



Web Journal of the SLA Western Canada Chapter

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It is with great pleasure that I thank the members of the SLA WCC for their support and for providing me with the opportunity to contribute to this Chapter. As the Chapter President for this year, I am committed to ensuring the provision of relevant programming and networking opportunities for our members, and to making your membership a meaningful one.

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January 1st 2007 marked the beginning of the new governance year for the WCC, and the first time that it will be in line with the fiscal year. Over the past two years, board members have been beginning and ending terms both in the spring and in the winter. In terms of acknowledging and thanking volunteers, this can get confusing.

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First, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the December 2006 outgoing board members: Peggy Neal (Membership Chair), Tanya Evancio (Archives), Richard Matiachuk (Employment), Keith Low (Past President), Deborah Hutchison (Vancouver Director), Karol Sinats (Victoria Co-Director), Barb Storms (Edmonton Director), and Jenny Fry (Student Liaison).

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I would like to acknowledge the many board members who are continuing their involvement or have signed on to new positions: Susan McConkey (President-Elect), Andrea Freeman (Secretary), Kevin Lindstrom (Treasurer), Frances Main (Membership), Deborah Copeman (Discussion List), Christina Zeller (Past President), Debbie Schachter (Communications/Webmaster), Susanne Barker (Victoria Co-Director), Phyllis Thornton (Calgary Director), Janice Ludberg (Manitoba Director), Daphne Bruce (Fund Development) and Suzanne Nykoluk (Virtual Programs).

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the new board members for 2007: Anne O'Shea (Bulletin Editor), Grazyna Nawrocka (Archives), Maria Swarbrick (Employment Chair), Lesley Perkins (Vancouver Director), Pam Wilkins (Victoria Co-Director), Weiwei Shi (Edmonton Director), Charlene Kramer (Saskatchewan Director), and Shirley Lew (Student Liaison).

I am very grateful to all of those who made the commitment to contribute to the Association through their volunteer efforts. Many thanks for your dedication and hard work.

SLA Leadership Summit 2007 - Reno

Some three weeks into my role as Chapter President SLA WCC, I attended the SLA Leadership Summit in Reno. The Chapter was well-represented at the event, and also in attendance were: Susan McConkey (President-Elect), Christina Zeller (Past-President and member of the Seattle Annual Conference planning committee), and Barbara Holder (Environment & Resource Management Division Chair Elect). I think we all found Reno an interesting place to hold the Summit, and the Nugget casino resort, an interesting venue. (Did you know there are slot machines in the Reno airport?)

For me, the highlight of the two days was the keynote speaker, Chip Heath, author of "Made to Stick: Why some Ideas Survive and Others Die", who talked about "sticky ideas" and the "curse of knowledge". Chip outlined the success factors for sticky ideas: simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, emotional and stories. **Information Outlook** (Vol.10, no. 11) November 2006, features an interview with Chip that goes over many of the ideas he spoke about and I recommend that you read it if you haven't already.

Chip's session segued very nicely into the next session "Marketing and Communicating your Message". Many of us are handicapped by the curse of knowledge, making it difficult for us to move from the abstract to the concrete and to communicate with our clients in ways that they can understand. Over lunch we talked about, and

practiced, the elevator speeches that we developed in the workshop. Staying with the communication theme, after lunch we participated in a mini workshop "Running Effective Meetings".

Ken Haycock opened Day 2 with a thought provoking talk entitled "Leadership & You: Tackling the Dragon". He touched on many different leadership ideas, ranging from defining leadership through skills, tasks and attributes, to recognizing success factors.

I also attended sessions, such as the Chapter Cabinet meeting, that dealt with specific business matters. Although I learned much from these sessions, the networking opportunities were probably the most beneficial, and certainly the most fun. Meeting with my colleagues from across North American and further afield was always a pleasure. In addition, Susan, Christina and I were able to spend time together discussing great plans for the future of the WCC.

Attending the SLA Leadership Summit was a great way to start off my year as Chapter President. I am confident that we will continue to provide meaningful and relevant programs for our members this year. I hope you will feel free to contact me anytime with your ideas or comments.

