

# Florida Libraries



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FLORIDA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

*Volume 50, No.2*

*Fall 2007*

## Transforming Libraries for Changing Times

Redesigning spaces

Adapting services

Changing processes

A black and white photograph of a large, modern library building. The building features a prominent brick structure on the left with a large, arched window. To the right, there is a glass-enclosed section with a series of columns. The building is surrounded by a well-maintained lawn with several palm trees and other plants. In the foreground, there is a brick wall and a paved walkway.

Library West,  
University of Florida



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Florida Libraries is published twice a year for the members of the Florida Library Association. It is indexed in *Library Literature*, *Wilson OmniFile*, and *EBSCO Academic Search Premier*. Articles in the fall issue of each year are refereed.

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ISSN 0046-4147

Member, Florida Magazine Association

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# These Will Be the Good Times for Florida Libraries; We Just Have to Figure Out How

By Charlie Parker

**A**s I write this in August 2007, the budget challenges facing Florida libraries look daunting indeed.

There is a feeling of unreality about this because, until this year's budget threats, recent years have been golden or glory days for Florida libraries. Usage is high – use of materials, children's services, programs and meeting rooms, technology, and Web services are all booming. There are probably fifty library construction projects in planning stages or under development. Floridians are happy with library service, voting for library service with their feet and usage, and now come budget reductions.

Public libraries have gotten most of the attention because of the property-tax reductions, but the state-budget reductions threaten all kinds of libraries. FLA will be closely monitoring the budget developments affecting all. Public libraries, and their counties and cities, are finalizing 2007-08 budget reductions caused by a legislative mandate for property-tax reduction. The Legislature meets in an October Special Session to consider mid-year state-budget reductions of up to 10 percent that may affect public, academic, and other government-funded libraries. Then, on January 29, 2008, voters consider additional property-tax reductions for cities, counties, and districts averaging another 22 percent. And this comes at a time when Floridians are using libraries heavily and need more library service – not less.

We refer to ourselves as the Florida library community because that is what we are. We have a sense of belonging, a feeling that libraries matter, that our co-workers and col-

leagues matter, and we believe that by working together, by putting those beliefs into action, we make things better. Here are some steps we can take to help our community thrive through the challenges ahead.

## Get involved with "FLA's campaign to convince the public of the value of libraries"

In coming months, elected officials and the public will be forced to make hard decisions about public-library funding. In academic institutions and other government-funded entities, administrators will be making similar decisions. It is critically important for them to be mindful of the value of libraries and to know that the public trusts and respects us and regularly scores libraries highest in city and county citizen surveys.

To reach people, for our story to resonate, our message must be all about the customers, the residents, the benefits they receive, and their positive library service experiences – not the services we provide. There is a reason the advertising slogan "It's all about you" works so well.

## Every member of the library community is a library ambassador– make sure employees know the library's story and keep the message positive

Every time someone checks out a book or interacts with a library employee, that person sends a message – and nothing delivers a better message than an excellent service experience. Every person who works in a public library should know how to respond when asked about the possible and real impact of tax issues. Local government policy will dictate how staff should be trained to respond – my point is that they need and deserve that training. The same holds true for other government-funded libraries that are impacted by state budget reductions.

It is doubly important for our citizen advocates, friends of the library, board, and foundation members to be actively telling the library story. Our advocates are influencers. They interact with large circles of people who rely on them to help shape their opinions, and

their calls carry a lot of weight with elected officials. Special efforts need to be made to help these folks tell the library story and keep it positive, even when the libraries they love are being threatened.

## At the local library level, recognize how change affects our organizations and those who work in them and take action to minimize the discomfort and disruption

The budget reductions, those currently being implemented and those that may be on the way, are causing uncertainty and stress for library staff and administrators that few have experienced before. The most important thing an organization can do to minimize the discomfort of change is Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! When folks know they have the latest news about the organization's plans, their comfort level increases. Continuous, accurate communication creates trust, a precious commodity in times of threat and disruption.

So here we are as a community, at the top of our game, providing a rich array of services, with a large base of happy customers. On this August morning, I don't know exactly how we will succeed through this challenge, but I have confidence in the Florida library community and in the power of libraries. I believe that if we provide users with excellent service experiences, if we deliver our message clearly and positively, and if we look out for one another in the workplace, that this golden era of Florida libraries will continue. Together, we will figure out how to make it so.

## Mark your calendars

2008 Library Days  
February 19-20, 2008

2008 FLA Conference  
April 22-25  
Tradewinds Beach Resorts and  
Conference Center  
St. Pete Beach

# Mobile Gamma: The Right People at the Right Place at the Right Time

By Nicole Cavallaro and  
Jamie Conklin

**W**hen you walk into the Orlando Public Library, there is a good chance you will be helped by a flamingo, a panther, or a dolphin. No, these are not actual animals, but rather public-service staff who are assigned to these Florida fauna groups. These group names are a way to add fun to Mobile Gamma, the new, improved service model of the Orange County Library System (OCLS).

The Orlando Public Library, the main branch of OCLS, began experimenting with mobile reference to assist customers during busy times in the early 1990s. In February 2003, the library implemented the Vocera communication system, which relies on wireless devices or badges that use voice-over-IP technology to enable communication between individuals and groups anywhere in the library. A few staff members were scheduled in one- or two-hour time blocks during busy times to be mobile, approach customers, and take them where they needed to go. Other staff was scheduled on each floor and used Vocera to call a mobile staff member if a customer needed to go to another floor.

## Introducing Mobile Gamma

With the implementation of Mobile Gamma on May 24, 2007, all staff scheduled on the floor became mobile at all times. The ultimate aim is to have staff wherever the customer is in order to provide timely assistance at the customer's point of need. This aim fits with current trends in reference, such as the use of chat, text messaging, and blogs, that take the library to the customer rather than the other way around. Literature on reference services cites declining traffic at reference desks and questions the value of subject specialists placed at desks.<sup>1</sup> Mobile Gamma allows staff to seek customers rather than wait behind a desk; it also allows staff to work with all collections in the building rather than a specialized section.

Why the name Mobile Gamma? First and foremost, the name emphasizes that staff is on the move; helping customers where they need it and taking them where they would like to go. The second part of the name, Gamma, is inspired by Flickr (a photo-sharing Web site at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) as a tongue-in-cheek way of suggesting that the service is in a constant

*(photo, below) In the Mobile Gamma service, library staff approach customers and offer assistance throughout the building.*



state of change and improvement. This name emphasizes to the staff and administration of the library that feedback will be taken seriously and changes will be made to improve this new service model.

## It's All About the Customer

Databases, call numbers, Infopaths, e-books—these library services and terms are new and unfamiliar to many library custom-

ers. These, combined with all the available formats of information, can be confusing. Mobile Gamma's goal is to create a positive experience that guides customers to the resources they need immediately and informs them of programs and services they could use in the future.

Imagine what it feels like to be a customer in a large library or even a new customer in a smaller library. Imagine not understanding

**“The ultimate aim is to have staff wherever the customer is in order to provide timely assistance at the customer’s point of need.”**

how Dewey is organized or how to find books in the OPAC. Now imagine what it would be like to have someone walk around the library with you, showing you how to use the catalog and taking you directly to the floor or section that you need. Considering such customer needs led to the birth of this new service program. Mobile Gamma allows the customer to interact with one staff member to find all of his or her items. The staff member is free to go to multiple floors and complete the transaction when the customer is satisfied. This is in contrast to the former service model that emphasized staying in one location.

Another goal of Mobile Gamma is to connect with all customers who enter the building. Studies have shown that customers tend to avoid asking for help from the reference desk. In a 1984 study, researchers found that 52 percent of users were hesitant to ask for help, most likely due to psychological costs (“the drain on an individual’s self-concept, pride, or other mental/psychological attributes”).<sup>2</sup> A more recent OCLC report found that customers still do not seek assistance, but that when they do, they find that librarians add value to the search process.<sup>3</sup> Customers may be too shy or embarrassed to ask for help, and in many cases, they may not believe that they need help. With Mobile Gamma, staff members approach customers and provide service to people who might not have asked or who would have left frustrated. Staff members invariably approach customers who decline their help, but these customers have been greeted and now know that staff is available to help. In the first six days of implementation, staff assisted 2,669 customers, while another 2,593 declined assistance.

Since the implementation of Mobile Gamma, staff have been pinpointing busy times and places within the library through observation, door count, and statistics. By focusing on customer needs and patterns, the model has led to other benefits. For instance, it has freed up the optimal number of staff to work on projects behind the scenes. This, in

turn, allows staff to be more accountable for their resources, which is an important aspect for all Florida libraries with the possibility of impending tax cuts.

### **Everyone’s Mobile . . . Isn’t It Chaotic?**

Librarians and clerks work together to provide service on four floors at the Orlando Public Library. The Mobile Gamma model divides the building into three zones: Flamingo for the first floor (audiovisual, fiction, and young adult and children’s materials), Panther for the second and third floors (nonfiction, world languages, and large print), and Dolphin for the fourth floor (periodicals, reference, and genealogy materials). Throughout the day, staff members are assigned to groups and work together as a team to meet the needs of their areas.

Staff members are scheduled on the floor for a maximum of three hours at a time. They provide service on the floor an average of four to five hours a day, which is broken up by project time and lunch hours. Staff also rotates assigned areas so there is a variety to the type of questions they receive. For instance, a librarian may spend a few hours in the Children’s Department and later a few hours in Reference Central.

The key to Mobile Gamma is communication among staff, which is achieved through Vocera. Each staff member wears a hands-free Vocera unit around the neck that requires only the push of a button to use. Staff members add themselves to their assigned group names and then use Vocera to communicate when moving throughout the building. They call for back-up and broadcast a message to all members of their group to alert them when they leave their assigned area with a customer. In very busy times, staff members call the assigned Manager of the Day, who then either helps out or finds staff to send to busy areas. In addition to Vocera, there are other devices that libraries can consider to make mobile communication more accessible. Mobile phones, which can be very cost

effective, could be a viable alternative to a specialized device.

The Orlando Public Library uses a division-wide schedule for all fifty-five staff members who are a part of the Division of Reference and Information. Using previous customer-interaction statistics and door counts, managers created a schedule that comes close to having the optimal number of people in each group. The Flamingo group always has more staff scheduled because the first floor houses two of the busiest departments: Children’s and Library Central (audiovisual material and fiction). Also, Flamingo



group members are more likely to intercept customers as they enter the building and will need to escort them to other floors.

### **Training: Making Sure Staff Are on the Same Page**

All staff in the Division of Reference and Information (DRI) attended a three-hour training session on Mobile Gamma, which emphasized communication, customer service, approachability, and expectations. This training also covered key tools that staff could rely on to help customers while on the floor. The mobile group names were tied to three important basics of the improved model: flock to customers (flamingo), cover your terri-

*continues on page 6*

## Mobile Gamma: *continues from page 5*

tory (panther), and provide service with style (dolphin).

The trainers provided real examples of how to implement Mobile Gamma and made training fun and informative. Staff practiced role-playing and using their Voceras in different situations, such as when an unexpected group visits the library. When staff members were unsure about whether or not to communicate with one another, they were asked to remember the phrase, “When in doubt, call about.” All staff members received a clipboard (referred to as their new service point), as well as a cheat sheet that staff members could fill with useful information, such as Vocera group names, call numbers, and databases that complement each floor’s collection. The clipboard is an easy way to hold statistics sheets for Mobile Gamma tracking purposes.



*Orange County Library staff use Voceras to communicate with one another*

Since Mobile Gamma entails frequently approaching customers, staff shared their favorite greetings, as well as ideas on what has worked for them in the past. For instance, staff found that open-ended questions like “What can I help you find today?” initiate a dialogue with customers. Closed-ended questions, on the other hand, can sometimes elicit automatic negative responses.

