Long Island Library Resources Council
12th Annual conference on Libraries and the Future
Oct 16th and 17th, 2003
Dowling College, Oakdale, New York

Reports of attendees: Sherry Chang, Kristen Nyitray, Paul Wiener, Godlind Johnson,
Janet Clarke,
(in order of the chronological sequence of the program)

The guest speaker at the dinner on Oct. 16 was Amy Goodman, the WBAI News Director
and award winning radio show host of the Pacifica Network's "Democracy Now!" Amy
produced WBAI's Evening News for ten years starting 1985. In 1990-1, she traveled to
East Timor to report on the US-backed Indonesian occupation of East Timor.   There, she
and a colleague witnessed Indonesian soldiers gun down 270 East Timorese. Their
documentary, "Massacre: The Story of East Timor" won numerous awards. In 1999,
Amy traveled to Peru to interview American political prisoner, Lori Berenson.
It was the first time a journalist had ever gotten into the prison to speak to her.

The title of her presentation was "Lack of an Independent Media". After a one-hour
documentary film about the recent Iraq War, Amy talked about her experience with news
broadcasting and how biased it can be due to directives by company management or
government. She related that once in her program, Bill Clinton called and talked with her
for more than half an hour to debate on different issues. The White House called her the
next morning and blamed her for keeping the conversation with Clinton too long and
warned her of the danger for no more future cooperation. She answered to the threat by
saying that "we might be around longer than you guys".

Amy concluded that free access to information is a common goal of libraries and her
expertise, news media. Let's all work to protect it.

Presentation Summary prepared by **Kristen Nyitray**:

S. Michael Malinconico: former dean of the School of Computer, Information, and
Library Sciences at Pratt Institute, a position he accepted following an administrative
career with the New York Public Library, where he was associate director for technical
and computer services. He is the first holder of the University's EBSCO Endowed Chair
of Library Service, which is the only position of its kind in library education. Prof.
Malinconico is involved primarily in research and is a prolific scholar and writer in the
areas of computer applications in libraries and management of technologies and
organizational change. He also teaches courses in library applications of modern
technologies

Mr. Malinconico's lecture was based in large measure upon an article published in the July issue of *IEEE Spectrum*, titled "They Know Where You Are: New technologies can pinpoint your location at any time and place. They promise safety and convenience—but threaten privacy and security," by By Jay Warrior, Eric McHenry & Kenneth McGee. (http://www.spectrum.ieee.org/WEBONLY/publicfeature/jul03/e911.html)

Mr. Malinconico outlined the various ways in which libraries are incorporating new technologies into the workplace. These technologies include:

1. Peer to peer file trading networks;
2. IM;
3. Real-time chat;
4. Digital reference service, i.e. "Ask a Librarian;"
5. Virtual Work Teams.

He also discussed the New York City Downtown Alliance and New York Wireless initiatives (www.nycwireless.net). NY Wireless provides free Internet service to mobile users in public spaces in New York City. According to their website, NY Wireless is a "volunteer group constructing a community owned network of computers that share Internet access over radio connections. Each access point is run independently by volunteers with their own equipment." Wireless ethernet provides internet access to mobile computers, PDAs and desktops without connection cables. Instead, it uses radio communication between the computer and access points. One example cited was the fact that there is now wireless, free Internet access in Bryant Park as a result of a professor from NYU setting up an antenna near his apartment. In addition, the Wireless Node Database is a simple database for people operating or interested in operating wireless network nodes in NewYork (http://www.nodedb.com/unitedstates/ny/newyork).

The most in-depth portion of Mr. Malinconico's lecture concentrated on Automatic Identification and Data Capture (AIDC), the industry term which describes the identification and/or direct collection of data into a microprocessor controlled device such as a computer system or a programmable logic controller (PLC), without the use of a keyboard. The information presented is quite similar to the summary I compiled below from AIM Global website: http://www.aimglobal.org/technologies/rfid/.

