-themed materials from local organizations serving the GLBT community.
- Prepare bibliographies and publicize gay-themed materials.
- Collect at an appropriate level; do not force patrons to rely unduly upon ILL or consortial collections.
- Use commonly consulted selection tools to identify gay-themed materials,

e.g., *Library Journal*, *American Libraries*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Choice*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Book Review Digest*. Use specialized resources, e.g., *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide*, *Alternative Press Index*, to develop more comprehensive collections.

- Use the Lambda Literary Awards and the American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgendered Round Table's Book Award lists as buying guides.
- Include the gay biweekly news magazine, *The Advocate*, in your collection. It is a useful resource for readers and selectors alike. 

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Diversity and Special Services

by Carolynn Avery
*Talking Book and
Braille Services
Oregon State Library*

Libraries meet their communities' needs by providing diversity in their collections and their formats and by providing access to a diverse population. One might think that Talking Book and Braille Services (TBABS) of the Oregon State Library doesn't deal with much diversity. Our service population is vision impaired. Period. Right? So why is the Regional Librarian writing about diversity matters? What possible insight can she have into this subject?

Actually, as the spokesperson for Oregon's Talking Books and Braille Services, I bring a valid but often overlooked viewpoint to this discussion. Diversity is not limited to culture or religion or race. It includes a wide array of abilities. Most libraries, by nature of their dependence on print materials, videos, and computers, have great appeal to the sighted and even the deaf populations. What about those segments of the population who, for various reasons, may not be able to access knowledge or entertainment through books or video screens?

Increasingly, public and academic libraries are expanding audio book collections and providing computer screen enlargers and screen readers in order to serve this user group. However, shrinking budgets may not cover basic services, let alone such enhancements. A library's ability to provide these additional services is also limited by the relatively small number of individuals who have need of these services, and by the difficulty they may have just getting to the library building.

The mandate for libraries is to provide information to all segments of the population. Can community and school libraries fulfill this mandate on their own? Probably not entirely. Probably not with the constraints surrounding us. But with assistance from special libraries the answer is a resounding "yes!" Oregon public and academic libraries can provide assistance to those with visual impairments or physical disabilities courtesy of the very special collection of

TBABS at the Oregon State Library.

TBABS provides Braille materials, talking books (cassettes) and playback machines, and descriptive videos to Oregonians who have vision impairments or physical disabilities (including dyslexia) and are unable to read regular printed materials. TBABS doesn't just have a few titles: the National Library Service has about 60,000 titles on tape and 5,000 in Braille.

Before coming to TBABS, I spent six years working as a public librarian in Corvallis. For three of those years, I also worked as a cataloguer and reference librarian for DB-LINK's National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind at Western Oregon University. These experiences acquainted me with the information and entertainment needs of people who are vision impaired and with the limits public and academic libraries face serving these users—limits imposed by budget and space considerations, as well as by the small number of users in each community who might need these materials, compared to the community at large.

Accommodations for TBABS in the State Library are expensive and space consuming. Consider the amount of space taken up by tax forms and instructions in most libraries each year for a limited time. Now imagine the extra space and cost for each library to provide that information in Braille. TBABS can and does provide this tax information in Braille each year. Those volumes are only a supplement to the complete TBABS cassette tape and Braille book collection, a collection that required 13,275 square feet of stack space and circulated 348,224 books in 2001 and 2002.

Is the staff at TBABS concerned about collection diversity? You bet. TBABS users can request non-fiction and fiction, adult and juvenile materials. They have access to Spanish, Russian, and Japanese language materials; children's large print books and Twin-Vision books (Braille overlays in regular children's picture books);



newspapers and magazines in Braille and on tape; old-time radio shows and contemporary videos.

TBABS members also have home access to Web-Braille on a password-protected site. This Web-based service provides the full text (in an electronic form of grade 2 Braille) of thousands of Braille books and all Braille magazines currently produced by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). Also offered by NLS via TBABS membership is access to a music collection consisting of music scores in Braille and large print; Braille and large print textbooks and books about music; music appreciation cassettes, including interviews and opera lectures; and self-instructional cassettes for voice, piano, organ, electronic keyboard, guitar, recorder, accordion, banjo, harmonica, and other instruments. This material contains more than 20,000 music-related items.

Whom does TBABS serve?

- The 90-year-old widower with macular degeneration who wants to listen to the Bible.
- The blind parent whose sighted 3-year-old wants to see pictures as well as hear the words.
- The 22-year-old student looking for career guidance.
- The 45-year-old businessman who wants to know more about the Middle East.
- The visually impaired student needing to read a novel for class.
- The 65-year-old grandmother whose arthritis won't allow her to hold the books of her favorite author anymore.
- The grandfather who wants to share his favorite childhood stories with

his grandchildren; he can't see the print well enough to read but can listen to the cassettes with them.

- The skier with two broken arms who still wants to read his favorite authors.
- The school librarian helping a teacher find Braille materials for her class.

What else does the staff at TBABS do to provide diverse services? Like librarians everywhere, we provide readers' advisory and ILL services. We provide referrals to people seeking books that NLS hasn't produced—usually we send them to their local libraries. We provide copies of books for reading discussion groups. We provide phone numbers and addresses to local support groups and national information services. We give tours of our facility. We connect Braille readers with libraries and schools for special storytimes. We do outreach to senior centers, retirement homes, and support groups.

Yes, diversity matters—in collections, in communities, and in libraries. We need to reach out to the visually impaired or physically disabled and let them know what is available locally and from Talking Book and Braille Services. The Talking Book and Braille Services can partner with each and every public and academic library in Oregon. Together we can provide service to a portion of the state's population that by its very nature is not likely to use the major parts of most library collections. 