In groups, staff brainstormed ideas for what to do while on the floor when it was not busy. Considering that at any given moment it might become busy again, they came up with activities that would take no more than three minutes and would keep them on the move. Staff have been straightening shelves and tidying up assigned areas, filling

displays, weeding, and remaining available for customers.

Youth Programs Coordinator Danielle King, described the Mobile Gamma training as “an exciting combination of high-energy activities and practical information demonstrating how mobiling is an important and effective concept for libraries.”

### Mobile Gamma: Staying True to the Name

Within the first six days of implementation, staff interacted with 5,262 customers, and the number of customers helped increased by 23%, as compared to usage statistics gathered prior to Mobile Gamma. There were 178 cases where a staff member left his or her group’s area to accompany a customer to another area for resources. Also, staff members made twenty-eight calls on their Voceras. Customers were complimentary and showed surprise that staff was willing to take them to another floor to assist them. One customer thanked a staff member for “being my personal librarian.”

Although Mobile Gamma was successful in many areas, there was room for improvement. Almost right away, everyone realized that communication between managers and staff would need to change from relying heavily on e-mail to using Vocera or face-to-face communication. For instance, if a staff member calls in sick, managers need to notify the staff affected by schedule changes rather than e-mailing them because staff is not accessing e-mail while on the floor. Also, staff either needed to remove themselves from their Vocera group name or put their Voceras on “do not disturb” mode when on breaks. This would ensure that they were not interrupted and would allow staff using the Vocera to reach an available staff member more quickly.

Approximately two weeks after implementation, all staff were invited to respond to a Mobile Gamma feedback form to indicate how it had improved their ability to provide customer service, identify things that weren’t working well and suggest possible solutions, and provide tips to share with colleagues. Overall, the staff feedback resulted in 63 percent positive responses, 16 percent neutral, and 21 percent negative. Managers met with all DRI staff in small groups to further solicit feedback and work out any issues staff wanted to discuss.

While some staff members were excited about all parts of Mobile Gamma, others were reluctant, either because of staff or customer concerns. Some expressed concern about working in the Children’s Department. Of

these staff, some gave it a try and learned by doing, some suggested having an on-call Children’s staff member to help out when needed, and some suggested further training. These suggestions were implemented, and staff has admitted to feeling more at ease since then. Some staff members were concerned about customers who were used to waiting at a service point. In response to this, the library purchased help phones that connect the customer to staff’s Vocera units.

“Now imagine someone walking around the library with you, showing you how to use the catalog and taking you directly to the floor or section you need.”

Managers made further adjustments based on staff feedback, including placing some staff members on call at night when it is typically slower. On-call staff works on projects in workrooms, but helps on the floor if it gets busy. A Mobile Gamma group was created to look more closely at the schedule to determine how long staff should be assigned to groups and to balance project time. The group suggested scheduling two-hour mobile shifts when possible and devised some plans for helping with transitions when staff switch mobile groups. Their ideas will be implemented in the next round of scheduling.

Because Mobile Gamma embraces change, it is a continuous work in progress. OCLS has a commitment to providing the best possible customer service and the best possible training for staff members. This combination of commitment to training and service means that the library experiences are more enjoyable and more efficient. As times change, so does the library and so does Mobile Gamma.

*Nicole Cavallaro is Main Reference Librarian and Jamie Conklin is Assistant Manager of Reference Central/Mobile Reference at the Orlando Public Library.*

### Notes

- 1 Scott Carlson. “Are Reference Desks Dying Out? Librarians Struggle to Redefine—and in Some Cases Eliminate—the Venerable Institution.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, no. 33 (August 20, 2007): A37.
- 2 Larry Larason and Judith Schiek Robinson. “The Reference Desk: Service Point or Barrier?” *RQ* 23, No. 3 (Spr. 1984): 332-49.
- 3 OCLC Online Computer Library Center. “Perceptions on Libraries and Information Resources (2005).” <http://www.oclc.org/reports/2005perceptions.htm>.

# Feeling at Home in Florida

By Nancy Pike

**W**hen you travel to a new place, do you immerse yourself in information about it first? Books, films, and Web sites all help us feel more knowledgeable. Moving to a new place requires an even greater effort. Most transplanted people can remember that initial sense of being an outsider. What is it that makes us feel at home? And how can libraries help their new users get closer to that feeling?

The history, culture, and ecology of this unique place called Florida are certainly among the things that can help ground us. Fortunately, libraries make it all easily accessible. For a short and different approach to the history of our state, libraries can offer a new title from a writer who has written much on the topic: Michael Gannon's *History of Florida in 40 Minutes* (University Press of Florida, c2007). Gannon's book and accompanying audio CD describe ten defining highlights in Florida history. Another brief account is on the Web site of the State Office of Cultural, Historical and Information Programs in the Florida Department of State (<http://www.flheritage.com/facts/history/summary/>). Also at this site, select "Preservation" and then the Florida Tourism Interactive Catalog for a list of museums, historical sites, gardens, libraries, markers, monuments, and other attractions one can visit to get to know Florida better. Addresses, hours, Web sites, and short descriptions (under "get directions") are included.

## Books About Florida

Several years ago, the Florida Humanities Council put together suggested readings for a "Making Florida Home" book-discussion group. The list includes these titles that a newcomer might find helpful in getting to know Florida: *The Kneeling Bus* and *In Troubled Waters* by Beverly Coyle; *Cross Creek* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings; *Dust Tracks and Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston; *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson; *Voice of the River* by John Rothchild; *A Land Remembered* by Patrick Smith; *Karate is a Thing of the Spirit* by Harry Crews; *Imaginary Men* by Enid Shomer; *Florida Stories* edited by Kevin



VisitFlorida "Movies in Florida"  
<http://www.VISITFLORIDA.com>

Floridiana "Florida Films"  
<http://faculty.mccfl.edu/jonesj/Floridiana.html>

"Exploring Florida" (USF)  
<http://fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA>

"Floridiana on the Web" (USF)  
<http://www.lib.usf.edu/lds/digitalcollections/F03/html/>

WPA Writer's Project  
<http://rs6.loc.gov/wpaintro/flcat.html>

Florida Memory Project  
<http://www.floridamemory.com>

McCarthy; *Tourist Season* by Carl Hiassen; *Condominium* by John D. MacDonald; and *River of Grass* by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas. Your library probably has a similar list of key Florida titles. More such lists can be found on Amazon.com's Listmania by checking the terms "Florida" or "Floridiana".

## Florida in the Movies

A different slant on the character of Florida comes through the movies. Two recent books

that reflect on Florida as viewed in films are *Sunshine in the Dark: Florida in the Movies* by Susan Fernandez and Robert Ingalls (University Press of Florida, 2006); and *Florida on Film: The Essential Guide to Sunshine State Cinema & Locations* by Susan Doll and David Morrow (University Press of Florida, 2007). A useful feature on the VisitFlorida Web site (<http://www.VISITFLORIDA.com>) is "Movies in Florida," which can be searched by title or filming location. If you haven't looked at this site recently, also click on "History and Culture," then "Florida by the Book" for a quick trip around Florida through the eyes of various Florida authors. Jane Anderson Jones and her Manatee Community College classes have compiled a list of Florida films on a Web site called "Floridiana," which also provides links to numerous other Florida topics (<http://faculty.mccfl.edu/jonesj/Floridiana.html>).

## Web sites

Teachers find the University of South Florida site called "Exploring Florida" useful, but newcomers will also enjoy the maps, photos, and even music (<http://fcit.usf.edu/FLORIDA>). The University of South Florida Library PALMM project is available for those doing more complex research (<http://www.lib.usf.edu/lds/digitalcollections/F03/html/>).

"Floridiana on the Web" is devoted to the history and culture of Florida. It includes documents, images, and audio and video recordings drawn from collections held throughout the University of South Florida Libraries.

Finally, the WPA (Works Project Administration) writers' project compiled a group of interviews that offer a fascinating look at the settlement period and later Florida history through the stories and recollections of Depression-era residents. They are available in full text at <http://rs6.loc.gov/wpaintro/flcat.html>. Don't forget the Florida Memory Project (<http://www.floridamemory.com>), which offers photos, music, and other treasures. These suggestions, along with your many local resources, can provide a starting point for new residents to find just what they need to know to make Florida home.

Nancy Pike is past president of the Florida Library Association.

# Keeping Up with Technology: Orange County Library Embraces Learn 2.0

By Thomas Simpson

**L**ike many organizations, keeping up with constantly changing technology has been a challenge for the Orange County Library System (OCLS). The library system has been successful in getting its people over some very large learning humps, but as the Web 2.0 movement gained momentum, administrators and others realized that a majority of the staff needed to update their technology skills. The challenge was to get all of the branches and departments moving forward at the same time. OCLS needed a way to give people experience using the technology in a manner that wasn't oppressive. It needed to motivate the staff, get them excited, and get them moving in the right direction. This all seemed like an overwhelming challenge until OCLS found Learning 2.0.

## Learning 2.0

Learning 2.0 was the brainchild of Helene Blowers at the Public Library of Charlotte/Mecklenburg County (PLCMC). Her original idea was based on Stephen Abram's article, "43 Things I (or You) Might Want To Do This Year" and the Web site "43Things" (<http://43things.com>).<sup>1</sup> Blowers developed the course on these guiding principles: participants would recognize lifelong learning; participants would be responsible for their own learning; and learning in the workplace can be fun.<sup>2</sup> By making the course an enjoyable experience, the participants were more likely to continue through the course and also more likely to learn. These principles paralleled several OCLS beliefs regarding staff development, so it was decided to explore the possibilities of using Learning 2.0 at OCLS.

## Identifying Gaps in Skills

Prior to starting the instructional design work, the library conducted a simple needs analysis of employees' technology skills. Two hundred seventy-two employees responded to the survey, providing feedback regarding their comfort with skill areas such as basic computer operations, use of productivity tools, ethical use of technology, and research technology. Web 2.0 skills and technologies



surveyed included tagging, collaboration software, RSS, podcasts, wikis, social networking, blogs, online video, digital/online music, Internet safety, and digital images.

The results of the survey indicated that 81 percent of respondents were unfamiliar with or new to podcasts. RSS and wikis were tied with 73 percent of respondents being new to or unfamiliar with them; and blogs followed with 69 percent reporting their unfamiliarity. These figures were important because OCLS produces podcasts, blogs, and wikis for both patrons and staff, yet approximately three-quarters of the staff were not comfortable with the technology. How could the Library share or promote these sources of information and content with patrons if most of the staff did not know what they are?

## Learning Virtually

With a demonstrated need to engage a large number of staff in new technology, Learning 2.0 seemed like a perfect fit for OCLS. The library's fifteen locations and varied employee work schedules made asynchronous Web-based learning very appropriate for the staff. The logistics of instructor-led training would have stretched the project out for months, if not an entire year. Allowing staff to participate in the course virtually, as their schedules permitted, was a key to success. An initial study revealed that some staff members were taking the course between midnight and 1:00 AM. Imagine trying to schedule an instructor for that time slot!

The fun factor was also very appealing since technology training can be boring. By adding a fun factor and making the course enjoyable, learners were more likely to remain engaged for the duration of the ten-week course. The fun factor also encouraged staff to explore Web 2.0 material outside of the course. Participants shared links to Web sites and applications they found interesting, a very important step towards self-directed learning.

## Course Content

Development of the course was fairly straightforward. Using the PLCMC's learning model, the course content was revised to meet the OCLS learning goals. Part of this process was dropping the "43 Things" theme and adding instructional content focused on specific learning needs, such as podcasts, digital media, and the ethical use of technology. Not all of the PLCMC content was cut. The excellent "7.5 Habits of Highly Successful Lifelong Learners" activity (<http://www.plcmc.org/public/learning/player.html>)<sup>3</sup> was used, as were several other PLCMC learning activities, including creating a personal blog and creating an RSS aggregator account on Bloglines ([www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)).<sup>4</sup> Additional activities, such as exploring digital music Web sites, library-related Web sites, and mashups, were added to meet the OCLS learning goals.