SLA News

Over the two days of the Summit, we were also informed about the latest SLA initiatives and projects for members. In summary:

- Information Outlook – new look and format unveiled in the January 2007 issue
- Conference planning is underway for the 2009 Centennial year, to take place in Washington, D.C.
- The 2007 Annual Conference in Denver is now open for registration
- The 2006 SLA Annual Salary Survey & Workplace Study is now available for purchase on the website
- Click University, the online campus for information professionals, has launched a Competitive Intelligence Certificate Program, as well as a new series called Gary Price's Research Toolbox: Quarterly Updates. Further information is available on the website: <http://www.clickuniversity.com/>
- SLA members will now receive an 11% discount on all web-based distance learning offered through the University of Toronto's Professional Learning Centre (PLC).

Robyn McDowell
President, SLA Western Canada Chapter

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Chapter & SLA News

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by *Debbie Schachter, [Communications Director](#)*.

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- Minutes of the [2006 SLA WCC AGM](#) are available on the website.

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Upcoming Events & Conferences

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Registration is now open for the 2007 SLA Conference, to be held in Denver. Early bird registration continues until May 1, 2007, and Conference Housing is now also open. See details at the [SLA Conference website](#).

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Check our [Programs page](#) to find out plans for professional development and social events that SLA WCC will be hosting throughout the chapter this year. The events for the month are always posted on the home page of the website as well.

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Be sure to monitor the following:

- [Calendar of SLA Events](#) - Schedule of SLA events and meetings, including chapter and division activities.
- [Information Industry Calendar](#) - Schedule of Non-SLA Conferences and Exhibits maintained by SLA HQ.

SLA News Releases & Announcements

Recent [SLA News Releases](#) include:

- [Dow Jones, LexisNexis and Thomson Scientific & Dialog Sponsor 2007 SLA Leadership Summit](#) (18 January 2007)
- [SLA's Click University Receives IACET Accreditation](#) (11 January 2007)
- [President Rachel Kolsky of SLA Europe Named "Information Professional of the Year" at International Information Industry Awards](#) (8 December 2006)
- [SLA's Click University Opens Registration for Competitive Intelligence Certificates Program](#) (28 November 2006)

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Welcome to volume 10, no. 2 of *Wired West: Web Journal of the SLA Western Canada Chapter*. I'd like to extend a warm thanks to all who contributed to this issue. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

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Coming soon - virtual tours

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Beginning with the next issue (Spring 2007), we'll be rolling out a new feature - virtual tours of members' libraries and organizations. As special librarians we work in a wide range of settings, with varied responsibilities. A virtual tour gives your colleagues across Western Canada a chance to peek into your life. They'll see and read about your organization, your position and responsibilities, your core collections (both print and electronic), what is unique about your job and how you bring value to your organization. I hope that by sharing our work, we can inspire fellow chapter members, spark new ideas and expand our professional toolbox.

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Interested in participating? Please [contact me](#) and let me know if you'd like to contribute a virtual tour.

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Remember that *Wired West* is always willing to hear about SLA WCC member activities.

Share your news

Have you changed jobs recently or been promoted? Have you received an award or recognition of any kind lately? Have there been significant movements or changes in your organization? Are you an SLA WCC member taking a leadership role in other library/information organizations? Did you participate (as panelist or speaker) at a conference recently? *Wired West* wants hear and publish your news!!!

Articles of interest to the SLA WCC community are always welcome, some suggestions for article topics can include:

- interesting projects you've tackled
- interviews with members
- marketing your library or services
- trends in library computing
- new tools you like
- cataloguing
- managing an electronic collection
- plus any other ideas...

Wired West is currently produced quarterly: November 15, February 15, May 15 and August 15. Deadline for text is normally the first day of the month before the next publication date e.g. November 1, February 1, May 1 and August 1.

[Submissions](#) to the SLA WCC Web journal are welcome at any time. Please send comments, ideas, or suggestions to the [Wired West Editor](#).

