



NJLA: New Jersey Library Association
The voice of New Jersey libraries and librarians



REFERENCE SECTION QUARTERLY

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This issue will highlight the different sessions held during the yearly NJLA Conference.

Message From Outgoing Section President Theresa Agostinelli

This has been a great year for the Reference Section. We have worked on some important projects together including our advocacy work at the Middlesex County Fair, The Adult Services Forum, The Library Maker's Toolkit, and our programs at the NJLA Conference. Thank you to the Section members that have been so willing to offer their time and expertise including Doug Baldwin, Karen Vaias, Mimi Lee, Heidi Schwab, Matt Latham, Dennis Kuhn, Louisa Bann, Emily Witkowski, Nick Van Dorn, Cassidy Charles, Katie Wissel, Leslie Kahn, and especially to our incoming president, Jill Stafford. You have all helped to make meetings productive and fun!

The end of my term has also given me the opportunity to reflect on our profession. I am inspired by all of the great work my fellow librarians are doing. The library is a place where people can earn a GED, learn the English language, obtain skills that will help them gain employment, research their family history, connect with their community, and more. As reference librarians, we have seen such as a high degree of changes in just the past few years. We are meeting those challenges, often with less funding and staff.

Reference librarians must know print reference sources, online databases, and reference websites. We must be aware of local social service agencies, and know how to refer our patrons to them in a compassionate way. We also must have a working knowledge of the latest novels, and be able to refer patrons to books that match their reading interests. This is done by asking thoughtful questions and using our knowledge of current literature, as well as reader's advisory tools such as Novelist.

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Message From Outgoing Section President Theresa Agostinelli—Continued

With the explosion of electronic devices, patrons turn to us for help getting started using their smart phones, tablets, and ereaders. They often come to the reference desk with a brand new device, often in its original packaging, looking for help on getting started using it. They also want to know how to download eBooks, audiobooks, music, and free issues of magazines that we offer through the library. And as we all know, the download process varies for each device, and there are many steps in the process. These steps are not often intuitive and the process can be challenging when working with patrons that may not remember their personal passwords or even have an email account.

We provide a welcoming space to our patrons who may be lonely, going through personal hardships, or mentally ill. Many of our patrons have formed personal bonds with different staff members, and will ask when they will be in so they can connect with them. We are the people they know they can turn to for support when they need help filing paperwork after a loved one has passed away, for assistance filling out an online job application when they lack computer skills, or help finding information about a recent medical diagnosis.

Many may believe that the help we provide is just quick answers but that is just a piece of what we do. What people ask for, and what they really want and need, are not always the same thing. It is part of our jobs to conduct a reference interview, ask pertinent questions, and determine the real needs of our patrons.

Some people feel that, because of technology, reference librarians are no longer needed at the reference desk. This is puzzling. Calling a company and being confronted by a computerized voice and a list of options and numbers to press instead of a live person can be frustrating at best. Often, none of those options fit the needs of the user. Self checkout machines at the supermarket may be good in theory, but my preference is always to go to the live person. I don't enjoy listening to the demanding computer voice telling me where to put my groceries, and nine times out of ten, I have had to enlist the help of a live person for help with my coupon or to figure out some other problem.

At this point, it is important to understand how we are viewed. This will help us as we try to improve the quality of service that we provide, as well as craft a message to properly communicate our value. I have several questions. Why aren't reference librarians and the services that we provide valued? Is it because the members of our community that need us the most have the smallest voice in society? Does this make our jobs less important?

How can we learn to promote ourselves? What services are needed that we are not providing? How can we improve upon the services that we are already providing? Do we envision a future where people will not want to come in contact with other people? I hope not.

Just a few years ago, I couldn't imagine that I would be helping patrons load eBooks, audiobooks, and more onto personal devices, but now this is something that I do regularly at the reference desk. No one really knows what the future will hold, but I do know that reference librarians will continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our communities.