The lesson format covered two targeted learning areas per week and always mixed "serious" content with some humor and fun. For example, after introducing the controversial concept of digital-rights management, the lesson shifted to the lighter side of digital music at Web sites such as LastFm ([www.lastfm.com](http://www.lastfm.com)), Liveplasma ([www.liveplasma.com](http://www.liveplasma.com)), and Musicmap ([www.musicmap.com](http://www.musicmap.com)). Each lesson started with a Youtube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) video that was loosely tied to the week's theme. An OCLS-produced podcast then introduced the week's lesson topic. Both of these components increased the participant's exposure to the specific technologies and again, added a bit of humor to the learning process.

Another change to the original Learning 2.0 lesson model was the addition of optional Adventure learning activities. These were added to challenge those participants who



“The lesson format covered two targeted learning areas per week and always mixed ‘serious’ content with some humor and fun.”

were excited about or knowledgeable about a specific Web 2.0 subject area. The Adventure activities ran the gamut from being very easy (search for a Web 2.0 application focused on your favorite hobby) to the very challenging (record a podcast and publish it on one of the hosting sites covered in the course). The Adventure activities were completely optional, but many of the learners completed them.

The content of the course was published using six blogs from the Web site Blogger.com ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) that were linked together with common navigation links. Using Blogger's layout templates, a learning space was created that delivered the primary instructional content as well as ancillary information needed by participants. The goal was to create a learning environment that was welcoming, consistent, and easy to navigate. For easy access, an icon and link to the course were placed on the front page of the OCLS staff intranet, the Orange Peel.

### Testing and Marketing

Once the development work was completed, a pilot group was assembled. These staff members represented all skill levels and as many branches and departments as possible. The pilot group met, reviewed the course content, and then provided feedback and suggestions for improvement. Several of the suggestions were implemented, such as the Department of Fun and the Glossary of Terms (<http://oclglossary.blogspot.com/>)

The pilot group was given access to the first three lessons to work through and validate the course content. With a green light from the pilot group, the course progressed into the marketing phase.

A month-long marketing blitz involved meeting with staff in all locations and departments. The course was also presented at system-wide manager meetings, administrative team meeting, and Library Board meeting. In keeping with the original model, the course was kept strictly voluntary. As an incentive, the library offered an MP3 player for each employee who completed the course. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many staff members excited about the possibility of earning an MP3 player.

### Growing Enthusiasm

On April 17th the course went live. The blogging exercise for the first lesson asked participants to leave a comment describing their own experience with blogs. For many people, this was their first time reading and commenting on a blog. Within a week, well over two hundred people left comments. The amount of positive feedback was incredible!

“I am very excited to be a part of this experience...I feel like a technology dinosaur because I am so out of touch with all of the latest innovations... Very much so looking forward to participating!”

“This lesson felt as if I had opened a door which leads to another world.”

“Learning is fun when I'm actually learning something....this course is great!”<sup>5</sup>

Managers and staff began to take notice of the excitement surrounding the course. There was a noticeable “buzz” fueled by the anticipation of next week's lesson and the air of mystery surrounding the identities of the authors of various blogs. The anonymity of blogging allowed participants to step away from their work persona and share tidbits about themselves. As staff began to learn about each other through their blog postings, an unexpected benefit became noticeable – the organization began to shrink. Shared interests and perspective removed geographic boundaries imposed by work assignments, and the staff grew closer.

As the course progressed, it was easy to see that time to participate was a very precious commodity. This challenge was overcome directly through the incredible support from the library director, Mary Anne Hodel, and the entire administrative and management teams. The Administration team jumped into the course wholeheartedly, creating blogs and leading the way by example. The message was universal, “Learn 2.0 is an important part of everyone's job.” Managers responded to the time challenge creatively so employees could participate during work hours. Some managers scheduled course time for certain days and times, others encouraged employees to work together to create the best schedule. To further help with the time crunch, the course

schedule included a one-week break after week number four and a three week “catch-up” period after the last week of instruction. These breaks were well advertised and helped ease the time-pressure anxiety. The ultimate goal was for everyone to succeed.

### Benefits of the Course

By the end of May more than three hundred employees had registered and were participating in the course. The very same employees who were unfamiliar with or new to blogging were now experienced bloggers. Their level of confidence with technology was up and many reported a better understanding of the technology being used. Many participants customized their blogs by adding pictures, links, lists, and avatars. All of this was done without any formal instruction; self directed learning and collaboration were happening! By the last week of instruction there were 327 employees, or 75% of the staff, engaged in the course. In the end, their experiences were positive and fun, and they reported how much they had learned and described how it made them feel:

“This was very enjoyable. I love Flickr, Grokker, YouTube and the RSS feeds. The Meez character was fun. Now I do not feel like I am from another planet when I hear people talking about Blogs, Podcast, RSS, YouTube. Thank you so much for this opportunity. Who could ask for anything more? I learned a lot and received an MP3 for it. Isn't life grand?”<sup>6</sup>

“As for my experience with Learn 2.0, up until about Week #7 I was flying through the lessons. I started out working with a partner, but that sort of changed as the weeks progressed. We were both working at different paces. I still made myself available to help when needed though. It's funny to think back to Week #1 when just making a comment to the Learn 2.0 blog made me nervous. I was just sort of peeking into the blogging world. Now I'm all settled. I've moved in my furniture, decorated, and met some of my neighbors!”<sup>7</sup>

Back at the front line, employees who participated in the program commented that Learn 2.0 gave them more confidence when working with patrons. One staff member used

*continues on page 10*

## Learn 2.0 *continues from page 9*

Learn 2.0 resources to answer a chat-reference request for cool music sites with free downloads and visuals. Another described her experience creating her own MEEZ avatar as she told a mother about an upcoming MEEZ avatar class offered through the Library's Camp Savvy. This interaction led the mother to become excited about the class. Another staff member sums up the impact of the program on her reference and instruction expertise:

Since I've taken learn 2.0 I have been able to talk about some of the topics covered and answer patron's questions about blogs, avatars, etc. Learn 2.0 also really helped me to prepare more for the classes I had to teach after I finished the course (Camp Savvy for Kids and Teens in June and July). After taking the course, I felt more confident on the topics and was able to use some of the information I gained in some of my Internet classes. With the knowledge I gained from the course I am now able to answer more questions on the subjects that were covered and teach them in my classes.<sup>8</sup>

### Future Directions

As an organization, OCLS provided employees with a learning experience that was

**"The goal was to create a learning environment that was welcoming, consistent, and easy to navigate."**

positive and fun. Employees experienced technology in a new light. They became excited, motivated, and eager to learn more. The logical question is: what is next? The plan is to develop a public-access catalog that will utilize Web 2.0 technologies to enable patrons to become content contributors instead of just content receivers. Patrons will be able to write reviews and create tags for catalog items, upload digital images and podcasts, and blog. Neighborhoods will be able to create digital image histories of their communities, write narrative descriptions of the images, and catalog and store it all on OCLS servers. The experience with OCLS Learn 2.0 has provided a bridge to implement these new technologies and the staff is now up to speed and ready to support the public as the Library moves forward with this new phase of collaborative technology.

Thomas Simpson is *Organizational Development Manager for the Orange County Library System.*

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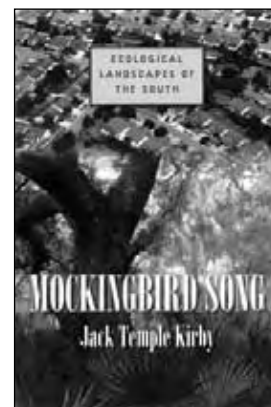
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# Transforming ESOL-Learning Opportunities through Technology

By Paolo Melillo

**A** new Florida resident wanted to learn English in order to improve her employment opportunities, as well as help her family adjust and prosper in its new homeland. Like many others around her, she found it difficult, if not nearly impossible, to register for the available English-as-a-second-language (ESOL) classes at nearby schools, colleges, and institutes. In addition to the expense, the fixed schedules and the necessity to commute inconvenient distances were impediments. She was finally able to learn English when she discovered the ESOL learning opportunities at the closest branch of the Orange County Library System (OCLS).

## Transforming the Library's ESOL Learning Opportunities

OCLS helps improve the lives of one of the fastest growing communities in its service district: non-native English speakers. The Library meets the needs of this group by providing ESOL learning opportunities in innovative and convenient ways. Rather than relying on traditional classroom setups with a teacher, the Library teaches ESOL electronically by using software and computer classes, thereby enabling individuals to learn English at their own pace and at their own convenience.

The Library's use of technology to teach ESOL not only meets the needs of non-native residents, but assists in creating a work-ready workforce. Increasingly, the Library is viewed as a vital economic-development partner, as well as a center for educational and cultural enrichment.

## Growth of Non-Native English-Speaking Population

Like many public libraries in Florida, OCLS serves a community that is experiencing growth and diversification. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey, Orange County's population increased 12 percent between 2000 and 2005.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, 29.8 percent of

county residents spoke a language other than English at home, with 44.7 percent in that group claiming to speak English less than "very well."<sup>2</sup> In 2004, a report put together by Workforce Central Florida stated that "increasing migration and population growth is creating a greater need for English-as-a-second-language instruction."<sup>3</sup>

a significant challenge.<sup>5</sup> In a 2006 LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant application prepared by OCLS, a quote from Pamela Rendsland-Tonello, Special Projects Manager for Workforce Central Florida, stated that many employers complain that insufficient English abilities keep many skilled people from entering or advancing in the workplace.<sup>6</sup>

In order for the Library to attract non-native English speakers to its locations, it needs to offer services that are relevant to their lives. The Orange County Library System is poised to help support the community's growing number of non-native English speakers by maximizing employability through the development and dissemination of ESOL-learning opportunities. After citing some statistics revealed in their surveys, the President and CEO of Workforce Central Florida stated that, "partnering with the Orange County Library to provide English language classes to central Florida non-English speakers is of crucial importance to the success of our workforce."<sup>7</sup>

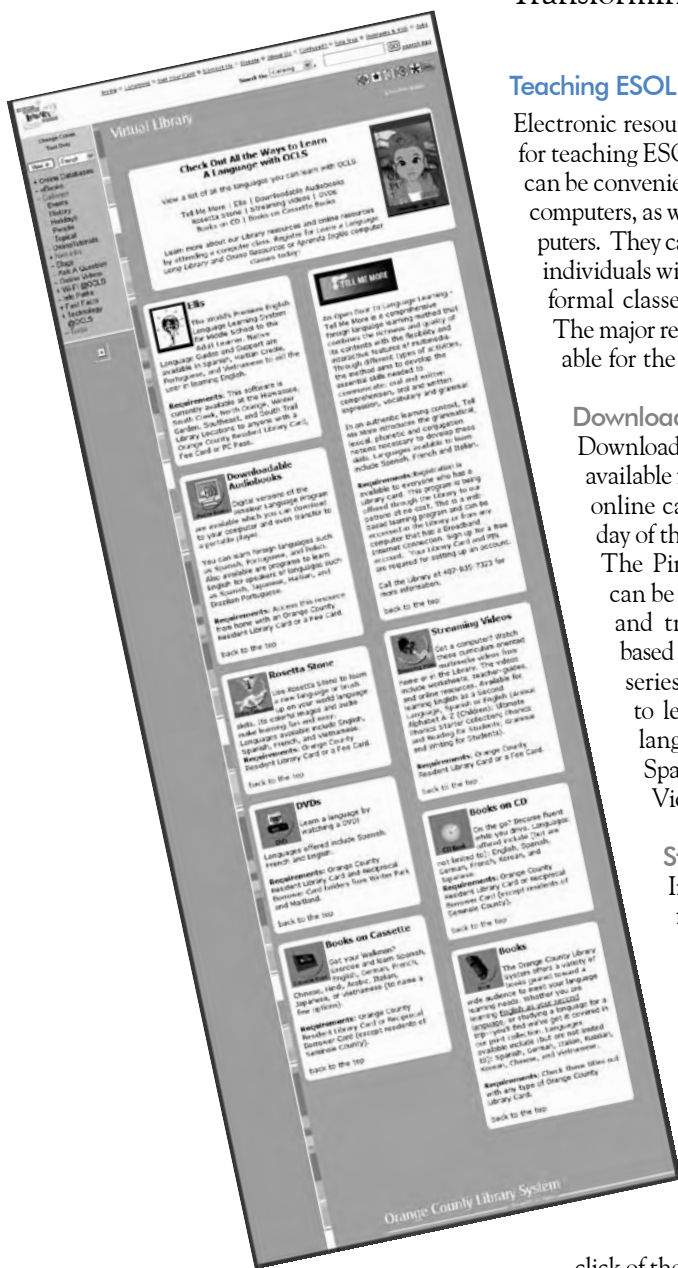
## ESOL Resources

Although the Library offers traditional resources such as books, CDs and DVDs to teach ESOL, there is also a demand for ESOL courses and classes. Even though there are other venues for ESOL learning in Orange County, such as local colleges and schools, they charge fees and can be expensive. Furthermore, these other institutions usually feature formal classes, which require participants to commit to a set schedule, wait for the start of a semester to begin a class, or linger on waiting lists. Any combination of these factors is typically not convenient for working people with families. The alternatives offered by the Library needed to be free of charge for cardholders and not limited by set schedules. These alternatives should also avoid placing added staffing burdens on the Library's budget.



