

## **ALA - Empowering Library Support Staff for the 21st Century:** **LIBRAS Report**

I requested funding from LIBRAS to attend ALA's Conference within a Conference, "Empowering Library Support Staff for the 21st Century" in June. After looking over the program and noting the nature of the sessions offered, I didn't find much I would be able to learn from as a member of support staff. A sampling of the sessions offered is as follows, "Staff Rewards and Recognition," "Enhancing the Skills of Managers at Public Service Desks," "Comparing Outreach Services through Cost and Equity," "Congratulations, Rural Library Director!

You've Got the Job. Now What?" "Religion and Intellectual Freedom: Divine Revelation in the Marketplace of Ideas," and "Stress-Free Library Program Planning." None of these sessions were practical for me, working as a Cataloging Coordinator. I am always happy to learn new things, but these sessions did not seem all that relevant to support staff.

I did, however, attend one session, "60 Sites in 60 Minutes." The speaker was not very good, there were no handouts and the sites he acclaimed were not always the best.. I thought it would be about helpful sites for library workers or librarians, especially those who might sit at a Reference desk, but the sites were more general in nature. The speaker also talked in a low monotone voice, which is probably another reason I disliked the session. At the end of this report, I have included my own selection of web sites that I think are useful, that the speaker did not mention.

I visited with many vendors at the ALA Conference. North Park is looking for a way to track our media equipment. I happened to see a company called Medianet, which specializes in tracking media and equipment. The sales representative gave me a demonstration of their product. It looked promising, so I asked them to send further information to the library so Bill Hartley, our Media Services Director could view the product. The company did send information which I passed on to Mr. Hartley. Last Friday, he and his staff viewed an online/teleconference demonstration of Medianet.

We were looking for additional video/DVD vendors, so I stopped by both Midwest Tapes and DV&A to compare services and get information that I could bring back to my boss. As a result, we now have vendor accounts with both companies.

I also stopped by these booths as well: WebFeat for a demonstration of how it would work for ILCSO libraries, H.W. Wilson to learn of their new products and demonstration, Highsmith, Gaylord, Demco Cambridge University Press, and numerous other publishers. I picked up a flier on a new cart offered by Gaylord and that has been ordered for library use. I went to the Scholarship Bash sponsored by ALA, not just for fun, but also because I will need scholarship money myself when I go for my MLIS degree.

The sites listed below are just a few of the sites that I have used or been referred to by librarians when searching for information.

For consumer information, I would suggest [www.consumer.gov](http://www.consumer.gov), a good site with news articles and links to information about food, product safety, health, home, money, transportation, children, etc. The site [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov) is the official portal for the U.S. Government and its layout is easy to use. Another good government site is [BTS - Airline Information](#), the U.S. Dep. of Trans. Office of Airline Information. It can give you

statistics on the causes of flight delays, airline on-time performance, as well as information on airline financials.

Two good legal sites are [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com) - self-help for the layperson, and [www.lawmoose.com/index.cfm?HomeCommunity=WorldLaw](http://www.lawmoose.com/index.cfm?HomeCommunity=WorldLaw) - the legal resource center that now incorporates the Internet Law Library. For current events, check out <http://uspolitics.about.com>. Computer information and internet security software can be found with these five sites: [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com), [www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com), [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com), [www.safer-networking.org](http://www.safer-networking.org), and [www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com). The latter two are anti-spyware recommended by professionals in the industry.

Business web sites are [www.morningstar.com](http://www.morningstar.com), [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com), [www.thomasnet.com](http://www.thomasnet.com) (Thomas Register), and [www.edgar-online.com](http://www.edgar-online.com). A couple of general sites are [www.ceoexpress.com](http://www.ceoexpress.com) and [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) (Better Business Bureau)

Library related websites that I have found helpful include, [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov) (and all its subsidiary links), <http://lu.com/odlis/> - the ODLIS Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science, [www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/108.html](http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/108.html) - Title 17 of the copyright laws, [www.librarytechnology.org/libwebcats/](http://www.librarytechnology.org/libwebcats/) - to find and search other library OPACs, [http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file\\_name=login-bl-list](http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list) - the British Library Integrated Catalogue, and [http://libraries.theeuropeanlibrary.org/libraries\\_en.xml](http://libraries.theeuropeanlibrary.org/libraries_en.xml) - the national libraries of Europe portal. This is, of course, in addition to Illinet, the databases offered to CARLI libraries, and the Library of Congress Online Catalogs.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at ALA, but I felt that the Conference within a Conference did not have programs appropriately aimed for support staff. The sessions for the main conference looked interesting though, especially those related to Technical Services. By the time the conference comes back to Chicago in 2009, I hope to have my MLIS. Still, I hope ALA improves the content for this sub conference and includes something for the support staff of Academic Libraries and those just starting out in libraries.