Radio frequency identification (RFID) first appeared in tracking and access applications during the 1980s. These wireless AIDC systems allow for non-contact reading and are effective in manufacturing and other hostile environments where bar code labels could not survive. RFID has established itself in a wide range of markets including livestock identification and automated vehicle identification (AVI) systems because of its ability to track moving objects.

RFID tags come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Animal tracking tags, inserted beneath the skin, can be as small as a pencil lead in diameter and one-half inch in length.

Tags can be screw-shaped to identify trees or wooden items, or credit-card shaped for use in access applications. The anti-theft hard plastic tags attached to merchandise in stores are RFID tags. In addition, heavy-duty 5- by 4- by 2-inch rectangular transponders used to track intermodal containers or heavy machinery, trucks, and railroad cars for maintenance and tracking applications are RFID tags.

The significant advantage of all types of RFID systems is the non-contact, non-line-of-sight nature of the technology. Tags can be read through a variety of substances such as snow, fog, ice, paint, crusted grime, and other visually and environmentally challenging conditions, where barcodes or other optically read technologies would be useless. RFID tags can also be read in challenging circumstances at remarkable speeds, in most cases responding in less than 100 milliseconds. The read/write capability of an active RFID system is also a significant advantage in interactive applications such as work-in-process or maintenance tracking. Though it is a costlier technology (compared with barcode), RFID has become indispensable for a wide range of automated data collection and identification applications that would not be possible otherwise.

Developments in RFID technology continue to yield larger memory capacities, wider reading ranges, and faster processing. It is highly unlikely that the technology will ultimately replace barcode — even with the inevitable reduction in raw materials coupled with economies of scale, the integrated circuit in an RF tag will never be as cost-effective as a barcode label. However, RFID will continue to grow in its established niches where barcode or other optical technologies are not effective. If some standards commonality is achieved - whereby RFID equipment from different manufacturers can be used interchangeably - the market will very likely grow exponentially.

Reported by **Paul Wiener**:

Professor Colleen Cool's (Queens College) presentation, "Youth information-seeking behaviors in the digital library age," was distinguished by several factors: it was almost completely off-topic; it was nearly incomprehensible; it was delivered in a scattered, hyperkinetic, digressive manner suggesting she had either never presented before, or had never learned anything from previous experience; it was cut short about one-third through (again and again) because her time was up; and it contained no new information. Before she finished, Prof. Cool did mention that relatively little research had been done about the information-seeking behavior of children, but it didn't prevent her from delivering a lengthy, seemingly ad hoc meditation on the subject. (She insisted she had scripted and rehearsed it, however.)

The presentation was actually about the historical development of academic research methodology that explores the information searching behavior of "young adults" (an undefined cohort, but varying from ages 4 through 17). It's not unusual for presenters to submit a title/abstract for review by a conference committee in order to get a bully pulpit

from which to deliver a lecture on personal research interests they know will attract few people. This is also a favorite ploy of politicians, but Prof. Cool was no politician.

Basically, Prof.Cool's main point was that since around 1980, research methodology had shifted from studying how young students used computer technology to access information sources, to how search strategies and search engines addressed the ways information (and querying behavior) was structured. The current status of this research (it was implied) is that it is heavily focused on how information-seeking differs among age groups. Young users tended to use single-concept searches. Search strategies tend to shift with cognitive and intellectual development.

Other findings were that students of all ages are taught not only *how* to use the library; they are taught to respect the *concept* of being considered "library users," as well as "good students." (The same dynamic, presumably, applies to being taught to be "good parents," "good Americans," or "healthy.") Young people are taught overtly or covertly to think of information as *text-based* by nature. Teaching how to evaluate web-based information is universally ignored, partly because young people already assume that whatever they see on the web is by definition authoritative. (Without irony, Prof. Cool recalled in an anecdote how a student had asked her to post a lecture she had delivered on the web so the student could cite it.) She did introduce us to a new word, "intersubjectivity." I don't recall who coined it, but apparently it refers to the process of classifying information along cognitive developmental levels.