This large and growing number of non-native English speakers is fueling demand for job opportunities and training. These challenges are mentioned in Workforce Central Florida's 2006 "State of the Workforce Survey," in which 57 percent of surveyed employers stated that increasing access to training for non-English speakers was a critical workforce issue. According to Gary Earl, President and CEO of Workforce Central Florida, 39 percent of local employers reported that language barriers were an area of concern when hiring new employees.<sup>4</sup> This was an echo of the Biennial Fall 2004 "State of the Workforce: Central Florida Executive Summary," which identified the need to train non-English speakers in basic, technical, and language skills as

continues on page 12



“Rather than relying on traditional classroom setups with a teacher, the Library teaches ESOL electronically by using software and computer classes, thereby enabling individuals to learn English at their own pace and at their own convenience.”

### Teaching ESOL via electronic resources

Electronic resources are a great alternative for teaching ESOL in a public library. They can be conveniently accessed via a library's computers, as well as 24/7 from home computers. They can be used independently by individuals without a need for scheduling formal classes or hiring outside tutors. The major resources OCLS makes available for the public are listed below.

#### Downloadable Audio Books

Downloadable ESOL audio books are available from home via the Library's online catalog any time of day, any day of the week with remote access. The Pimsleur Language Program can be downloaded to a computer and transferred to a Windows-based MP3 listening device. Entire series are available for patrons to learn English from another language such as “English for Spanish Speakers,” “English for Vietnamese Speakers,” etc.

#### Streaming Video

In 2005, OCLS was the first public library in the country to offer curriculum-oriented multimedia – educational streaming videos – from Clearvue & SVE, Inc Power Media Plus. Streaming videos are available from OCLS' online catalog, and logging in with a card from home requires only a

click of the mouse. The videos feature content for all K-12 grade levels and subject areas – including ESOL. Written by professional ESOL instructors, each 30-minute video covers a different part of speech. The lessons include worksheets, teacher guides, and online resources.

#### Language Learning Software

Rosetta Stone®, a language-learning software, is also available 24/7 for card holders from home or any Library computer. Patrons can learn over twenty languages, including English, with this resource by following interactive and easy-to-use courses with video and audio. The electronic self-contained courses allow individuals to learn a language the way they learned their native one – by immersion. Users monitor their own progress with immediate scoring, complete answer explanations, and an individual analysis of results.

### The ELLIS™ Project

One of OCLS' most popular ESOL resource and the one that comes closest to a traditional classroom setup is ELLIS (English Language Learning and Instruction System). Like Rosetta Stone, ELLIS is interactive multimedia software that enables users to learn a language through listening, reading, and speaking exercises, as well as through tests and quizzes. Unlike Rosetta, ELLIS starts with the individual's native language and only teaches English. ELLIS does not assume the learner has any previous knowledge of English, and uses speech-recognition technology that allows users to perfect their pronunciation by comparing it to that of native speakers. ELLIS also has a Career Skills Set, which ties in to the Library's goal of assisting its target audience with English-language skills for the work place, as well as providing tips on culture and life skills for those new to the U.S.

Unlike the other resources, ELLIS is not available via the Library's Web page to patrons at home. Due to license agreements, the software resides on specific public PCs in the Library and not on the network.

OCLS initially made the resource available from the PCs at the Southeast and South Trail branches, locations with a high number of Spanish speakers and, in the case of the latter, also a high number of Haitian-Creole speakers. Patrons register by attending an introductory session, which includes an online placement assessment. The orientation is conducted by a staff member who explains how the software works. Once registered, the patron simply signs up to use a PC with the software at his or her convenience whenever the branch is open and works independently with the software.

Once implemented, the program quickly gained in popularity. One orientation class attendee commented (translated from Spanish), “It (ELLIS) will help in obtaining major job opportunities, to interact the correct way with others through English, to obtain a good job, improve the quality of life and to help accelerate the learning of the English language.” Another commented (translated from Spanish), “For me it is important to learn through the ELLIS program because it will help me read and understand a job application. At the same time it will help me to become familiar with vocabulary.” Several attendees cited the convenience of not being restricted to set schedules, nor having to worry about high costs.

Staff also made favorable observations. Staff at the Southeast branch marveled at how a patron who had continually requested service in Spanish suddenly mustered the

courage to speak English and over the span of a few weeks developed the ability to express herself very well. Staff at other locations noticed patrons becoming more confident at speaking English, as well as developing basic computer skills from using ELLIS.

The popularity of ELLIS and the demand for ESOL training in other locations prompted OCLS to expand the resource. The Library applied and received an LSTA grant in 2006, which allowed for the expansion of ELLIS to four other branches by funding additional licenses, computers and printers as well as furniture to accommodate classroom setups. The extra licenses enabled a total of thirty people to access the software at a time. In two branches, the grant-funded dedicated computer classrooms with thirteen laptop computers and a printer. In another branch with limited space for a dedicated classroom, the grant funded a mobile computer lab with thirteen laptops.

ELLIS is currently being offered in six branches. As of July 2007, OCLS had 881 registered users with ELLIS learning English from eighteen different native languages.

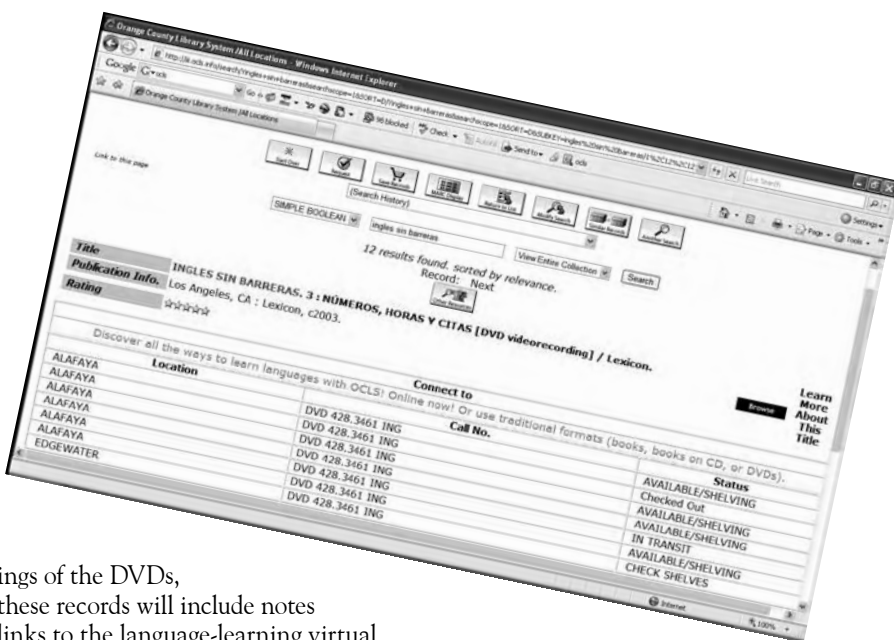
#### Marketing electronic ESOL resources

Although a library might have a rich variety of resources for its patrons, making these resources well known to their communities is an ongoing challenge. OCLS' main efforts at promoting ESOL electronic resources include a Web site, catalog records, signage, flyers, bookmarks, and cross promoting.

Information on the Library's language-learning resources was put together on a Web page, or "virtual gallery." The virtual gallery titled "Check Out All the Ways to Learn A Language with OCLS" provides descriptions and links to all of the Library's language-learning opportunities.<sup>8</sup> The virtual gallery, "Know Your Business," which promotes the Library's business and job-related resources, links directly to ELLIS from a section highlighting job skills.<sup>9</sup>

Each ESOL electronic resource has its own catalog record with direct access to the resource. A search for English language, or Inglés in Spanish, will produce hits on OCLS' book holdings, as well as ELLIS, streaming videos, downloadable audio books, etc. Once the holding record appears, the patron can simply click on the link and connect to the resource or to information about it.

Cross marketing is also done through the online catalog. Bibliographic records for language-learning materials include notes and links to the Library's language-learning virtual gallery as an option for more information on the topic in question. For example, a search for the popular ESOL DVD series, *Inglés sin barreras*, retrieves records showing the Library's



holdings of the DVDs, and these records will include notes and links to the language-learning virtual gallery.

The Library also developed bookmarks and brochures promoting ELLIS in English, Spanish and Creole. Signs for ELLIS were also made in these three languages and are placed prominently in all locations with the software. In addition, staff at the locations offering ELLIS distribute the brochures and bookmarks at community events and through outreach efforts.

#### E-Resources Transform ESOL Teaching

Electronic ESOL resources have proven to be a great way for the Library to meet the language-learning needs of Orange County's fast growing communities of non-native English speakers. These resources have enabled OCLS to transform the way ESOL is taught in a public library. In addition to offering ESOL teaching opportunities free to patrons, these resources allow the Library to offer alternatives that do not limit patrons to fixed schedules and do not require the Library to hire tutors.

Overall, OCLS patrons report satisfaction with the Library's electronic ESOL resources, and are particularly pleased with their convenience, simple registration processes, and scheduling flexibility. Library staff members in turn are pleased to provide much needed services that truly enable patrons to help themselves.

On the whole, OCLS' attempt at offering ESOL opportunities electronically has been a success that can serve as a model for other Florida libraries to replicate and tailor for their own communities' needs. Electronic language-learning products are another valuable resource that can be made available with a library card!

Paolo Melillo is Branch Manager of the Orange County Library System's Southeast Branch.

## The Orange County Library System helps non-native speakers by maximizing employability through improved ESOL-learning opportunities

#### Notes

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- 9 <http://www.ocls.info/knowyourbusiness/default.asp?bhcp=1>

# Transforming Library West at the University of Florida: A Fairy Tale Makeover

By *LeiLani Freund and Colleen Seale*

**T**his article is indeed the tale of an outdated building that was renovated, enlarged, and magically transformed into a vibrant, welcoming new facility . . . but the story must begin at the beginning . . .

Once upon a time, 1967 to be exact, a library building was constructed on the University of Florida campus. As the second library building on a growing campus, it was designated as the Graduate Research Library when it opened. Adjacent to Library East (now called Smathers Library), the new building was called Library West. From opening day through the 1970s, Library West continued to serve as a research library. In the 1980s, as more subject-focused library spaces were defined on campus, the collections at Library West were concentrated in the humanities and social sciences. The building also housed government documents, Special Collections, and offices for Library faculty and staff.