Sincerely,

Theresa



A Message from new Section President, Jill Stafford

A Message from Incoming Reference Section President, Jill Stafford

Hello! I'm very excited to be serving as president of the 2015-2016 Reference Section. I'm also a bit nervous to be following in the footsteps of our outgoing president, Theresa Agostinelli. Theresa did a stellar job this past year – from inviting the Northvale residents to be the keynote speakers at the Adult Services Forum to creating the very successful hands-on Library Maker's Toolkit this past March. She gave us much to think about and provided us with tools to become stronger librarians. I learned a tremendous amount as vice president, and I hope to continue Theresa's hard work.

As the only full-time Adult Services librarian at a small library, NJLA has been an invaluable resource for me over the past four years. I began by attending the annual conference and then got involved with the Reference Section so I could meet more reference and adult services librarians. At first I didn't think I would have anything to offer the section, but I quickly learned every member has a unique perspective and something to share with their colleagues. It turns out it **IS** fun to present a poster or a session at the conference. Not only is it rewarding to share your hard work with others, you learn so much from the conversations you have with colleagues after your presentation. I mention this because I would like all new librarians to know their ideas and experiences are valuable and NOW is the perfect time for you to get involved with NJLA. There will be plenty of opportunities for everyone to help with the upcoming forum as well as the 2016 NJLA Conference next May.

We have begun planning for the 7th annual Adult Services Forum which will take place on Monday, October 26, 2015 at the Monmouth County Library System Headquarters in Manalapan. Our theme this year will be Librarians as Agents of Positive Community Change. Like many others, I was inspired by Rich Harwood's NJLA conference keynote urging librarians to turn outward to become more connected to our communities. Stay tuned for more information about the upcoming forum. In the meantime, if you have a program suggestion, or would like to suggest a meeting location or topic, please feel free to contact me at jstafford@lmxac.org.

Sincerely,

Jill

Writer Biography

Jill Stafford is the Department Head for Adult Services at the Matawan Aberdeen Public Library. She also works part-time as an Adjunct Librarian at Brookdale Community College.

Prior to becoming a librarian, she worked as a scientist for a major pharmaceutical company.

Tuesday Keynote Address—Rich Harwood

Mr. Rich Harwood, founder and President of the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation addressed the NJLA conference as Keynote speaker on Tuesday, April 21. The Harwood Institute, a national nonprofit organization, is partnering with the ALA to help bolster the role of libraries in transforming communities and to strengthen the role of librarians as “core community leaders” and “change agents”.

During his address Mr. Harwood expressed his belief that “community” has never been more important than now. He stated that building “community” in towns and cities should be a common enterprise where varied members of the surrounding area participate and engage, most especially librarians since they are builders by nature. Mr. Harwood discussed the toxic political discourse that today’s society is plagued by, exacerbated by constituencies that focus enormous effort on promoting their own political interests without considering what’s best for the community as a whole. He’s an advocate for community leaders investing in schools and libraries for the long term, but asserted that they are prevented from doing so by the political agendas of local leaders.

According to Mr. Harwood, libraries are the bedrock of a community and thus, their health is reflected in the health of the surrounding area. He discussed how libraries are struggling to be relevant in today’s communities and encouraged librarians to counteract this trend by turning outward rather than inward. Mr. Harwood encouraged conference attendees to turn towards the community to learn about specific needs and to resist the urge to channel energy and resources into rearranging the library furniture or into developing new library organizational charts.

Mr. Harwood suggested that all libraries (public, K-12, and academic libraries) should think about doing three things to be more relevant in their communities:

Libraries should be “community not conference room” focused. By this he suggested that librarians engage communities in conversation about shared aspirations. In a vacuum, libraries often develop notions that are untethered from reality. Mr. Harwood stated that people don’t want “blue sky”, they want reality. Most community members on both sides of a conversation share enough common aspirations that agreement and “shared vision” are possible. Mr. Harwood stated that native languages may be different, but most people are speaking about the same concepts. In order to move forward, productive conversations must be had. It’s the library’s job to reflect back to the community their aspirations.

Writer Biography

Margery Ashmun is a Reference Librarian, Science Specialty at Drew University, Madison, NJ. Prior to Drew, she worked as a secondary school science teacher (chemistry and physical sciences), a market researcher/business consultant in the petroleum industry, and in chemical sales.

