

# THE Nexus



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State Librarian Ann Joslin

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## The Value of Surveys

**by State Librarian Ann Joslin**

This fall the American Library Association and the Center for Library & Information Innovation at the University of Maryland, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will survey a national sample of public libraries regarding their Internet connectivity and computing access resources. The 2009 National Survey of Public Library Funding and Technology will open in September and close November 6, 2009.

Why is completing this type of survey important? The findings of data-gathering surveys like this are used for advocacy efforts on behalf of libraries; decision making regarding critical resources; and support for the E-Rate program, the Library Services and Technology Act, and other initiatives. These surveys also provide data regarding the impact of public libraries on the communities that they serve.

At the national level, data from such surveys have appeared in Supreme Court decisions, Congressional reports, news media, and stimulus funding discussions and have identified the roles of libraries

in sustaining a knowledge-empowered public.

At the local level, the data can help you plan or improve services, assess your library's needs, and identify your library's contributions to your community. The data also support you when educating stakeholders, policymakers, funders, supporters, and the media about the issues that your library faces when providing services.

If you receive a postcard announcing the availability of the library funding and technology survey, please make it a priority to complete the information so Idaho libraries are represented in the national debate for funding and the connectivity and computing access needs in Idaho libraries are well-documented. When potential funders are unaware of the needs in our state, it could mean lost opportunities for Idaho libraries.

If you have questions about any survey you are asked to complete, please contact your library consultant at the Idaho Commission for Libraries.

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for Libraries**  
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**Mission:**  
The Idaho Commission for Libraries assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele.

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- Sonja Hudson, grants/contracts officer
- Staci Shaw, reading programs coordinator
- Stephanie Bailey-White, reading programs coordinator
- Sue Walker, Talking Book Service consultant
- Teresa Lipus, public information specialist

## Your library's website: your online presence by ICFL Networking Consultant Gina Persichini

What does your website say about the library? Does it tell the community who you are or how to use your services? Is it the equivalent of a brochure hung up on a bulletin board? Or is it a tool for patrons to interact with the library, even when the library is closed?

Library use in Idaho is increasing quickly while library budgets are growing more restricted, with many libraries cutting hours. In these times, it is even more important that community members are able to reach library services even when the building is closed. One way to do this is through an e-branch.

In one model of an e-branch you can think of the website as a branch of the library that is open to the community 24 hours a day. It has links to access the library's selection of online databases, functionality to place holds on items in the library's catalog, a form for submitting requests for interlibrary loan, library card registration, and online registration for library programs.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries' (ICFL) e-Branch in a Box program has been helping libraries move in that direction since 2006. The goal of e-Branch in a Box is to help libraries create a vital web presence for their customers.

Beginning with the next competitive cycle for LSTA grants, applicants will need to confirm the library has a web presence meeting the following minimum criteria:

1. Library name
2. Library address—both mailing address and street address, if different (includes branch

- information if applicable)
3. Library phone number
  4. Online contact (email address or contact form)
  5. Hours of operation
  6. Library board member names
  7. Link to the online catalog (if applicable)
  8. Link to the LiLI Portal or a link to the individual LiLI Databases and LiLI Unlimited statewide catalog with the "funded by LiLI" icon
  9. Description of the library services available to patrons
  10. Content that is up to date

These 10 criteria are just the start and can be accomplished by using the e-Branch in a Box templates for sites hosted free of charge at [lili.org](http://lili.org).

Commission staff developed e-Branch in a Box to help libraries more easily meet that eligibility requirement. Using the ICFL e-Branch system isn't a requirement, but many libraries have found it helpful. Getting started is easy and maintaining the site takes just a few minutes per month. Adding additional features like the library card application and incorporating online registration for programs by using a free web tool are easy next steps that let the customer use the library any time of day.

Find out more about e-branch websites at: <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/e-branch-a-box>.



### e-Branch help

You don't have to struggle on your own if you're having trouble with your e-branch website. There are many resources available to help you. At <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/e-branch-a-box> you'll find a handbook, FAQs, and screencasts (short how-to videos that run using a Flash plug-in). If these resources don't help you solve the problem, then call the e-Branch Help Desk at the ICFL between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. MDT for help.