As the collection grew over the next two decades, space became a major problem. Several small renovation projects over the years provided some stop-gap measures to cope with space constraints and growth in new technologies. These projects included remodeled staff areas, the rearrangement of collections, reduction and removal of the card catalog, and transfer of various small collections of materials to storage and other buildings. The introduction of the Library's OPAC terminals was followed by a growing number of specialized database workstations that soon expanded to over eighty networked computer workstations crowded into small spaces on two floors.

Almost forty years after the building was constructed, funds were designated to enlarge and renovate the building. In December 2003, Library West was closed to the public for a long-awaited makeover.

## The Planning Process

Planning for an addition to Library West began as early as 1963 prior to the building's construction. The original plans included a proposed 80,000 square-foot future addition as a second phase to the building plan.<sup>1</sup> In

1982, a report written by a task force to evaluate the libraries documented the crowded conditions that existed in the building.

A 1991 proposal, "Building Program: Addition to Library West, summed up the many problems that had arisen over the years. As this document states, Library West was constructed as a modular building. While modular buildings have often been considered the most effective design approach for libraries, Library West had some serious problems. Originally intended as the graduate library, it was too small to house the research collections almost from the beginning. The usefulness of the building as a library was further reduced by inadequate space for staff and the assignment of large amounts of space to classroom-like facilities across from the front of each door. In addition, the poor physical distribution of spaces for air handling equipment rooms, elevators, and stairwells prohibited maximum utilization of the available floor space. The

of the building from approximately fifty-five to over one hundred workstations.

In 1999, Interim President Dr. Charles Young achieved a higher priority funding status for the renovation of Library West. Shortly after that, the building addition and renovation of Library West moved to the top of the campus building list and bids went out to architects and construction firms. The Library West project was awarded to Long & Associates Architects, Ross Barney and Jankowski Architects, Interior Design and Biltmore Construction. In the summer of 2003, charrettes were conducted by the building architects allowing staff to ask questions and provide input in the planning process. The vision for the new library was to provide a collaborative learning environment and the latest technology with group and individual study space; to add more seating and shelving for books and materials; and to provide improved work space for library faculty and staff.

" . . . to add more seating and shelving for books and materials . . . "



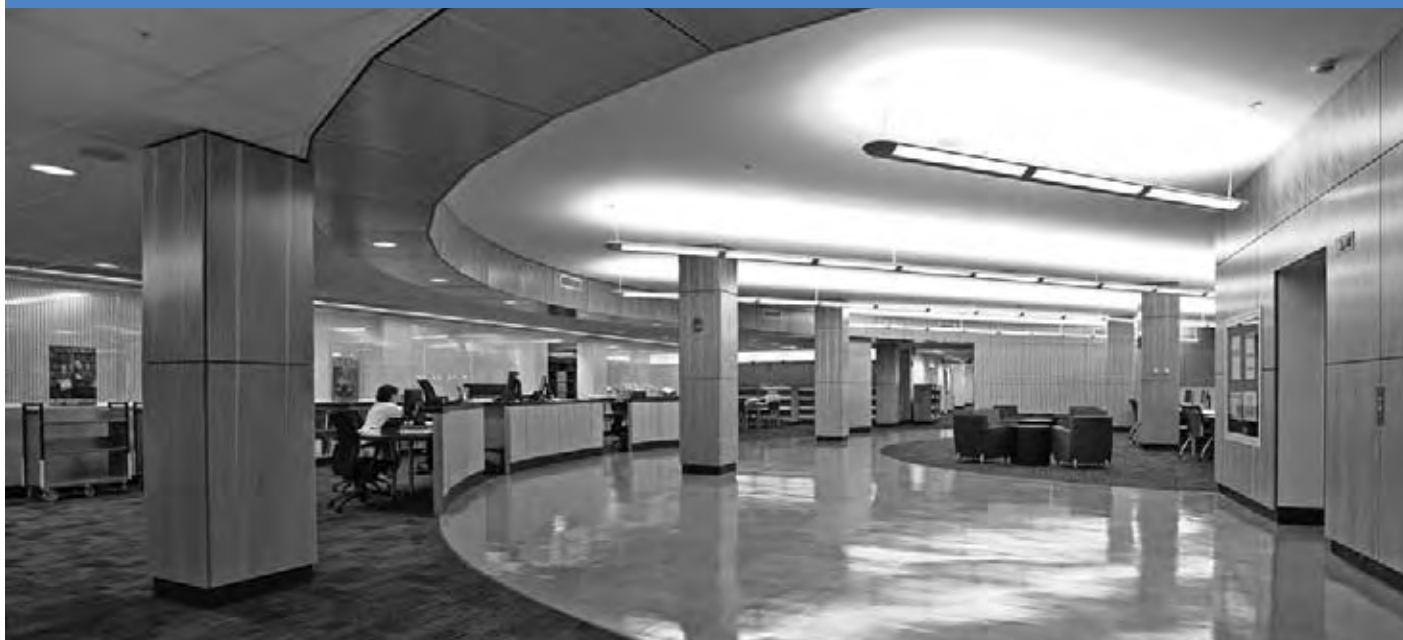
Library Director noted in this proposal that a well-known expert on academic library building planning had cited Library West as one of the worst examples of a research library building in the country.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997, thirty years after Library West opened, the 1991 addition plan was dusted off and an Ad Hoc Committee was formed to review the plan and make suggestions for further modifications. Included in the recommendations was a proposal to expand the "InfoSwamp" of computer workstations that had emerged as a focal point on the first floor

## Information Commons Planning

The planning process for the Library West reference and computer areas began in earnest in 2004 when planning staff made a number of site visits to institutions that had recently undergone successful transitions to an information-commons concept. The locations included the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Emory University, and the Ohio State University Science & Technology Library. Of all these locations, Georgia Tech was the closest in size and original vision to the Library West space, but all the sites yielded many ideas and examples.

"The vision was to provide a collaborative learning environment and the latest technology with group and individual study space . . ."



Two of the travelers later joined other UF Libraries' staff to create the Library West Info Commons Concept Team. This team used a combination of methods to gather information, including a thorough examination of the literature, personal interviews, surveys, and focus groups. Working closely with the campus Office of Academic Technology (OAT), team members envisioned a technology-rich space that would complement, not duplicate, the campus computer labs and the new media-rich OAT learning-commons space called the "Hub."

Some common themes emerged from the surveys and focus groups that would inform decisions throughout the new facility. These themes included:

- Desire for more work space
- The need for a mix of individualized and group work space
- Easier printing
- Comfort
- Friendlier signage; less restrictive language (don't start every sign with "NO")
- Knowledgeable assistance available 24/7
- Approachable, friendly staff at the information desks
- Coffee

In describing the difficulty in providing a multi-functional space, Associate Director

of the Public Services Carol Turner said, "The greatest challenge we were facing was designing a multi-functional building that provides adequate space for books, individual and group work study and technology. We wanted to design it in a way that incorporates the flexibility to adapt to future needs."

Shortly before writing the final report, the Concept Team had another wonderful opportunity to talk with students. A School of Art and Art History professor, and a strong advocate for the libraries, invited the team to a special design workshop set up for his students. As part of the workshop, the students were charged to design an ideal library space. The results were fascinating, ranging from the practical (place a large mall-like map of each floor at the entrance and near each elevator) to the outlandish (librarians on roller skates). Like the results of the focus groups, many of the ideas that bubbled up in the workshop are still being discussed and implemented today.<sup>3</sup>

The Concept Team completed its recommendations and report in February 2005. Many of the recommendations were adopted for implementation, and serious space planning ensued. The Systems Department and Library West IT staff soon began planning the huge task of configuring and installing the many public workstations needed for general use and in the planned multimedia areas. The Systems Department Interim Head chose Dell™ and an associated media-consultant

firm to help transform Library West with an emphasis on multimedia and the Information Commons concept of one-stop shopping for the student doing research, processing and sharing information, and packaging that information for a paper or presentation.

#### Research Assistance Desk Planning

After finalizing certain design elements, the location of compact shelving for the book collections, and various security concerns, these plans then dictated the locations of other functions of the building. The sole entrance and exit to the building via the escalators necessitated placement of the Circulation Desk and the security gates on the second floor at the top of the escalators. This led to the somewhat controversial decision to place the Reference Desk and reference collection, as well as the information commons area on the third floor of the building.

In order to accommodate walk-up and appointment-based consultative transactions, the Reference Desk was separated into three separate desks, the center desk at counter-height level and the two on the sides at ADA-level for easier access and seating for longer consultations. A name change was also in order to reflect the concept of research assistance and consultation. The new sign above the central desk now reads "Research Assistance."

#### How was Library West Transformed?

- The physical building space transformed into 89,000 square feet of reno-

*continues on page 16*

". . . and to improve work space for library faculty and staff."

## Library West: *continues from page 15*

vated space with over 50,000 square feet of new space.

- The old building included two doors, one to enter and one to exit with a small, pedestrian lobby area. The new building includes a revolving door and two single doors that can be used for entrance or exit. All open into a two-story lobby featuring art funded by Florida's Art-in-State-Buildings Program and a coffee shop. Up and down escalators and a small ADA-accessible elevator provide entrance and exit for the collections and services.
- Seating increased from over 400 seats to a capacity of over 1400 seats, including fourteen booths (eight with computers and six with video/DVD players and monitors), club chairs, café seating, and a casual bean-bag seating area.
- Over a forty-year period, several collections and staff were housed in cramped conditions in Library West. Many of these collections moved to Smathers Library and other buildings. In the new building, spacious staff offices (many with windows) are primarily on one floor. Access Services offices are located near the Circulation Desk and Facilities staff is located on the first floor with access to the loading dock.
- Shelving capacity grew from 950,000 volumes to 1.7 million volumes and from traditional to state-of-the-art moveable, compact shelving.
- The humanities and social sciences collections were classified in both Dewey and LC. A massive reclassification project allowed Library West to open with LC collections only.
- Old Library West had soft drink, coffee, and snack machines outside the building. Food was not allowed inside; covered drinks were allowed during the last few years the building was open. A new Starbucks coffee shop is now open all hours the library is open. An adjacent study area is provided with café tables and chairs and casual seating to enjoy food and drink in the library. This summer, a more liberal food policy was approved to allow covered drinks and snacks throughout the building.
- While Library West was originally designated a graduate research library, graduate study space was significantly reduced over the years. In the new building, the entire sixth floor has been designated for graduate study with lockers and study spaces for individuals

and group. Access is controlled by card swipe via the elevator and staircase.

- The old Library West contained thirty faculty cubicles; faculty had the option to share them with a colleague, although most did not. For graduate study there were 103 carrels, each assigned to two people. In the new building, private study space was created with eighty-four graduate studies and thirty-six faculty studies.
- No group-study rooms were available in the old building. New special study areas include twenty group-study rooms, one equipped for teleconferencing and two with special digital media and ADA equipment.
- A crowded InfoSwamp of approximately eighty workstations was transformed into an open, inviting Info Commons with 139 general-use computers, including eighteen with double monitors and specialized software located in the Digital Media Center area.
- An informal group presentation area with a 61" plasma display allows users to rehearse and edit presentations.
- A 42" plasma screen was installed near the Research Assistance Desk to allow for informal small group instruction.
- Wireless access is available throughout the building, and twenty laptops with wireless capability were purchased for student check-out.
- The microform reader printers were replaced with eight digital microform readers.
- Library West had one designated instruction room. The newly renovated building holds two instruction rooms: one hands-on and one lecture/presentation room. A third instruction room on the fourth floor is reserved for staff development and training.
- Dark wood paneling, outdated wall-to-wall carpeting and harsh lighting were replaced with hickory paneling, cork flooring, polished cement, carpet squares and diffused, high efficiency fluorescent lighting that help to brighten the building.
- Library West was transformed into an efficient green building receiving a "Gold" Leeds score.

