

ALA 2009
Chicago, July 10-14

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I've only been to one ALA conference before, but after this one decided it's a must when it's in Chicago. However, I'd recommend registering for a single day rather than the whole conference as a cost-cutting measure. Or recommending that your staff attend for a single day (or register for exhibits only at \$25). I thought the following three programs were worthwhile, and encourage those interested to look at the ALA Presentations WIKI for more details and slide presentations from some of the programs.

1. RUSA/BRASS "Dollars, Pounds and Yen: Libraries in a Time of Globalization"

Terese Terry, business librarian at Wharton School (UPenn) and Alec Young, international equity strategist from S&P talked about library resources and interest in emerging markets (EM). The overlying message was "the success of free markets in India and China is more important than the current financial crisis." Barriers to getting information on these markets included: Disclosure (not enforced as in U.S.), reliability, infancy of the economy (China's stock market dates back to 1991), superabundance of information, political control of business and society, corruption, and lack of free press.

Of particular interest were the sites that Terry highlighted for information on these emerging markets. She divided them into free and paid, but didn't really explain clearly what the added value was in the subscription sites. The full report will be on the BRASS website which has a wealth of information:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/sections/brass/index.cfm>

FREE Sources for information on Emerging Markets

www.fdi.net (division of World Bank) – contains reports on emerging markets

<http://tse.export.gov/> Trade Stats Express – national trade data and state export data ; user friendly!

www.worldbank.org Click on Data and Research

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/Default.aspx> (a World Bank project)

www.OECD.org Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

2. PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR USERS! CONDUCTING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO REINVENT LIBRARY SERVICES (Committee on Research and Statistics, ALA ORS) Presentation slides at:

<http://tinyrul.com/m6mu4t>

The presenters did an excellent job of explaining why and when you would use a qualitative approach to research; how you analyze data from a qualitative study (there is software to help), and how you use the results to design and deliver library services. The project they described was a study of information-seeking behavior of teens in an urban, low-income environment. Good case for qualitative studies.

3. PRESIDENT'S PROGRAM: ADVOCACY IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT (ACRL)

Everyone should attend one of these sessions on the do's and don't of lobbying legislators. But once is enough. If the topic interests you, try to attend a national Library Day in D.C.