Few illustrations of findings or insights were given by Prof. Cool, other than that some academics had studied a small group of school children who used the Yahooligans website. Some observations showed that children preferred the aid of pictures (or pictograms) when structuring an inquiry. Currently only one or two child-oriented search engines have been developed that employ pictures (without text) as a query-identifying language. Whether children use designated or recommended databases any more than undergraduates or adults do was never addressed. Prof. Cool hinted that search engines as they currently exist leave something to be desired in their effectiveness in teaching critical thinking skills to children.

While Prof. Cool never finished her presentation, and thus never offered a "conclusion," her remarks indicated that she believed children should be increasingly involved in the graphic, as well as cognitive, design of search engines - and catalogs. The notion was not fleshed out. Since no time was allowed - or requested - for questions and answers, this idea was passed over without comment. From speaking with others, I could tell I wasn't the only person who had been enervated, to say the least, by the false promise of this lecture and the compulsive indifference of the speaker.

Reported by **Godlind Johnson**:

Information Commons: Public Space and the Threat to the Electronic Information Space, by Howard Besser, Professor UCLA School of Education and Information.

To me this talk was the most interesting of the day. Besser discussed the concept of a "commons" and how the Information Commons is encroached upon by commercial interests, mirroring the disappearance or commercialization of the physical commons of water, air, public spaces, etc…

By definition a "commons"is not owned or controlled by anyone, and it is used by a diversity of people. Examples of physical commons are the Greek Agora, village marketplaces, etc. The information commons fosters free speech, exposure to diversity, inspiration for new thoughts and ideas, etc. However, all of this is being threatened by commercial restrictions on access to content, by the "commodification" of the intellectual commons, whose content would be critical for the wellbeing of society.

Commodification includes the granting of perpetual copyright/loss of the public domain; erosion of Fair Use; the trend to licensing information instead of selling, thereby giving the content industry control over downstream use. The content industry wants consumers, no interference from other content providers, to treat content as a mere commodity, disregarding the impact on society by stifling creativity and progressive development.

References:
www.digitalconsumer.org : A digital consumer bill of rights.
www.gseis.ucla.edu~howard/copyright H. Besser's information on copyright issues.
The Hollings Bill: "…providing for private sector development of technological protection measures to be implemented and enforced by Federal regulations to protect digital content …."
Lee Felsenstein, 1993, The Commons of Information, *Dr. Dobbs Journal*.

Reported by **Janet Clarke**:

Diane Berry is the Automation Consultant at the Mid-York Library System. Her talk, titled, "The impact of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) on the way libraries do business," focused on describing what CIPA is and outlining its impact on libraries. She also discussed future possibilities with respect to this new law.

CIPA was signed into law in 2000 and requires public libraries to be in compliance by 2004. Generally, CIPA restricts funding that public libraries and schools get from 3 federal programs if in non-compliance: Universal Service E-Rate, Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), and Title 3 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). While it does not *mandate* filters on library computers, the law requires public and school libraries to have an Internet Safety Policy, to use technological measures (e.g., filter software) to prevent visual displays of child pornography, etc.; and for E-rate applicants, to hold at least one public hearing on the Internet Safety Policy. While the law does not apply directly to academic and special libraries, Berry suggests

that it may include these types of libraries in the near future. The FCC is the primary enforcement agency.

Berry outlined three general considerations for libraries in deciding whether to use filters: professional ethics, financial responsibilities, and services. Filters by nature censor materials, even undesirable ones, and that goes against the ALA code of ethics. In addition, implementing filtering software may add impractical costs to the library. CIPA may also hinder library service because of the restrictions to materials access.

Finally, Berry suggested two methods of impacting this law, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the Federal Government does have the right to restrict funding to libraries unless libraries restrict access to certain things. Two avenues for change are: litigation and legislation. She concluded with a challenge to libraries, that we rethink our mission: "LIbraries need to think/present ourselves as bigger than just serving the educational and cultural needs of a community, but rather to create a bigger presence in the society at large because what we're doing is far bigger than what we're saying" in our mission statements.

Useful websites:
http://www.ala.org/cipa/
http://www.sl.universalservice.org/reference/CIPAGuidance2003.asp
http://writ.findlaw.com/hilden/20030701.html
http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/02-361.ZS.html