



Cheryl Kern-Simirenko



On My Mind ... a message from the Dean

With the advent of the Internet, “content is king” and “the information age” became common expressions. Certainly we live in an age when more information is available than ever before in the history of the world. We are, however, experiencing another rapid shift, this time in the way that information and knowledge are being created and applied.

As the Internet evolves into a dynamic, interactive environment, software tools that enable open composition, discussion, collaboration and repository creation are transforming our world. Mass collaboration is proving to be the mother of invention. Increasingly, we see real-world demonstrations of the value of applying collective, and not necessarily expert, intelligence to problem-solving.

Two examples of transformation and mass collaboration, from 2007 headlines, come readily to mind. Mapmaking, once the exclusive purview of cartographers, has been revolutionized by user-friendly tools that merge data from different sources and layer data on a single map. Software, such as Google’s My Maps, Microsoft’s Collections and Platial, make it easy for anyone to customize maps. The Center for Citizen Media is using Platial for a project documenting reconstruction of a New Orleans neighborhood, with the participation of researchers, journalism students and residents.

GalaxyZoo (galaxyzoo.org) harnesses mass collaboration in identifying and classifying galaxies from a million telescopic photos. Researchers at the University of Portsmouth, Oxford University and Johns Hopkins University opened this major astronomy project to volunteers last July.

Volunteers are trained via a tutorial and then tested on their ability to classify known galaxies. Once a volunteer has correctly identified eight out of 15 galaxies, he or she begins reviewing images. If volunteers enter conflicting data about a particular image, it is subject to further review. Volunteers receive no compensation. The excitement of contributing is its own reward, along with being first to view an area of the universe. Intellectual curiosity appears to be alive and well on the Internet!

Howard Rheingold’s “Smart Mobs” (Basic, 2002), James Surowiecki’s “The Wisdom of Crowds” (Doubleday, 2004) and Tapscott’s and Williams’ “Wikinomics” (Portfolio, 2006) make thought-provoking reading as we contemplate what these developments mean for the academy. In library science, as in other disciplines, the challenge will be to grasp the implications of this transformation and develop effective strategies for applying collective intelligence and interactive tools to our work.

As we struggle to balance existing models with these new modes of knowledge discovery, learning and communication, it seems wise to reflect on the deep skepticism that has greeted new modes of inquiry and communication over the centuries. The early printed book was often an object of contempt, regarded as a shoddy imitation and a profoundly troubling source of rampant error, since all copies were identical. In Phaedrus, Plato shows us a Socrates who is distinctly averse to the written word. He objected to the absence of dialog and the ability to interrogate the thinker/writer. I can’t help but wonder whether Socrates might just view collaboration tools as a way to recover the opportunity for challenging the source and the immediacy of intellectual discourse that he so valued.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Employees dressed up as Potter characters



UA mascot Zippy visited Dean Cheryl Kern-Simirenko.

UL employees served food to hungry student visitors to UL's tent.

Student assistant Scott Marshand (aka Harry Potter) served as emcee for a series of contests and games for UA students to learn about the library and to test their Harry Potter knowledge.
(Photo courtesy of Patrick Tabatcher, DDS)

Melanie (Minerva McGonagall) Smith and Kaye Ketcham

Lori (Sybil Trelawney) Fielding

Phyllis O'Connor and Roger (Severus Snape) Durbin

UL took second place in a campus contest for "Best Tent" during Student Appreciation Day. Led by Melanie Smith, the UL created its version of the Hogwarts Library from the ever popular Harry Potter book series.
(Photo courtesy of Patrick Tabatcher, DDS)

International visitors come to Bierce Library

Twelve academic library directors from throughout Thailand traveled together to tour Ohio libraries. Their first stop was in Akron where they spent an enjoyable afternoon touring the facilities and discussing issues with UL faculty and staff.

The visiting librarians were especially interested in studying our cooperative ventures, particularly our lending through OhioLINK, traditional interlibrary lending and document delivery. They also wanted to learn about librarians' faculty rights and responsibilities, such as publishing and making presentations, professional involvement, and the retention and tenure process.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Steve Aby's tome sparks discussion

The Academic Bill of Rights Debate: A Handbook (Praeger, 2007), by library faculty member Steve Aby, has received significant critical notice and generated considerable discussion in public forums concerned with this topic.