### Conclusions

The Interim Head of the Systems Department, Will Chaney, aptly described the condition of the old Library West building: "The reality was students did not spend much time there ... It did not match the way students

learn today."<sup>4</sup> The changes to the Library West building have resulted in many physical improvements, but a transformation has occurred at psychological and social levels as well. Students are returning to the library in record numbers. The first month the building was open the daily gate counts often exceeded 4,000 users. Several reference librarians have reported hearing student patrons calling their friends to meet them at "Club West." Clearly, the modular "frog" turned into a handsome "prince" among modern libraries. Like all good fairy tales, this has a happy ending. The desired goals of re-establishing the library both as a research and undergraduate facility for the humanities and social sciences and as an attractive focal point on campus have been achieved.

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### Acknowledgements

*The authors would like to thank Barbara Hood, Public Information Officer at the George A. Smathers Libraries, for supplying the photographs used in this article.*

### Notes

- 1 Melissa Thompson, "Officials: Library expansion four decades overdue," *The Independent Florida Alligator*, August 1, 2006, p.10.
- 2 Building Program: Addition to Library West, University of Florida, 1991.
- 3 LeiLani Freund, Marina Salcedo, Marilyn Ochoa and Tara Cataldo, Library West Info Commons: Report from the Concept Team, <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/hss/infocommons/Info%20Commons%20Report.pdf>
- 4 Dell Computer Company, Breathing New Life into a Campus Landmark, [http://www.dell.com/downloads/global/solutions/public/case\\_studies/univ\\_of\\_florida-libraries-final-4-9-hi.pdf?c=us&l=en&s=gen](http://www.dell.com/downloads/global/solutions/public/case_studies/univ_of_florida-libraries-final-4-9-hi.pdf?c=us&l=en&s=gen)

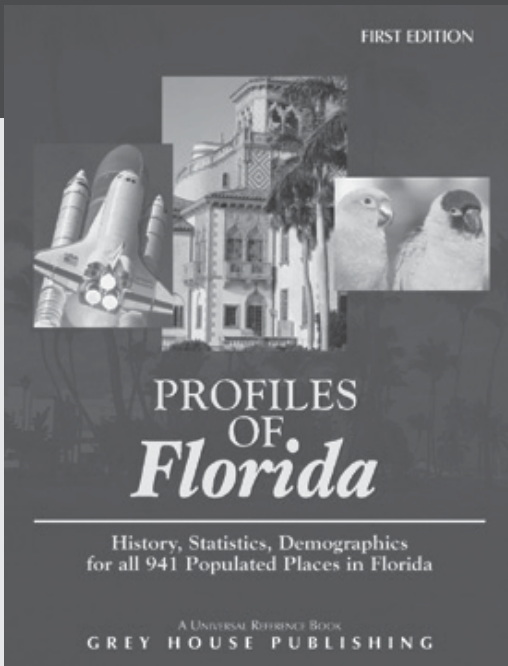
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# DESTINATION: next, Jacksonville Public Library's Journey toward Transformation

By Melonee Slocum

**T**ransformation. Isn't that just another management buzzword? And what does it really have to do with providing library service? Webster's dictionary defines transformation as an act, process, or instance of change in structure, appearance, or character; a conversion, revolution, makeover, alteration, or renovation.

Outgoing ALA President Leslie Burger chose "Libraries Transform Communities" as her presidential initiative theme. Burger clearly makes the case for transformation: "We know that when libraries are transformed either by new service programs, renovations, or new buildings that the communities we serve are in turn transformed. Our users' relationship with the library changes, they become advocates and passionate supporters for what we do, and learn in new and different ways."<sup>1</sup> While transformation is a synergic process, planning for transformation and embracing change are both essential if public libraries are to remain vibrant, relevant and essential to a community's quality of life.

## Library Expansion

To move forward, Jacksonville Public Library Director Barbara A.B. Gubbin engaged the support of the Board of Library Trustees to embark on a community-based strategic-planning process to determine the future direction of the library. This process resulted in a five-year strategic plan which provides a vision of the library system for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Upon successful implementation of the plan and achievement of the plan goals, the Jacksonville community will recognize the library as a springboard for educational and occupational success, an essential partner in creating learning experiences, the center of community life, and an outstanding public investment.

From a single library building, seeded by a \$50,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie in 1903, the Jacksonville Public Library (JPL) has grown and changed with the community. With twenty-one locations, the Library now serves 891,000 residents over an 841 square-mile service area.

The journey toward transformation began in 2001 when Jacksonville citizens demonstrated support for JPL by approving the Better Jacksonville Plan which would invest \$150M in new and expanded libraries. By the close of 2005, construction of six new branches was complete, and the Library capped off its facilities-expansion program with the opening of the new 300,000 square-foot Main Library, the largest public library in Florida.

The community has responded enthusiastically by visiting the library in greater numbers and borrowing more materials than ever before. By FY05, the total square footage of the JPL had doubled; the number of visitors had increased by 72%, reaching an all time high of 4.3 million visitors; and circulation had increased by 84% to 7.9 million items system-wide, with over a million items circulated at the Main Library alone. If you build it, they will come!

## Strategic Planning Process

After more than one hundred years of service to the Jacksonville community, the unprecedented growth afforded by the Better Jacksonville Plan put the JPL on the fast track to transformation. With the infrastructure in place, the challenge was to ensure that the community's support and investment resulted in a vital, relevant 21<sup>st</sup> Century library system that would help the people of Jacksonville succeed.

To meet that challenge, the Library embarked on a community-based strategic planning process predicated on JPL's goal to become nationally recognized as a leading 21<sup>st</sup> Century public library. The strategic plan would provide a broad vision and specific strategies to transform the library into a place that the community views not only as a place to get books or information, but also as a gathering place for people who want to read, meet friends and colleagues, study, work, or simply relax.

The selection of Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants, to facilitate the strategic planning process was based on several important elements including a proposed Library Summit for the community, plans to engage the community through innovative uses of technology, and the inclusion of Florida library leaders Ruth O'Donnell

and Sam Morrison on the consulting team. O'Donnell is a consultant and Executive Director of the Florida Library Association and Morrison is former Director of the Broward County Library System. In order to successfully identify the true needs of the community, two steps were essential. First, finding a way to form a shared understanding of what is meant by the phrase "21<sup>st</sup> Century library" and, second, to find a way to effectively obtain participation and input from as many residents as possible.

The Library Summit was designed to engage the community in a dialogue about outstanding 21<sup>st</sup> Century public libraries and how they differ from public libraries of the past. Sponsored by Mayor John Peyton and



the Board of Library Trustees, the Summit was attended by over two hundred people from the community. The Summit featured an outstanding panel of some of the best and brightest leaders in American libraries who explored the frontier of 21<sup>st</sup> Century public library services.

Participants were delighted with the information presented by the panelists and, after a complimentary lunch, were eager to participate in breakout sessions to discuss library services with the experts.

It was clear from the reaction to Leslie Williams' presentation on electronic resources that the Jacksonville Public Library needs to

do a much better job marketing its services. Although many participants were already library users, they were amazed by the wealth of free electronic resources already provided by JPL and the Florida Electronic Library (<http://www.flelibrary.org/>).

The idea of the library as the center of community life resonated with many participants. Comments and questions highlighted the need for more services for teens and seniors and strongly supported technology training, cultural programs, and social programming, such as “conversation salons”.

The Summit was a successful kick-off event, invaluable not only for generating positive publicity and input from the community, but also as the first step in shaping

Geographic-mapping technology was employed to sample library usage patterns; a customer satisfaction survey was developed; and new SharePoint software was implemented to launch a collaborative DESTINATION:next Strategic Planning Team site on the City Portal. The site provided staff convenient access to resources and documents, as well as a discussion board to talk about the future of the library and share ideas.

### Importance of Leadership

Of course, strategic planning is only the first step in the process. To transform a library in changing times, skillful leadership is needed to bring staff and the community into the pro-

cess addressed through the process. JPL addressed this issue in several ways:

- Town Hall meetings hosted by the Library Director in 2006 were an early forum for discussing the strategic-planning process, ways of participating, and the importance of change.
- The library administration invited a core group of librarians and library associates to serve as members of a staff team to share ideas and stimulate discussion about what it means to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century library. Encouraged to present ideas from other professions, such as business and technology, and to challenge the status quo, the



*At left, the planning process included input from all stakeholders through interviews, focus groups (where this photo was taken), and surveys.*

*At right, the completion of Jacksonville's new Main Library in 2005 capped off the Library's facilities-expansion program.*

a common vision for the future of the JPL. The Summit was followed by interviews, focus groups, and surveys targeting general and specific groups of users and potential users. Online surveys, surveys posted on free-standing touch-screen kiosks, and a Web-based customer survey posted on the JPL Web site were all utilized. The Web-based survey was “pushed” via e-mail to the contact lists of major employers in Jacksonville, resulting over 1,500 electronic responses! One of the survey results indicated that only 42% of the respondents had visited the library’s Web site, echoing feedback from the Summit that the library needs to do a better job promoting its products and services.

cess in such a way that they not only embrace, but become agents of change. In “Winning at Change,” John P. Kotter discusses steps for organizational transformation.<sup>2</sup> These steps provide a useful framework for examining JPL’s journey toward transformation.

### Leaders must communicate the importance of change.

Communicating the need for change in a governmental organization requires imparting the idea that change is not just desirable, but critical, if the organization is going to move forward. Because change can be difficult for people to accept, the need for change must be

Scout Team was the first in the city to make use of new technology to build a DESTINATION:next Web site. Staff ideas from the site both challenged and reinforced the need for change.

- Staff Development Day 2007 focused on the future and was the kick-off for the newly approved strategic plan. All staff received copies of the plan, participated in break-out sessions to review and discuss the plan, and recommended priority strategies for implementing the plan.

*continues on page 20*

## DESTINATION: next *continues from page 19*

- The implementation plan was a key component of the Director's Town Hall meetings in 2007.

### Successful transformation requires a powerful guiding coalition.

This step highlights the importance of inviting community leaders to participate in the process. The Board of Library Trustees was actively engaged in the strategic-planning process through the Board Planning Committee, chaired by Joy Korman. The community-planning committee, called TEAM:next, was carefully selected to include representative leaders from the arts, education, business, social services, government, and nonprofit sectors. The chairman of this energetic, enthusiastic, and opinionated group was Deborah Gianoulis Heald, literacy volunteer and former news anchor woman.

TEAM:next members participated in the Library Summit; they were presented with the results of focus groups, surveys and interviews; they debated the issues; and, they made recommendations for the final strategic plan. It is interesting to note that this team was not

change, is also one of the most important. If the library as an organization is to be truly transformed in order to meet the needs of the new century, it must happen from the inside out. Results of staff surveys, interviews, and focus groups highlighted the need to both empower and engage staff in the change process. To that end, strategic-plan implementation includes three key components:

### Leadership Development

Thirty participants from all levels of the organization were nominated to participate in a two-day leadership skills workshop based on the five practices of exemplary leadership from *The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner.<sup>3</sup> All staff, from entry-level clerks to the Director, will eventually participate in the leadership-development workshops, which teach participants how to “model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.”

### Leadership Council

As leadership-development workshops continue, participants will be called upon to act as both innovators and as agents of change. Selected participants will be invited to participate as members of a Leadership Council to work with the Library Director. Council members will serve

as liaisons between the staff and the administration to consider various issues including customer satisfaction, communication, and core values.

### Implementation Teams

Responsibility for implementing the strategic plan has been assigned to four implementation teams based on the strategic-plan focus areas: customers, funding, human resources, and organizational effectiveness. Implementation teams will recommend priority strategies, develop metrics, and track progress via shared online workspace. All staff has access to the workspace.

### Celebrate success and create short-term wins.

During the strategic-planning process and moving forward, it is essential to build this simple but effective step into the change process. For example, a staff suggestion to improve recycling efforts at the Library garnered a lot of comments and support for related green initiatives such as purchasing library bags that can be composted. A team was formed to find ways to adopt this and other environmentally friendly initiatives within the library. As a result of the team's recommendation, the first short-term win was the purchase of personal recycle bins for all staff members.