She holds a BSci in Chemistry from Miami of Ohio, an MBA from UNC-Chapel Hill, and an MLS from Rutgers University.

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Tuesday Keynote Address—Rich Harwood Continued

When financial pressure increases, institutions tend to be more inward turning. Internal reorganization won't make a library more effective in the community's eyes. In order to "build things" in communities, libraries need to set goals and show that they will do what they say they will do., Mr. Harwood claimed that people are yearning for trusted leadership to encourage them to come out of their homes and work together on human scale projects, and that, other than the fire department, libraries are one of the most trusted community-based institutions that could provide this leadership. Engaging in activities that build civic confidence in communities could prove that people can still do things together.

It's vital that libraries learn how to tell a shared story about their community. Mr. Harwood discussed the importance of libraries paying attention to the narratives in the community and then getting involved in telling new kinds of stories. Mr. Harwood stressed that these "stories" must not be disguised marketing campaigns or public relations ploys, but community-focused, actual narratives.

During his keynote Mr. Harwood offered broad brush encouragement to NJLA conference attendees about making an impact in one's local community, but didn't offer specific prescriptive. Based on his statements, the assumption can be made that being part of one of the most trusted community institutions imbues librarians with social capital that can be leveraged for the greater good. Being part of a highly polarized electorate, most community members are starved for leaders whose sole motivation is to do good. Mr. Harwood offered full-throated encouragement to attendees to get out into the community and start making a difference.



“Libraries need to set goals and show that they will do what they say they will do.”

Creating Partnerships Through Maker Culture

Writer Biography

Emily Witkowski is a Children's Librarian at the Maplewood Memorial Public Library in Maplewood, NJ. She has an B.A. in English Literature and Interactive Multimedia from The College of New Jersey and a M.L.I.S. from Rutgers University.

Much of her first library experience was through makerspaces, having worked for the Piscataway Public Library's Summer of Make program, as well as interning at Columbia University in their Library of Science and Engineering to help plan a potential makerspace.

When the Maker Movement started to take off in libraries, there was a bit of a divide. There were those who jumped right on the bandwagon and embraced the movement, standing in line to order their 3D printers and soldering irons, and there were the cautious observers, warning others that this might all just be a passing trend. But as Jason Griffey pointed out, makerspaces are nothing new, and more importantly, makerspaces are nothing new to libraries. The tenants behind creativity and making have always been in the library, whether it was through book clubs where like-minded people shared ideas, or through craft times with hands-on activities for all ages. Makerspaces and libraries are truly the perfect fit, and the NJLA Conference panel on Creating Partnerships Through Maker Culture proved just that.

Five unique individuals representing a variety of involvement in the Maker Movement participated in this panel, moderated by Doug Baldwin, the guru of New Jersey library makerspaces. And while the focus was on makerspace partnerships, the lessons extended into any sort of partnership that the library may enter. In light of the diverse perspectives, I think it would be best to highlight the key piece of advice from each member that serves as the best takeaway for this session.

Ray Vacarri, director of ManufactureNJ, reminded us of the importance of simply asking. There are shared goals between the manufacturing industry and the library's involvement with STEM education initiatives that provide the perfect opportunity for partnership, and industrial organizations will only benefit by becoming involved.

Dave Franz, the director of the Hillsdale Public Library, seemed to have an epiphany while sitting on the panel: libraries are the introductory picture book or easy reader to the maker movement. Therefore, the partnership comes from not only shared goals, but the sincerity of those shared goals. The goal of libraries in the maker movement is to provide the community with an introduction to other types of makerspaces that there might be out there, as well as to the types of technologies and jobs that the future of industry will be asking to fulfill, and there is a sincere interest in connecting with these other organizations to help further that message.

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Creating Partnerships Through Maker Culture

“If there is sincerity and reciprocation in the relationship to begin with, you often do not need to ask”

Mike McEwan, director of 21st century CCLC and STEM initiatives NJ School-Age Care Coalition, had a particularly interesting piece of wisdom to offer: if there is sincerity and reciprocation in the relationship to begin with, you often do not even need to ask. And if you do have to ask? Be careful how you do it. He suggested instead of flat out asking for something in a partnership, offer a fair trade instead, and that trade does not need to be monetary. Maybe you trade space, or manpower, or promotion, but if the partnership is a right fit it will be easy to identify how to make it fruitful for both parties.