Anne O'Shea is an Information Specialist at the BC Securities Commission..

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All roads lead to communication: key skills in a changing environment

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The following is the winning essay of the first SLA WCC Scholarship for Special Librarianship

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"In our media society, whoever is uninformed and unable to communicate no longer exists." -Rafael Ball, 2000
(1)

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Special librarians often perform every duty, from shelving to management, in their library. They may work alone or in a small team, and they serve a particular clientele in a specific subject area (2, 3). Because of this, special librarians must be able to switch task focus easily, must know their sources and clientele needs, and must be able to keep on top of new information and opportunities for their library as these emerge. Above all, special librarians must be able to communicate effectively.

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As more information is available in new types of media and technology, and an increasing amount is open-access (free) online, special librarians must fight to keep their libraries open. There is pressure from parent organizations to reduce spending and the library, its resources, and its staff, are often seen as expendable unless they can prove otherwise (1, 3). This challenge demands excellent communication skills on the part of the librarians, simply to keep their library and their job alive.

Higher-ups must be kept convinced that their information specialists are essential to their organization. Special librarians must confidently assert the necessity of their services and allocated space. Those services should also be regularly promoted to the clientele (3, 4), even when the clientele consists solely of internal staff members.

Good rapport with the clientele must be achieved so that they too will validate the necessity of the librarian to the organization. Communication between special librarians and other information professionals is also beneficial in order to produce a value-added service and enable librarians to stay on top of their game even in the face of information glut and rapid technological advancement.

Special libraries tend to run on more of a business approach than public libraries, and businesses tend to try and keep ahead of technology developments that will give them a competitive edge. One such development could be thought of as Web 2.0 applications. These are generally web-based tools that allow rapid transmission of information between users, no matter their location (5). Wikis and other file-sharing programs are being adopted by businesses to facilitate collaboration and reduce costs (5). The ability to edit material and share it online can increase efficiency and reduce the number of emails in already-crowded in-boxes.

Librarians are familiar with these concepts because of shared online catalogs and a standard cataloging style, MARC21, which allows the sharing of MARC records to avoid cataloging the same material twice from scratch. Special librarians, to better serve their organizations, must be able to take this form of communication further. Efficient internet-based communication tools such as wikis and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone systems can also save company money by reducing long-distance fees (6). Embedded within these technological challenges are the ability to assess which of the web-based applications best serves a special library's organizational interests, and the ability to teach staff how to effectively use the chosen applications.

New, changing, and open-access technologies challenge the very premise of special libraries. The key skill required to respond to the new challenges is communication. Effective communication will ensure that library services remain useful and are seen as essential by current and potential clientele and employers.

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SLA Leadership Summit 2007: The Reno Experience

[Leadership](#)

By [Susan McConkey](#)

[Member Resources](#)

"Was it worth it?" someone asked me today. I replied very enthusiastically, "Yes! It certainly was." Let me tell you why.

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For most of us traveling to Reno was a multi-airport experience. Our 2 day summit was actually held in Sparks close to the Reno airport. Approx. 200 people attended this mid-winter event. They represented SLA chapters in North America, Australia/New Zealand, and Europe, as well as SLA divisions and conference planning committees.

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SLA Midwinter is an intimate experience

As attendees number about 200, this conference is intended to bring members together to share chapter and division experiences. It wasn't difficult to find Toronto chapter members and discuss issues and event planning with them.

ISSN 1483-9288

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Robyn McDowell and I were fortunate at one point to sit with Washington, DC representatives. This chapter holds more than 100 events per annum. Within their chapter they have a military group, a government group, etc. committed to offering members quality programs, networking opportunities and so much more.

Breakfast, refreshment breaks, lunch, evening reception and daily sessions presented us with the opportunity to talk to colleagues.

In addition, as Western Canada Chapter is made up of 4 provinces and 2 territories, communication by email is sometimes difficult. It was quite beneficial for Robyn and me to meet at this event, especially when she is beginning her term as President of our chapter, in order to plan and exchange ideas for the coming year.