### Build on the momentum created to produce more change.

Embracing change, inviting innovation and seeking transformation requires openness to a fluid organizational structure built on the free flow of ideas rather than structural limitations. As technology speeds ever faster forward, libraries must emulate the corporate world in building nimble organizations that will anticipate trends and respond to changing customer demands in a seamless manner. For example, as one of the first public libraries in the state to provide downloadable movies, JPL anticipated a trend, provided the service on the front end and, in the process, surprised and delighted our customers.

The transformation of the Jacksonville Public Library has just begun. The Better Jacksonville Plan referendum provided major enhancements in technology, materials and facilities. The DESTINATION:next strategic-planning process effectively engaged the community, identified what customers want and need, and helped opened everyone's eyes to the exciting possibilities and brave new world of 21<sup>st</sup> Century libraries! With effective leadership and continuing participation from staff in the DESTINATION:next Implementation Plan, the Jacksonville Public Library is on track to meet its mission to connect people with ideas that enlighten, encourage, inspire, enrich, and delight.

*Melonee Slocum is Executive Assistant to the Director of the Jacksonville Public Library.*

### Notes

- 1 Leslie Burger. “Libraries Transform Communities.” 24 Aug. 2007 <http://lb.princetonlibrary.org/>
- 2 John P. Kotter. “Winning at Change”, *Leader to Leader*. 10 (Fall 1998):27-33.
- 3 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (2003, c2002): 3-22.

*Jacksonville Public Library's strategic-planning process involved community leaders, residents, and library staff.*



only active and engaged, but also requested additional meetings to discuss the future of the Jacksonville Public Library!

### A vision must be created and communicated.

Before beginning the strategic planning process, JPL had launched a new branding campaign for the library, using the slogan “Start Here. Go Anywhere.” During the strategic-planning process, this slogan was also adopted as the new library vision.

### Leadership must empower others to be agents of change.

Perhaps one of the hardest steps to accomplish, empowering others to be agents of

# Plant City's Not So Extreme Makeover – Library Edition

By Anne Haywood

**B**ased on the reactions that are received daily, you would think that the Bruton Memorial Library had undergone a complete transformation or metamorphosis, rather than a “Not So Extreme Makeover.” “Wow!” is the most frequent verbal response given by Library customers when they return to the Library for the first time after the May makeover. This exclamation is generally accompanied by a slightly dropped jaw and an awestruck gaze as they turn from left to right and back again. “It feels so much more open and spacious! Are you sure you didn’t add on?” is another frequent comment.

Because Plant City is projected to double its population in the next ten years, many city services are expanding, including the Library. Library impact fees were added in 2005, and in 2006 Harvard Jolly Architects and consultant Ruth O’Donnell were hired to conduct a library-building needs assessment. The study recommended that the city double the size of the Library in the next four to six years. The City Commission has agreed with the recommendation, but the project has not yet been budgeted.

## Recommended Changes

As part of the study, the consultant was to recommend how the current facility could be better utilized to serve customers’ needs until the Library could be expanded. O’Donnell identified eleven challenges in the facility and suggested improvements for each.

She noted that the various collection spaces and service areas did not reflect current priorities, much less future needs. Adult nonfiction, reference, and periodical collections, which are declining in use, took up an unwarranted amount of space, while the popular audiovisual collection had no space to grow. Teens did not have a space of their own, with an appropriate area to gather for group homework projects and other activities of interest to them. More public-access computers were needed, but too much space was taken up by oversized computer-workstation furniture.

The service desks (Circulation and Information/Reference) used too much floor space, yet did not have sufficient work and storage space. The desks were not oriented directionally to provide the best service and maximize available space. Finally, the facility presented a crowded impression upon entrance, while other areas were hidden from customers’ view and not used to their maximum potential.

The staff and the Library Board agreed wholeheartedly with these eleven recommendations. Staff members had lived and worked

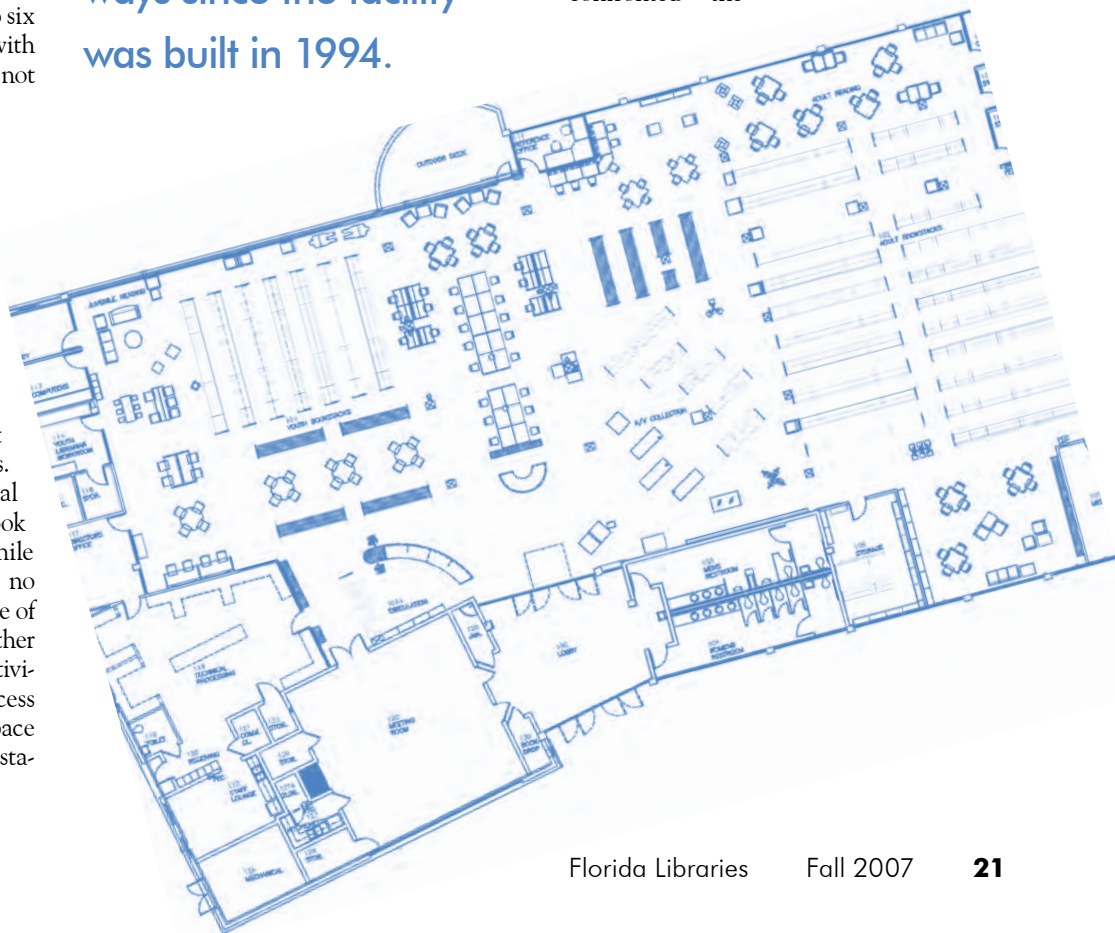
under these conditions for a long time and were very ready for a change. Their collective effort to implement the recommendations transformed the Library.

## Before

The Bruton Memorial Library is located in Plant City just south of I-4 between Tampa and Lakeland. The Library is a member of the Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative and shares resources with Tampa Hillsborough Public Library and Temple Terrace Public Library. There is a staff of seventeen FTEs, and the current collection is just over 100,000 items.

The Library was originally a 7,000 square-foot building built in 1959. It was expanded to 10,000 square feet in 1970, then expanded and remodeled to almost 20,000 square-feet in 1994. Juvenile services and the meeting room were on the west side, and adult services, including reference and periodicals, were on the east side. Customers entered the Library in the middle and confronted the

Like most public libraries, the Bruton Memorial Library is being used in different ways since the facility was built in 1994.



## Plant City *continues from page 21*

Circulation and Information Desks, which separated the two sides. In 1994, the Bruton Memorial Library was not yet automated and had few public-access computers and a very small audiovisual collection. The Library anticipated the need for these services and had some furnishings and shelves to accommodate anticipated growth.

The Library automated in 1995 and installed computer equipment at the Circulation Desk and in appropriate carrels. A Florinet grant provided Internet access, and a Gates Grant supplied more equipment. The books-on-cassette collection grew and was joined by a video collection, followed by a collection of books on CD, a CD-ROM collection, and a DVD collection. Both of those “departments” continued to expand to the maximum of their space with no room for growth.

The most inefficient area was the Circulation Desk/Information Desk located just inside the front door in the center of the building. Customers entering the Library came first to the Circulation Desk. The Information Desk was on the far end facing away from the door. Check out, returns, some phone calls, and card registrations were handled at the Circulation desk by two staff members. In addition, upon entering the Library many patrons asked questions at that desk, including how to use the copier, printer, computers, catalog, as well as many reference questions. The customer would receive an answer or be referred to the Information Desk. The two biggest problems with the Circulation Desk were the increasing numbers of returns that had to be handled there and the lack of storage for the 5000-plus holds that were awaiting pickup each month. Three quarters of the holds had to be shelved in the workroom, requiring a short hike for the staff and a wait for the patrons.

All of the other space problems on O'Donnell's list were equally valid and needed addressing. She included a suggested floor plan that involved moving the Circulation Desk into the west half of the building with children's services, putting a small Information Desk at the entryway, and moving the public-access computers into the center of the building where the Circulation Desk had been. She also suggested moving several smaller collections, including periodicals, reference, large print, audiovisual, and young adult, into new spaces.

### Planning and Preparation

To facilitate the reconfiguration, the staff began an extensive weeding and shifting project in May 2006. Approximately 22,000 items were removed from the total collection, and both the adult and juvenile collections

were shifted completely. This enabled the staff to move some smaller collections into more appropriate places and to empty and remove a range that was a visual and physical barrier. The reference collection was reduced by half, making way for the future audiovisual department.

In January 2007, planning for the makeover was begun. From the beginning, this project was a group effort by Library staff. There were many opportunities for staff members to provide input along the way, and they were critical players when time came for the actual makeover. Several staff members served on a Makeover Workgroup, which was responsible for making decisions about the new floor plan, planning and executing a publicity program, providing information for the furniture/shelving consultant, selecting fabrics and carpeting, and keeping their fellow staff members informed about progress.

Jeff Hunt of Library Interiors of Florida was an invaluable partner in this project. He inventoried the shelving and determined what would be required; provided important advice and information on the new service-desk plans; made suggestions for economical solutions to the furniture needs; and provided good design ideas. Most importantly, he met the budgetary constraints.

This makeover project had not been budgeted, but approximately \$65,000 in donations and State Aid were available. When Hunt projected his portion alone – which did not include electrical work, painting, carpeting or signage – to be \$65,000, the project appeared to be in jeopardy. Fortunately, two “angels” came to the rescue – one patron called and asked, “What do you need?” and another, who had relocated to Virginia, sent a check out of the blue. With these contributions, the total project cost of just under \$100,000 could be met.

A serendipitous encounter with a local sign painter, Paul Hetrick, was another critical piece in the project. The dream plans included a gateway into the children's department, but the mega installations appearing in many new libraries were not financially possible. Hetrick designed and produced new overhead signage for many of the departments and created a tree-shaped gateway and

*Top left: After the renovation, the library looks more open and spacious. The new Circulation Desk (left) and Information Desk (right) adjoin KidSpace (background).*

*Bottom right: Before the renovation, the building looked crowded and the Circulation Desk dominated the center.*



countertop signage that was affordable and effective.