The final two members of our panel represented the point of view of an independent makerspace. Jean Consorti and Paul Gentile of FUBAR labs in New Brunswick, NJ echoed one another in stating that while makerspaces are about educating others, we need to do a better job of educating others on what a makerspace is through partnerships. The library offers a nonthreatening environment to learn in, and the opportunity of a partnership exists not only with the library reaching out to them, but them reaching out to the library and bringing their materials and expertise into our space.

What was so wonderful about this session was that these were not empty words. These partnerships existed in real life for New Jersey Makers Day, a statewide event that happened on March 21 celebrating the maker movement in libraries and other organizations. So lets use the wise words and positive examples of the members of this panel to further partnerships in the library, both those connected to maker culture and those that are not.



Collection Development and Maintenance of eResources

Much like providing electronic media a generation ago eContent access and collections brings up familiar and unfamiliar collection development challenges like purchasing duplicate copies, multiple licensing options, publisher purchasing and use restrictions, and even user experience.

On Tuesday, April 21st at the New Jersey Library Association Annual Conference, Ruth Bogan (PALS Plus Library Consortium), Charles Dolan (Middlesex County College Library), and Tina Marie Doody (Plainfield Public Library), grappled with the topic of eResource Collection Development & Maintenance in a packed conference meeting room.

Doody presented about the eLibraryNJ consortium, which is an eContent purchasing consortium made up of primarily public libraries across New Jersey. They work with OverDrive and purchase eBooks and eAudiobooks. The member libraries of the consortium meet once annually to discuss business, otherwise purchasing is done monthly by committees from the libraries. **Purchasing as a consortium is beneficial for libraries of all types and sizes** as it distributes what would be an expensive vendor bill across multiple users. Doody emphasized that collection development with eContent isn't that different from print in terms of criteria like budget, holds ratio, and duplicates. The challenges arise with vendors and publishers however. **Pricing for eContent can often be 5-6 times higher than retail pricing** and changes can be made to the interface or pricing with little to no notice. She also emphasized that **eCollections still require maintenance** like weeding underused and irrelevant eTitles.

Bogan presented her findings from an experiment she conducted in her library system regarding whether or not the wait for eContent (eBooks and eAudiobooks) is longer than the wait for the print counterparts. Her experiment involved setting-up 4 dummy accounts and the experiment accounted for the time it would take to read the items while accounting for not taking away items from real, interested readers. She concluded the **wait time for eTitles was slightly shorter than for print titles**. This is an interesting thought to consider the next time a cardholder inquires about their holds.

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Writer Biography

Cassidy Charles is an Adult Services & Periodicals Librarian at the Madison Public Library. Her professional interests include: organizational policy, information literacy, technology training, and determining who has been ripping pages out of the magazines.

[Free Databases](#)



Collection Development and Maintenance of eResources

Dolan discussed the Patron-Drive Acquisition model (PDA) of eResource collection development. Middlesex County College Library started using a PDA model for eContent purchasing in 2011. MCCL considered several options for eCollection development from subscriptions, to direct and indirect per-person ordering. They settled on the PDA model because they wanted ownership of the content (unlike subscriptions, which would be similar to leasing) and they wanted users to actually use the eContent that was being purchased. With a budget of about \$30,000 MCCL allows their library users to select the eContent that they wanted the library to purchase. Dolan disclosed that during the launch year they nearly spent the entire year's budget within the first few months. Since that year though, they have benefited from creating an **eCollection that has content that users want and use.**

Two of the three presenters mentioned that vendors can make changes to policies and pricing with little to no warning. While vendors may feel pressure to do from publishers' restrictions, this was an interesting dimension for the panel – pricing and policies changes are felt by librarians of every field that has users seeking eContent whether it is the latest James Patterson bestseller or a health sciences textbook.



“Purchasing as a consortium is beneficial for libraries of all types and sizes as it distributes what would be an expensive vendor bill across multiple users.”



Creating Great Presentations.....