Keynote speakers

Chip Heath delivered a talk on "sticky" ideas. He explained why we remember certain ideas. He stressed that successful message have to cross boundaries, in and out of corporations. These messages are also simple, unexpected, emotional, concrete, credible, and may also be related as stories. His book, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Stick and Others Die*, contains some wonderful examples of some very "sticky" ideas.

Ken Haycock spoke about leadership. His humorous talk entitled *Leadership and You: Tackling the Dragon* addressed many leadership issues.

Relevant sessions

Sessions such as Communicating Your message and Running Effective Meetings focused upon practical matters for SLA volunteer leaders.

Author bio in italics.

What's new from SLA headquarters?

SLA will unveil AMS, a new membership system designed to meet the needs of chapter and division leaders. It

will offer convenient membership lists, event planning etc.

SLA is also considering developing a wicki for members to share event ideas.

Information Outlook magazine has a new look.

See SLA Click U section for information about training opportunities and discounts. For example, SLA members are offered an 11% discount on all web-based distance learning from the University of Toronto Professional Learning Centre.

In 2009 SLA will celebrate its centennial. SLA plans to produce a book on SLA history. Additionally, the Centennial Planning Committee is planning an exciting conference in Washington DC for 2009.

They are planning to open an online library! Via EBRARY, SLA will be offering you free access to about 900 online professional books in 2007. This collection contains many leadership and management books.

SLA executive is investigating strategic realignment. They hope to review branding and consider initiatives to realign the organization to meet present and future challenges. You will hear more about this initiative in 2007.

Conclusion

The Leadership Summit was a very worthwhile experience. We met some of SLA headquarters staff, learned about new SLA initiatives and 2007 directions. We met so many people, who are also involved in similar chapter activities, and attended sessions which were designed to help us understand and perform our SLA WCC roles in 2007.

Susan McConkey is a Commerce Librarian at the University of Saskatchewan Library in Saskatoon, SK and 2007 President-Elect of the Western Canada Chapter of SLA.

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Managing [InfoAction](#), the fee-based research and information service at Vancouver Public Library, means developing expertise across a broad range of business topics. We spend a lot of time on due diligence and market research, as well as frequent research in many other areas. These are a few of my most-visited sites, plus a favourite from my days managing the website content at the BC Securities Commission.

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- Canadian Company Capabilities from Strategis/Industry Canada http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_coinf/ccc/engdoc/homepage.html - database of 50,000 Canadian businesses categorized and fully searchable. Great for finding companies and profiling competition in an industry.
- Stockwatch - <http://www.stockwatch.com/> - if you ever need to quickly find directors and officers, rumours about venture companies, and affiliations, Stockwatch makes a great starting place (although you may want check Corporate Online or SEDAR to ensure accuracy). Start with the 30 day free trial to find out if it's worth signing up for a very inexpensive account.
- NationMaster - statistical comparisons of countries on almost any topic, for example, [wine consumption by country](#). Fun to explore. We rank #4 in membership in voluntary professional associations (Australia is #1).
- SLA Member Directory (for SLA members-only) http://www.sla.org/ecommm_phase1/member_search/WhosWhoSearch.asp - I use this when I need to find a librarian with expertise in a certain area for a quick answer, or the email address of someone I met at a conference.
- Pew Internet & American Life Project - <http://www.pewinternet.org/> - Canadian statistics on Internet use remain difficult to find, but for up-to-date American statistics this website always covers the latest trends with comprehensive information and stats.

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On the personal side, my current favourite is OpenTable Vancouver at <http://www.opentable.com/start.aspx?m=73&n=165>. If you love going out for dinner, this website lets you find available restaurants and book online (available for Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg too). Plus you accumulate points towards gift certificates!

Finally, if you've never seen <http://www.csszengarden.com/> check it out for the amazing things designers can do using CSS. The concept is that the designer can change only the stylesheet - the creativity on this site continues to amaze me.

Christina Zeller is the Manager of InfoAction at Vancouver Public Library and Past President of SLA WCC.

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