The staff felt that a critical element in assuring that the makeover was a success was keeping patrons informed about what was going to be done. Local newspapers published several articles about the plans. Members of the Makeover Workgroup created a display of the future floor plan, and others designed a flyer and a bookmark that were distributed heavily. The Chamber of Commerce and the local school system also helped spread the word. An eye-catching daily countdown in 600 point type was posted beginning thirty days out.

### During the Renovation

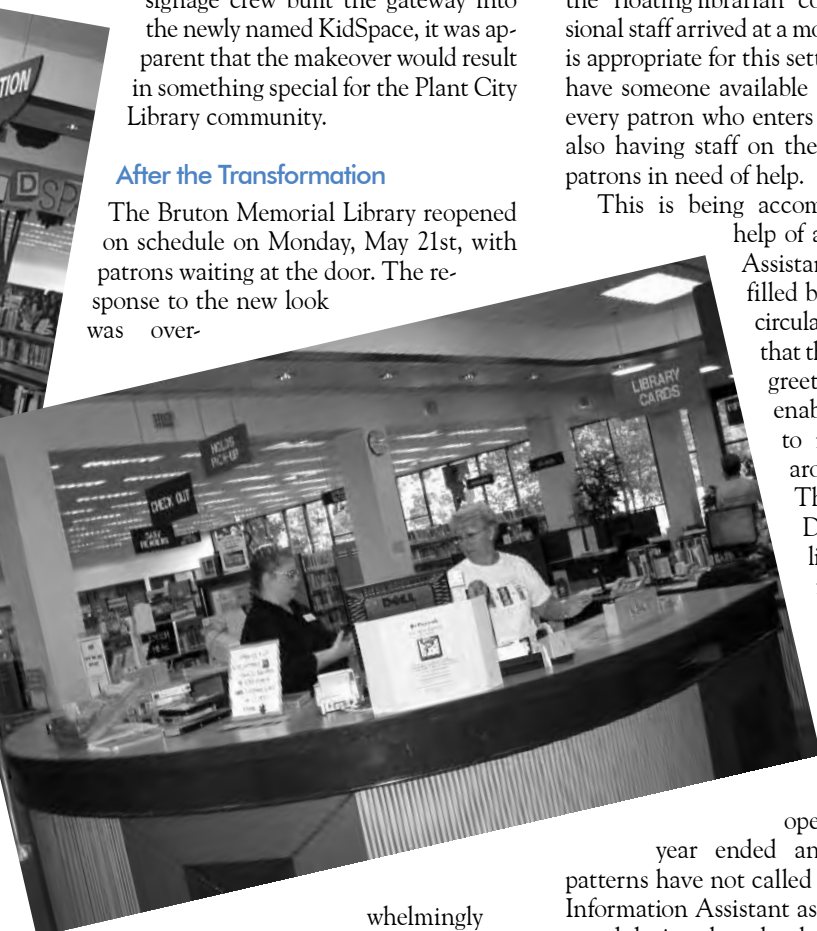
The goal was to be closed no longer than two weeks, beginning on May 7th. To accomplish this, the furniture/shelving installers, Plant City General Services staff, an electrical contractor, a data-lines contractor, a painter, the carpet installers, the Library staff, and the signage company all had to work in concert under the direction of the Library Director. Contractors and staff members removed collections from their shelves, dismantled, moved and rebuilt or removed things, constructed new furniture and shelving, replaced items on the shelves and installed new data and electrical lines. The staff worked in teams when they were

needed and continued to perform their regular duties when they were not. The Library was open for returns and reserves pickup in the meeting room, where staff also conducted a surplus shelving and furniture sale.

Throughout the project, spirits were high and everybody truly enjoyed bringing about these long needed changes. Staff, the Library Board, and generous patrons helpfully provided lots of good food. One day, following a Chinese “banquet,” staff enjoyed an afternoon of lighthearted group-building exercises with library trainer Andrew Sanderbeck. After the signage crew built the gateway into the newly named KidSpace, it was apparent that the makeover would result in something special for the Plant City Library community.

### After the Transformation

The Bruton Memorial Library reopened on schedule on Monday, May 21st, with patrons waiting at the door. The response to the new look was over-



whelmingly positive. The makeover eliminated all eleven space-allocation problems and provided the Library with a new feeling of spaciousness.

Patrons now are greeted by someone at the new Information Desk as they enter the building. Seven additional public-access computers, for a total of twenty-three, are available in the center of the Library, just behind that desk. Children enter the newly configured KidSpace through a playful and bright gateway, while their parents browse a much enlarged Audiovisual section near the adult “What’s New” shelves or read a magazine in Quiet Space. TeenSpace offers computers configured for teen use and age-appropriate book collections. Tables and lounge seating have been distributed throughout the building, and two additional catalog computers

were added in the stacks. Circulation services are provided at a service desk with shelving to accommodate all the reserves awaiting pickup. Because of the modest budget, the anticipated expansion, and lack of space, the self-check-out services recommended by the consultant were not implemented at this time.

From the beginning, the staff recognized that when the service desks were moved into different areas, the whole service dynamic would change. Gale Vaccaro, lead Reference Librarian, took virtual and real-life tours of libraries that have adopted different levels of the “floating librarian” concept. The professional staff arrived at a modified version that is appropriate for this setting. The goal is to have someone available to greet and assist every patron who enters the Library, while also having staff on the floor to seek out patrons in need of help.

This is being accomplished with the help of a new Information Assistant (IA) role that is filled by a member of the circulation staff. Knowing that the IA is available to greet and assist patrons enables the Librarian to move more freely around the Library. The new Information Desk is small and the librarians are able to move quickly out from behind it to go with customers to the shelves or their computer. One caveat, however, is that the Library reopened as the school year ended and summer usage patterns have not called for the help of the Information Assistant as much as is anticipated during the school year.

Patrons return their items in freestanding book drops that were constructed by the City General Services staff to match the new décor. A member of the Circulation staff is scheduled each hour to empty the drops and take the returns into the reconfigured periodical storage room for check in and sorting. Often, only one staff member is required on the new service desk; but, if assistance is needed, one tap on the security system microphone brings someone from the workroom within seconds. The configuration and staffing of the service desk is a work in progress to determine the best service scenario.

The makeover cost approximately \$100,000. Sixty-five percent of the project was funded by donations, including surplus funds in the Memorial Book account and donations from the Friends of the Library

and the two “angels.” The remainder came from State Aid (\$28,720) and a small amount that was absorbed by the Library’s annual budget. The funds were expended for the following purposes:

Carpeting .....	\$ 9,000
Signage and KidsSpace gateway....	\$10,000
Data and electrical work .....	\$8,800
Shelving and end panels.....	\$23,000
Furniture .....	\$20,000
Service desks .....	\$27,000
Miscellaneous .....	\$ 2,200

### Considerations for the Future

There is no doubt that the makeover was justified and that it has been a success. The eleven space allocation problems identified by the consultant were resolved in an economical and attractive way. Library staff worked together, well and hard, to accomplish the goals that had been set. It does not necessarily take a lot of money to transform a library, if the need is paramount. It does take a good staff, a creative furniture consultant, and a little bit of leadership.

Like most public libraries, the Bruton Memorial Library is being used in different ways since the facility was built in 1994. The most obvious changes are the demand for public-access computers and the shift away from use of print and toward music, movies, and audiobooks. There is also an increased use of the facility as a place to meet, socialize, and/or work together. More tutors are meeting their students at the Library, and small business people are using the Library’s computers, WiFi, and study rooms to augment their home offices. Families come and spend hours, allowing time for the children to play computer games, do puzzles or color pages, and produce spontaneous puppet shows in KidSpace while the parents sit with them or work on the Library’s computers.

Daily, the staff basks in the awe and wonder of patrons returning to the Library, and they enjoy showing them around their “new” Library. While the makeover has provided a little more growing room for some collections, more space is needed for them, as well as for an enlarged children’s department and additional meeting and group-study areas. The Bruton Memorial Library needs to be expanded in the near future, but in the meantime Plant City will find that it has a more functional, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing library thanks to the ‘Not So Extreme Makeover – Library Edition.’”

*Anne Haywood is Director of Bruton Memorial Library.*

FLORIDA READS

# Florida on the Boil

By Joyce Sparrow

Reference book expert Kenneth F. Kister has compiled an impressive annotated reference on Florida fiction—*Florida on the Boil: Recommended Novels and Short Story Collections Set in the Sunshine State*—for people who love to read. (Xlibris, 2007, ISBN: 978-1-4257-1725-4 hardback \$32.99; 978-1-4257-1726-1 softcover \$22.99).

Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with Kister about his new book. Kister uses the catch phrase “on the boil” for his title to suggest the high, hot state of excitement that drives Florida fiction. He recommends *I Killed Hemingway* (St. Martin’s Press, 1993) by William McCranor Henderson as a perfect example. Set in Key West, *I Killed Hemingway* tells the story of “Pappy” Markham who believes he is the author of many of Hemingway’s published works. Sloppy Joe’s, the landmark bar, serves as a backdrop for much of the novel.

Kister says good Florida fiction gives readers a solid sense of place, whether it is a Key West bar, an Ybor City bungalow, or a fishing boat on the Withlacoochee. The extreme heat, bright sunshine, stormy weather, trailer parks, and dive bars all play an important role in Florida’s novels—as does crime.

Theories speculate that all the nooks and crannies around the peninsula allow for many opportunities to escape and hide, for solitude or ill-gotten reasons. On any given day, Florida has quite the dynamic population where tourists and transplants intermingle, making it the perfect opportunity for criminals to take cover in a tropical climate. This situation is ripe ground for Florida fiction, resulting in an abundance of detective, suspense, espionage, and legal thrillers. But the predominance of crime fiction accurately reflects the reality of Florida’s past and present. Kister recommends *White Shadow* (Putnam, 2006) by



Kenneth F. Kister

Ace Atkins, set in the Ybor City area of Tampa, which tells the story of the Sicilians and Cubans during the 1950s. We discussed how many popular Florida novelists began their careers as newspaper journalists and crime reporters who saw firsthand the fertility of crime in Florida. Kister cites *Up For Grabs A Trip Through Time and Space in the Sunshine State* (Viking, 1985) by John Rothchild as a good study on the history of crime in Florida.

It is quite common for readers to learn about Florida’s real people by reading Florida’s fiction. Kister believes that with fiction, an author can get the reader into the heart of a character better than many nonfiction books. He cites Michael Largo’s *Southern Comfort* as a good example of revealing the sad brutality of trailer life in the swamp. In his opinion, one can trust Florida fiction as a means to learn about the people and personalities who make the Sunshine State come to life.

Kister recommends Susan Carol McCarthy’s *Lay That Trumpet in Our Hands* (Bantam, 2002) as a prime tool for educating readers about Florida’s racial intolerance, which some believe cannot exist in paradise. Set in Central Florida in the 1950s, the story tells of residents who take

a stand against the local Klan.

*Florida on the Boil* begins with a question and answer introduction outlining the history of novels and short stories set in Florida from 1845 to the present. Kister explains how the 20th century growth in Florida has altered the landscape from rural to urban and changed the setting for Sunshine State fiction. With paved roads, commercial air travel, military installations and the space program bringing people to Florida, writers now have a wider variety of subject matter and more personality. The introduction concludes with recommendations of the major authors who have contributed to Florida’s literary landscape.

The individual annotated entries for the recommended 305 novels and short stories include author, title, publisher, and number of pages. Some entries include excerpts from the works. Many of the detailed descriptions of Florida novels are accompanied with caricatures by David O’Keefe, an award-winning illustrator for the *Tampa Tribune*. The book includes a bibliography and a comprehensive author-title-subject-locale index.

After spending a few hours talking with Kister about his book, I found myself at the public library checking out some of his favorite Florida novels, hunkering down for a long rainy weekend, and taking a literary tour of the state.

Every library should purchase copies of the book for the reference and circulating collections.

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