In one instance, a series of interviews with scholars, thinkers, commentators and others who contributed essays to Aby's collection, including Professor Michael Berube from Penn State, appeared on the "Free Exchange on Campus" Web site (<http://www.freeexchangeoncampus.org/>). An initial interview with Aby launched the extended discussion of the issues raised in his important work.



Steve Aby, professor

Psychology Archives hosts national conference

The Archives of the History of American Psychology (AHAP) hosted a national conference titled "Psychological Perspectives on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons: A Retrospective and Prospective Discussion." The conference marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of psychologist Evelyn Hooker's classic article, "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual." The article is credited with starting the movement to depathologize homosexuality.

The 50-year anniversary of her article provided an opportunity to reflect on progress that has been made and discuss steps in moving the discussion forward. Ten nationally known scholars presented historical and contemporary developments related to psychology and society's attention to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons. The event was capped off with a showing of the 1992 Academy Award-nominated documentary film, "Changing Our Minds: The Story of Dr. Evelyn Hooker."

Little things mean a lot



More than 8,000 financial transactions were conducted last year at the freestanding ATM in the front lobby of Bierce Library.

Little things mean a lot



UL sent 183,830 electronic notices in one year reminding borrowers that their materials were coming due, a service that saved many borrowers from late charges.



Roberta Robertson, at left, Carol Ficken, Sara Douglas

Charissa McDowell and Shelle Davis



Melanie Smith, (second from left), and Susan Ashby, (third from right) along with members of the EGL-IUG Planning Committee.

Regional conference held at UA

University Libraries hosted the fourth annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Innovative Users Group on the UA campus in the fall. Expert practitioners in the various components and subsystems of Innovative Interfaces (Illi) conducted informative and practical sessions that showed attendees how to maximize system usage. Instruction covered cataloging, acquisitions and serials modules, and Innovative Interfaces public catalog and electronic resources management systems.

Susan Ashby, library systems, and Melanie Smith, circulation, served as the co-coordinators for the event, giving visitors from Canada, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Northern Ohio a good look at the attractive new campus buildings, landscaping and services at the University.

Several UL employees made presentations. Carol Ficken and Sara Douglas, acquisitions, along with Roberta Robertson of the law library, gave a talk on using the system to anticipate and prevent problems in ordering and receiving materials. Charissa McDowell and Shelle Davis, circulation, talked about an inventive project for managing the collection by using Illi information.

ALL ABOUT LEARNING



UL hosts information literacy workshop

A daylong workshop on integrating information literacy skills into the curriculum was hosted by University Libraries for the faculties of UL, science and engineering, and the humanities and social science disciplines. Guest speaker for the day was Dr. Caroline Stern, an English professor at Ferris State University and an internationally recognized advocate of faculty/librarian collaboration. She shared tips for successfully integrating information literacy into coursework. She also focused on assessing the outcomes of instructional efforts through various rubrics for scoring accomplishment of learning objectives.

Learning Commons consultant

Nan Weir, an architectural professional for more than 25 years, has focused her career on academic and public libraries, churches, senior centers and government projects. For the past seven years her work has been primarily with libraries.

Before coming to UL as our consultant for the Learning Commons project, Weir worked on more than 40 highly regarded library projects, including the Ohio University Alden Library Learning Commons, Franklin University Library, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Jacksonville Public Library.

Weir brings valuable leadership, library planning expertise and group facilitation skills to the process of developing the service model program statement and conceptual space plan for the Learning Commons that will reshape Bierce Library.



UL goes iTunes

University Libraries regularly presents a series of Brown Bag Seminars on how to successfully use various databases and other software products. All UA faculty, staff and students are invited to these learning sessions – which can be either in lecture format, a demonstration, a panel and discussion, or an interactive session.

In order to market the series better and to provide additional and convenient access to the information, the UL has begun creating video and Web-friendly versions of the sessions and mounting them electronically on the University's iTunes U. <http://itunesu.uakron.edu/>

iTunes is a digital player application designed for music

and video use that has transformed into a means of presenting all sorts of information that can be accessed via the Internet and downloaded onto a variety of devices, including iPods. Appropriately enough, the first UL iTunes Library entry is a lecture/demonstration on searching music in the new music-streaming database, Naxos.

Other presentations available on iTunes are seminars on the use of RefWorks to manage bibliographic citations, searching for legal information, avoiding plagiarism in classroom assignments and research, and how to successfully use personal document delivery services.