Nancy Kingsford and Nancy Reese have been part of the e-Branch Help Desk for three years and have helped librarians add content, contacts, and categories; attach files; work with new tools; and undo errors. They can log in to your site, see what's been done, and walk you through the process of fixing it.

They love being able to help libraries have a web presence and make it look good, and are excited to see some of

the fantastic things that Idaho libraries are doing with their websites—such as incorporating social networking and interactive activities. They've been impressed with how skilled some of the librarians have become and how they help each other.

Kingsford and Reese want librarians to feel free to call the e-Branch Help Desk for anything, no matter how small. They'd rather that people not wait until they get frustrated and they enjoy helping out.

If you don't have a website and are interesting in developing one, check out the e-Branch in a Box mission and scope statements and user agreement at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/user-agreement>. Then contact Eric Hildreth at the Commission to help you get started.

Need help with your website?

Check out <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/e-branch-a-box> or ask for the e-Branch Help Desk at ICFL.



Nancy Kingsford, e-Branch Help Desk



Nancy Reese, e-Branch Help Desk

### New ICFL web design specialist

Web design specialist Aubrey Ellis joined the ICFL staff in June. In addition to moderating comments and blogs on the ICFL website, helping build new templates that comply with upcoming state website regulations, and updating the Idaho Center for the Book website, she supports the e-Branch Help Desk and develops new themes for e-branch websites. She is also updating the e-branch handbook, and the revised version will be released soon.

Ellis loves getting things to work: the most rewarding part of her job is fixing something that was broken. Her biggest challenge during user support is gauging a person's skill level, which can make it tricky to talk them through problems.

Ellis will graduate from Boise State University in December with a degree in Information Technology Management. In addition to being busy with work and school, she has two sons, ages 4 and 11. In her spare time—what little she has—she loves to knit and enjoy the local music scene with her husband, who has a local recording label.

We're delighted to have Ellis as the ICFL web design specialist. And if you are wondering about Eric Hildreth, fear not. He applied for and accepted the web developer position that Michael Samuelson vacated this spring, so the ICFL and the library community are still benefiting from his expertise.



Aubrey Ellis is the new web design specialist at the Commission

**SPLAT Members:**

- Amy Vecchione
- Gena Marker
- Heather Redding
- Kate Radford
- Liesl Seborg
- Mary Nate
- Melody Eisler
- Memo Cordova
- Ruth Funabiki
- Zinthia Briceno

**SPLAT update**

SPLAT (Special Projects Library Action Team) welcomes four new members to its ranks:

- Liesl Seborg, Hidden Springs, Ada Community
- Kate Radford, Meridian Public Library
- Zinthia Briceno, University of Idaho Library
- Gena Marker, Centennial High School, Meridian School District

These new members join current members in serving as a crow's nest to search for innovation, propose experiments, lead pilot projects, and discover new opportunities for the Idaho library community.

SPLAT meets about four times a year—both virtually and face to face—to identify innovations and/or trends that impact Idaho libraries and initiate activities that introduce new ideas to the Idaho library community.

SPLAT Members Cordova, Funabiki, and Vecchione will be hosting Ignite SPLAT presentations at the Idaho Library Association Annual Conference in Burley this fall. You can find out more about SPLAT and follow the SPLATTERs blog at <http://splat.lili.org>.

**Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP)**

The American Library Association (ALA) recently launched the Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP), a national certification program to help the profession standardize expectations for library support staff, to enhance library support staff competencies, and to assist library directors and managers in defining job requirements. This is a great opportunity for library support staff to gain the recognition needed to further their career paths. Consider the benefits:

- Benefits to individual staff members
- Increased understanding of library operations
- Positive proof of their Competency Sets in multiple library operational areas
- Portability of certification from one library or state to another

- Benefits to the institution
- Staff that is knowledgeable about broad aspects of library operation
- Staff that is able to serve the library in a number of different positions
- Staff that demonstrates ability and willingness to accept higher level responsibility
- Assurance that an employee has a specified body of knowledge and skills
- Standardization of expectations of library support staff in a library
  