Writer Biography

Theresa Agostinelli is the Instructional/Educational Services Coordinator at the Monroe Township Public Library. She is also the Immediate Past President of the NJLA Reference Section.

Presenter(s):

Moderator: Bonnie Lafazan, Berkeley College
Amanda Piekart Primiano, Berkeley College
Megan Dempsey, Raritan Valley Community College
Alyssa Valenti, Raritan Valley Community College

The three presenters shared their advice on how to plan and create dynamic presentations. One piece of advice was not to use PowerPoint templates. People will recognize them and they will make your presentation look stale. Try to include the theme of the Conference into your program title. Make sure that you create a good abstract that accurately describes the program that you intend to present to help attract the audience that you are looking for. You do not want to speak to a group of experts on a topic, when your presentation is geared towards beginners. Deliver the program that is described in the abstract.

Practice your program before the presentation so you know how long it will take and edit accordingly. Start on time and allow time for questions throughout the presentation, since some people may not stay until the end. If you are working with multiple presenters, plan how you will transition from one speaker to the next. Communicate, plan, and practice with the other presenters.

Your body language is important. Face the audience and make eye contact. One trick is to look directly above people's heads if you are uncomfortable looking them in the eyes. Take deep breaths and try to avoid using filler words such as "like" and "um." Pause deliberately.

Have a plan B in case things do not work out. Do not try something new that you have not done before. Test out technology and include a hard copy of your presentation. Practice jokes beforehand until you are comfortable using them.

I enjoyed this program and walked away with several practical tips. All three presenters delivered polished, entertaining presentations. If you are going to present a program on giving amazing presentations, your program should be an excellent one and this one was.

“Practice your program before the presentation so you know how long it will take and edit accordingly.”

Exploring Career Options in Specialized Libraries

Librarians play an important role in our society today, and they aren't only found in public or academic libraries, they also work in other institutions such as law firms, museums and hospitals. At the New Jersey Library Association Conference program on Exploring Career Options in Specialized Libraries, moderated by Jill Stafford, four different librarians spoke about their job and experiences in the institutions that they currently work.

Carrie Hayter currently works at McElroy Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpetner, LLP as the Law Librarian, commented on her daily duties which include a lot of researching on public records, statutes, and other information that the attorney's might need. She's also responsible for keeping up with current awareness and trends on companies and clients.

Lynn Schott currently works in Bergen Community College as a Reference and Instruction Librarian and explains that her job duties include answering reference questions and teaching library instruction as there are many classes that come in for some sort of library research/instruction inquiries. She also attends daily meetings and is responsible for the online maintenance and management of the online databases for the university.

Lisa Caputo who works in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) is a Prospect Researcher/Manager and holds a unique job position where she researches potential donors for the museum using sources such as family trees, periodicals, databases and public records. She's also in charge of keeping records on all donors and updating their information in an online record. I found her job to be the most interesting, and a job I did not know existed.

Lastly, Robin Siegel who works in CentraState Medical Center is a Medical Librarian and explains that her job duties include reference research for anyone who works in the hospital. As a staff member, she's also included in many different committees so that she can make connections and find the latest information which may help answer the reference questions that come in. She also attends morning rounds with the students in the Residency Program which is another way she can make a connection and help answer their questions.

At the end of the program, all the different speakers on the panel gave advice on how to get started in their profession. Many stated that volunteering or working part-time is the best experience. They also stated that it's helpful to join listservs and online discussions to see what is being discussed in that field. Lastly they all agreed that to try and find a job shadowing program, since that will give you the opportunity to spend some time with a librarian and see what their day-to-day duties encompass.

Writer Biography

Dennis Kuhn is an Adult Services Librarian working at Old Bridge Public Library and teaching classes on their MakerSpace equipment. He's also a Team Leader/Tween & Teen Programming at Spotswood Public Library creating programs, cataloging books and other duties.

Dennis is the Vice President of the NJLA Reference Section.



Wednesday Keynote Jason Griffey

Writer Biography

Doug Baldwin has been the Emerging Technologies Librarian and makerspace coordinator at the Piscataway Public Library since 2013 as part of the Adult Services Department. He has graduate degrees from both Rutgers University (MLIS) and Montclair State University (MA, Social Science).