Little things mean a lot



Responding to an average of 220 requests per month, UL e-mails PDF copies of articles to students and faculty as part of its electronic document delivery program.

Faculty notes on newly acquired research databases

Jim Crowe, UA's School of Art slide librarian and associate lecturer, finds ArtStor, a database of about 500,000 images on art, architecture and archeology, "an indispensable tool" for finding art images for classes and lectures.



Thomas Craig, at left, a graduate assistant in geography and planning; Aaron Wisroth, UL graduate assistant; Deborah King, geography and planning instructor; and Peter Linberger, associate professor of bibliography, at the Brown Bag seminar on using SimplyMap.

Kevin Butler, manager of GIS research for the department of geography and planning, says of the database SimplyMap, "University Libraries has purchased a program which extends the functionality of Web-based mapping beyond location maps only. SimplyMap is a powerful yet highly intuitive tool which enables faculty and students from all disciplines to generate thematic maps for their presentations and reports." Maps can be generated using business, demographic and marketing data.



Stokes rejoins UL as assistant dean

Professor of bibliography Nancy L. Stokes rejoined University Libraries as assistant dean, effective Oct. 1, 2007. Stokes has responsibility for coordinating UL programming, including the extensive conference planning that the Archives of the History of American Psychology (AHAP) is undertaking as a result of the Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation endowment.

Stokes also coordinates internship opportunities at Smithsonian Museums, available to UA students as a result of AHAP's affiliate status. In addition, she will help establish and coordinate a staff and professional development program, plan effective approaches to the diverse and continuous learning needs of the UL, and undertake extensive data analysis for UL decision making.

Student support services move into Bierce Library

The Office of Student Academic Success has moved into Bierce Library. The units are Tutoring Services, the Math Lab and the Writing Lab. The move is in anticipation of the Learning Commons and will provide opportunities to establish and test these basic services along with library and technology support for students and faculty.



Marjorie Keil is interim director of the Writing Lab.



Sandra Jovicic is interim director of Tutoring Services.



Christine (Chris) Kolaczewski-Ferris is director of the Math Lab.

Miller granted emeritus status



John Miller, at right, associate professor of bibliography, was granted emeritus status upon his retirement from the University after 35 years of service. Miller was head of University Archives, the University records officer and head of the American History Research Center. He participated in national, state and local organizations, including the Society of American Archivists and its state chapter. He worked closely with community-based groups. In recognition of these and other contributions, Akron Mayor Donald Plusquellic declared Dec. 3, 2007, "John V. Miller Day" in a proclamation presented by Deputy Mayor Dave Lieberth, at left, to Miller at his retirement event.

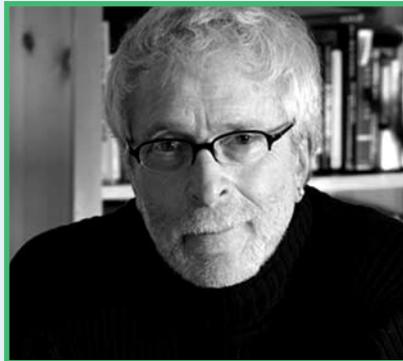
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Creative nonfiction writer Gutkind to speak

Lee Gutkind, author of "Almost Human: Making Robots Think," will discuss his book and his work at Martin University Center on Wednesday evening, April 2. The time of the event will be announced later.



Little things mean a lot

UL provides convenient book drops for students and faculty to return materials. Two outdoor book drops are adjacent to Bierce Library, one in the front and another at the back of the building. There is one book drop in the Polsky Building and one in the Student Union, both located near Starbucks. Another is located at the front door of the Science and Technology Library in Auburn Science and Engineering Center, and the newest at Medina County University Center.

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Legacy for Learning bookplate program

Memorialize or honor a loved one, friend or associate through the UL's Legacy for Learning bookplate program. Made-to-order inscriptions create a gift that is both personal and meaningful. For more information, call 330-972-7224, or e-mail bookplates@uakron.edu. To access an online order form, go to www.uakron.edu/libraries/bookplate.php.



Little things mean a lot

UL sells flash drives (small electronic mass-storage devices) as a convenient way for students and faculty to save information they are working on and for inserting into a printer for quick photocopying.

Other contributors: Peg Goodman, Dean Goumas, Dorothy Guich, Kaye Ketcham, Phyllis O'Connor, Melanie Smith and Reneé Wilson