- Benefits to the library user
- Library users served by the best trained staff possible
- Staff with broader understanding results in enhanced support of library's mission and goals

**Western Regional Fellowship: Public Libraries and Baby Boomers**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) recently awarded over \$20 million in Librarian Recruitment and Education Grants. Among the recipients was the Peninsula Library System in San Mateo, CA, which, in partnership with the Idaho Commission for Libraries and other state library agencies, will develop a fellowship program for practicing

librarians that is designed to improve library services to Baby Boomers and older adults. The program will offer 100 libraries throughout California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington the opportunity to learn more about how to position themselves as resources and partners in creating opportunities for Boomers to teach, learn, and become civically-engaged.



**Find more information about LSSCP at <http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp>.**

**Stay tuned for more information about this fellowship program.**

Learn more by visiting <http://transforminglifeafter50.org/whats-new>.



## Teen Read Week: Read Beyond Reality @ Your Library

Idaho's school and public libraries have a great opportunity to expand teen programming this fall and highlight their creativity through Teen Read Week, October 18–24. Submit a completed entry and your library may win a Flip video camera (up to 30 will be up for grabs). A snazzy program title, concise description, and a few other details is all it takes. The entire Idaho library community can participate by voting on their favorite October 1–8.

Every library submitting a completed entry will receive key-chain ID wallets branded with "Read Long and Prosper" for their Teen Read Week program participants.

Programs can build on the American Library Association's "Read Beyond Reality" or develop a separate theme. Anything goes as long as it encourages teens to read.

And reading isn't limited to books. Magazines, websites, games, blogs, and other resources that encourage teens to read can be included.

Complete information about Teen Read Week, contest rules, and sample programs are available on the Teen Read Week page. Hurry! **Contest submissions begin September 10th and end September 30th.** Winners will be announced October 9th and will receive their Flip video camera before Teen Read Week, so they can video the action and share with the library community.

Idaho Teen Read Week is brought to you by ICFL and funded through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).



Check it out at:  
<http://libraries.idaho.gov/trw09>.

**Idaho School Libraries/Media Centers Survey preliminary results are online at:**  
<http://libraries.idaho.gov/doc/school-library-statistics>.

## School Library Partnerships: Building Strong Libraries, Building Powerful Students

ICFL staff, primary and secondary school librarians, a state PTA liaison, and others will launch a school library advocacy campaign beginning in November. The project includes 13 Partnerships and Conversations (small group gatherings) at elementary schools and three regional workshops.

Anne Abrams, ICFL Advocacy & Marketing Consultant, is excited about the advocacy push. "We are taking what we learned from our work with secondary school librarians and broadening our efforts to encompass primary school library staff." Those who attend the Partnerships and Conversations session with their school administrator (or designee) and a parent will receive a FlipCam video. They will be required to video-tape a partnership project, upload it on TeacherTube, and send the link to the Commission. FlipCams and other 21st century tools to prepare

students for the workplace are on the agenda, as is building partnerships to boost library resources. A letter of invitation will go to all school librarians and principals once the schedule is firm. The agenda calls for an after school meeting from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

The FlipCam videos will be used to showcase partnership projects at the three regional workshops planned for the end of January and beginning of February. The day-long workshops will be facilitated by the founders of Washington Coalition for School Libraries & Information Technology (also known as the Washington Moms), who successfully convinced their legislature to allocate \$4 million for school libraries for the 2008–2009 school year. Although Idaho has no parallel structure for state funding, the workshops will focus on

how parent, school librarian, and administrator partnerships can make a difference in school library resources.

Find more information and the registration link for Partnerships and Conversations at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/SLpartners>.