He has worked previously at the Cranbury Public Library and New York Public Library. Doug is a Past President of the NJLA Emerging Technologies Section, as well as current Member at Large for both the NJLA Reference Section and the NJLA Executive Board. He also presently served as grant principal for projects in the areas of financial literacy and STEM / Maker education.

His most recent project, just completed, was working as lead coordinator for the statewide NJ Makers Day initiative funded by LibraryLinkNJ.

One of the highlights of this year's 2015 NJLA Conference was the Wednesday keynote speaker Jason Griffey, Formerly of the University of Chattanooga Library, Griffey has now found a place as a consultant and principal for Evenly Distributed. His talk at the Conference focused on the where and how libraries are behind the technological curve, some predictions for emerging tech to come, and how we can do better in keeping our libraries technologically relevant.

He began his talk by pulling no punches in offering a dim view of the current state of libraries and technology. In his words, "Library technology is not awesome... and people in tech. outside of libraries think we're insane." Why is that? Well, in a few short strokes, Griffey railed against our acceptance and use of sub par ILS systems (noting they are designed as digital systems graphed to an analog past, and not digitally native), libraries tend to be late technology adopters (reactive), we do not incentivize good technology in our statistics or representation, and we do not fund tech. in the same meaningful way we fund our collections and other core services.

In highlighting these reasons, Griffey underscored that we should and need to do better because technology moves so fast. However, he likewise recognized that fact that as institutions, we traditionally do just the opposite and tend to move slowly. Finally, he stated simply that attempting to take analog models and map technology over them, instead of reconsidering our technology and services with a natively digital framework in mind will ultimately lead to our extinction.

- 1.) Robots - they are quickly being integrated into our daily lives through embedded computers and the Internet of things (examples he discussed included things such as driverless cars and drones).
- 2.) Voice technology - quickly we are moving toward more of the world being available and controllable via voice command to machines. During the presentation, he posed the question of which would be replaced by software (or voice activated software first) - reference or cataloging? While most did mention reference, which he agreed with, he did also indicate both eventually would be. One example of new voice technology he mentioned was the Amazon Echo, a speaker device connected to the Internet which could perform various tasks with voice command.

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Wednesday Keynote Jason Griffey

3.) Touch technology - He feels that this technology, which started with mobile devices, will continue to mature and evolve with more sensitivity, range of motion and vibration, and more “natural” and varied touch types. One example being the new Taptic Engine in the Apple watch with various types of touch responses for notifications.

Finally, Griffey touched on the ways in which libraries can do better in regards to technology. The list of things we can do included:



1.) We need to make more tech aware librarians (you do not have to know how to code to understand what code does because you do not need to do the thing to understand how it works). Also, understand how our patrons use technology.

2.) We need more diversity in the profession and in technology.

3.) We need to hold vendors accountable for technology that we WANT.

4.) We need to stop relying on enterprise technology (technology where the person that makes it, is not the person that uses and vice versa).

5.) We need to enable more librarians to build things.

Griffey closed by noting once again that technology will never slow down, and that as librarians we need to understand it, better assess it, better plan for its future implementation and be more involved in the creation of the technology we use. Jason Griffey provided not only a warning, but hope, that we as librarians do have the ability to do better in selecting, designing, using and disseminating technology to our patrons. It has not been and cannot be something we find excuses to ignore, or reasons to remain apathetic about. It may not have been the tech pep rally many would have liked, but it was strong medicine we truly need to swallow.

“We should and need to do better because technology moves so fast.”



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NJLA REFERENCE SECTION MISSION STATEMENT

The Section fosters professional development and networking opportunities for reference librarians.

Members plan continuing education programs, including a major workshop in the fall, programs at the annual NJLA Conference, opportunities to interact with colleagues and tours of specialized libraries or collections.

It is the goal of this newsletter to provide a forum for New Jersey reference librarians, from public, academic and school libraries, to read and write about the issues that they face.



7th Annual Adult Services Forum: Librarians: Agents of Positive Community Change

Monday, October 26

Monmouth County Library Headquarters
125 Symmes Drive
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