### Tentative Partnerships and Conversation Schedule:

**November 9-13:**  
Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Moscow, and Lewiston

**November 16-30:**  
Twin Falls, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Soda Springs

**December 14-18:**  
Boise and Meridian (two sessions at each location) and Nampa/Caldwell



The Boundary County library led the community effort to build a new early learning center: proof positive of what people can do when they work together

#### Tips for partnering on projects:

- Be realistic about challenges the community is facing: don't raise false expectations
- Listen to people
- Respond to the changes in your community
- Plan thoroughly before implementing
- Stay accountable to the public

## Fostering Partnerships and Collaboration—it's about community An Interview with Sandy Ashworth, Boundary County District Library

"Partnerships and collaboration are the meat and potatoes of a community, as far as getting things to happen," explains Sandy Ashworth, director of Boundary County District Library since 1996. "The library needs the community and the library *is* the community's."

Ashworth recently wrote a letter of support for a joint Bonner and Boundary County broadband stimulus funding request, is collaborating on a state of health initiative with their Community Coalition for Families, and is involved at the local and regional levels with the Horizons Project community revitalization and economic development planning.

But Ashworth didn't jump right into "looking for partnerships." She learned long ago from Associate State Librarian Marj Hooper and public library consultant Sandra Nelson that to begin you need to get out of the library, look around, listen, learn, and foster a community environment of cooperation and trust.

She compares the process to being a war correspondent: it's an ongoing process of becoming imbedded in the community and gathering intelligence. You must discover what's really needed. You may have a lot of great ideas, but they may not be what the community needs. And find out what has already been tried, so you can avoid the expense of duplication, repeating mistakes, and reinventing the wheel.

Ashworth advises, "You can't just show up in the community when you need something. You have to establish a supportive relationship beforehand, become a familiar face, be part of the

community conversation, participate, and build trust and rapport. It requires patience and perseverance."

You also need to get other perspectives and not get too focused on the library point of view. Stay interested in what others are doing: you make connections and there's always something you can borrow. You can draw on the expertise of other agencies and organizations.

She looks at the long view and says that the library is part of an ecosystem, a three-legged stool with the legs being social, economic, and environmental. If one leg is missing, it's hard to balance. But when local government, businesses, non-profits, health care providers, and citizens work together, everyone benefits.

Years ago, when Ashworth studied a survey revealing a fragile economy and its effects on the county, she started looking for ways to more closely connect the library to the community. She began hiring people more on their connection to the community than their library skills, and board members have been recruited on this basis as well. They all work to keep the library woven into the community tapestry, to make sure that the library is relevant to the community.

Ashworth's personal philosophy is that a library director is in a position of service and service leadership. Staying connected with the community and its changing needs has helped develop her library's flexibility and capacity to change. However, she laughs and admits that, although the momentum for community collaboration began in-house, sometimes the words her staff most dreads hearing from her are, "I have an idea..."



**It's not too late...**

...to register for a free one-year subscription to Career Information System (CIS), brought to Idaho public libraries through the collaborative efforts of the Idaho Department of Labor and the Idaho Commission for Libraries. If your library would like to participate and has not yet signed up, please contact Shirley Biladeau, ICFL Continuing Education Consultant. See the eCIS workshops schedule at <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/career-information-system-idaho-works>.



## Library News From Around the State

### **Clearwater Memorial Public Library**

was chosen by Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association as the recipient of this year's Michael Pritiken Rural Library Program donation, an award consisting of thousands of dollars worth of books and materials from publishers at the end of the 2009 fall show.

In addition, library director Chris Ashby retired recently and the library welcomed new director, Ellen Tomlinson.

**Ada Community Library** kicked off their "Learning Resources" project on July 28, with the help of Idaho First Lady Lori Otter and representatives from Wal-Mart. The project includes a virtual interactive tutor service, a text messaging reference service, and an interactive whiteboard, purchased with funds from a \$10,000 Wal-Mart grant.

**Portneuf District Library** was one of 10 libraries chosen nationwide to receive \$500 in mini-grant funds from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to do skin-health outreach in fall 2009.

**Elk City School and Community Library, Kamiah Community Library (Prairie River District), Oakley Free Library District, Patricia Romanko Public Library, Peck Community Library (Prairie River District), and Tensed-DeSmet Community Library (Benewah County District)** are recent recipients of the Libri Foundation Books for Children grant.

**Grace District Library** received \$1,500 for audio books and **Madison Library District** received \$1,000 to expand The Big Read program from the Idaho Community Foundation.

**Meadows Valley Public Library** held an open house on August 17 to celebrate its 10th year of operation. In 1997, part-time resident Mary Villani donated \$110,000 to start the effort of building a library. With additional donations of labor, money, and materials, the library was completed in June of 1999. Voters approved a library taxing district two months later in August 1999.



Board members, friends, and staff Becky Levi, Barbara Smole, Sylvia Tinsley, Audrey Crogan, Julie Good, Kayrene Brown, and Stacy Loper graciously pause from their work for a photo op

### **Talking Book Service Awareness Day**

Libraries in several Idaho communities held a "Beat the Heat" open house for Talking Book Service (TBS) Awareness Day during the week of August 17-21, providing a short program, summer treats, and sunglasses to all attendees.

The following libraries participated:

**Ada Community, American Falls, Blackfoot, Boise (Cole/Ustick branch), Burley, Coeur d'Alene, Emmett, Grand View (Eastern Owyhee County), Hayden (Kootenai-Shoshone), Jerome, McCall, Meridian (both main and Silverstone branches), Mountain Home, Nampa, Payette, Plummer, Chubbuck (Portneuf), Blackfoot (Snake River School/Community), and Twin Falls.**

To our knowledge, Idaho libraries were the trailblazers of the national TBS Awareness Day initiative, and they pulled off the inaugural event beautifully.



ICFL customer service rep Laurel Day displays both models of digital players

### New Arrivals at ICFL!!!

The Talking Book Service (TBS) staff at the Idaho Commission for Libraries is proud to announce the arrival of 32 of the long-awaited TBS digital players:

**Date:** Tuesday, August 25

**Time:** 8:00 a.m.

**Weight:** 2.5 lbs each

**Length:** 9 inches

**Names:** Digital Standard and Digital Advanced

**Nicknames:** DS1 and DA1

For more on the TBS digital transition, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/digital-collection>.



Participants Beat the Heat and learn about the Talking Book Service

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## **Education opportunities**

### **WebJunction Idaho – New Courses!**

WebJunction Idaho still has about 200 course units available for individuals affiliated with Idaho libraries. There are four course providers and two types of courses.

The course providers include Amigos Library Services, LibraryU, University of North Texas (UNT) LE@D, and SkillSoft. View the course catalog at <http://id.webjunction.org/catalog>.

LibraryU, UNT LE@D, and SkillSoft offer self-directed learning modules, accessible 24/7. You chose the time and place convenient for you. To familiarize yourself with the course navigation tools, view the following short video: [http://id.webjunction.org/help/-/articles/content/67072449?\\_OCLC\\_ARTICLES\\_getContentFromWJ=true](http://id.webjunction.org/help/-/articles/content/67072449?_OCLC_ARTICLES_getContentFromWJ=true).

Amigos Library Services offers instructor-led, online, date specific courses. This requires you to report to your class at a specific time and date, as well as participating in discussions and doing homework. These are new classes just added and as a special offer to the Idaho library community, ICFL is offering free access to the courses on a limited basis—as long as we have course units available. To view the current list of available Amigos Library Services courses go to <http://id.webjunction.org/catalog>.

If you would like to set up a learning cohort for a specific course or have any course questions, please contact Shirley Biladeau, ICFL Continuing Education Consultant, at: [shirley.biladeau@libraries.idaho.gov](mailto:shirley.biladeau@libraries.idaho.gov) or 208-639-4149 or 800-458-3271.

### **Are you ready to SWIM?**

The SWIM (South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana) Regional Collaborative Library Education Project will offer six Idaho librarians scholarships to earn an MLIS through the University of North Texas and five Idaho teacher-librarians scholarships to earn a media specialist endorsement through either the University of Montana or Montana State University. The program is funded through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program. Native American and Hispanic/Latino librarians and media specialists are encouraged to apply.

For more information visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/page/swim> or contact Shirley Biladeau at ICFL.