



Web Journal of the SLA Western Canada Chapter

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This September in Athens I had the pleasure of meeting a librarian from the National Library of Greece. He was working in the foyer of the National Library gently dissuading tourists from entering the research library. I was one of the tourists shooed out. He took the time to tell us a little bit about the building, its architecture and history. At one point during our conversation I mentioned to him that I was a librarian, and his manner towards me changed from formal politeness to genuine eagerness to provide information and, as a fellow librarian, to assist me in any way he could.

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As I sat down to write this column, I was reflecting on how this chance meeting illustrates the collegial strength of our profession, and how this good will is international in understanding. I feel that this collegial understanding and good will is also exemplified by our WCC board. Being President has been a wonderful experience, and I strongly recommend it to any of you who are considering it. It has been great working with the board and I am very proud of what we have accomplished over this past year.

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Highlights:

- the speaker tour with Joe Matthews
- the introduction of a Travel Grant
- the inaugural year for the SLA WCC Outstanding Information Professional Award
- an updated and electronic brochure
- a continuation of our virtual programs
- very fine local programs

This is my last *Wired West* column as President as I will be passing the gavel (virtually) to our incoming President, Susan McConkey, at the AGM on November 28th, and officially changing my position to that of Past President on January 1st. I would like to thank everyone on the board for their support and hard work over the past year, and I look forward to staying involved next year as Past President.

Robyn McDowell

[President, SLA Western Canada Chapter](#)

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

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- Minutes of the [October 2007 Board Meeting](#) are now available on the website.
- The new SLA WCC [Brochure](#) is now available on the website

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Upcoming Events & Conferences

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The "Click U" virtual program replay [Web Searching: Advanced Techniques for Google and Beyond](#), presented by Greg Notess, is available to November 24, 2007 to any SLA Western Canada Chapter member.

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:

- [SLA Announces 2008 Board of Directors Election Results](#)
(17 October 2007)
- [New Certificate Program for Knowledge Management Professionals](#)
(12 October 2007)
- [Special Libraries Association Urges FTC to Reconsider Decision on Net Neutrality](#)
(13 September 2007)
- [Special Libraries Association Recognizes Military Librarians with 2007 Professional Award](#)
(23 August 2007)

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Welcome to volume 11, no. 1 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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Watch for the next issue of *Wired West* which will be hitting your inbox mid-February. It will include write-ups of the AGM, Stephen Abrams' visit to Vancouver, a member article on library renovations, a summary of Ulla de Stricker's recent talk and a history of the Vancouver Online Users Group.

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Share your news

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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!!!

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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...

I am also looking for a volunteer for our next virtual tour. [Email me](#) if you're interested.

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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Joe Matthews Tour: Evaluation of Library Services

[Leadership](#)

By [Tracey Carmichael](#)

[Member Resources](#)

In October 2007, Joe Matthews swept through Western Canada providing workshops on determining and communicating the value of the library in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Joe has a long history of assisting libraries with planning and evaluation in his role as a consultant and faculty member at San Jose State University. This article summarizes both what he said at the Vancouver workshop and what I learned.

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As a profession, we've talked to death the idea that our organizations don't understand us or value what we do. Joe says that this is caused by 'The Iceberg Problem.' So much of what we do is invisible to the organization. Our customers see the output of our work but they often don't understand the inputs. This reminds me of the many lawyers I've worked with who wanted to sit with me while I researched their questions online, as if they could absorb my training, experience, and expertise through osmosis. These lawyers wanted to duplicate my output, not understanding the complexity and depth of the inputs.

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Many of us want to get the organization to recognize and value our inputs:

- I have a Masters Degree!
- Do you know how much time I spent on that research?
- Can't you see the complexity of the taxonomy I created for you?

The reality is that no one cares about what went into the product; customers care about what they get out of the product. We need to have focused conversations with our clients to understand who they are and what they need. We need to see the value proposition from our client's perspective.

In a business environment, two things matter to management above all else: effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness focuses outward. It is the impact of the library on the parent organization. Efficiency focuses inward on one function within the library. We need to evaluate and measure two factors:

1. Are we doing the right things? [effectiveness]
2. Are we doing things right? [efficiency]

We need evidence that we are making a difference to the organization and that this difference is a good value relative to the investment being made (money for staffing, space, etc.) Joe outlined six ways that libraries typically add value:

1. Ease of use - what are the barriers in your library?
2. Noise reduction - How do you mitigate information overload?
3. Quality
4. Adaptability
5. Time savings - Do you perform more quickly than your competitors or customers?
6. Cost savings - Do you perform more cheaply than your competitors or customers?

The last two factors are often the biggest reason the library is valued. This is why it may be a better strategy to train administrative assistants to find documents needed frequently (legal cases, articles, etc.) and use your more expensive skills for hard to find information.

Measurement can be used to compare, diagnose, orient, inform, reward, sanction, or justify. Below are some ideas and examples Joe provided, illustrating the scope of the various ways you can prove your value:

- Find similar organizations and compare yourself to them.
- Conduct qualitative studies to get an in-depth evaluation from your clients. Use focus groups, etc.
- Use the WOREP - Wisconsin Ohio Reference Evaluation Program, an unobtrusive tool for evaluating in-person reference desk transactions. One part is completed by the client and one by staff.
- Look for existing studies to evaluate an existing service or function. For example, there are numerous studies on the effectiveness of OPACs. Evidence-Based Library and Information Practices, a new open access journal from University of Alberta, is an excellent resource.
- Consider an availability study to evaluate your collection. Find out what people were looking for when they came to the library and then figure out the outcome, including the reasons the item or information was not found.
- Finding out what customers are expecting and evaluating what you are delivering can identify gaps. Process re-engineering may be needed to close gaps and realign services.
- Be on the team, not a resource to the team. Your visibility is key and your contributions will be invisible if you only act as a conduit of information.
- Get your users to determine value. Your executives are too far away and your staff is too close. Neither is in the best position to determine value. If your executives whiff a problem in your library, they'll take action based on little or no information. Make sure you have objective evaluations from your users ready.
- Deliver reports on value and measurement in a language that makes sense to your decision-maker. Use their jargon, not your own. Always include at least one "snapper" - an impressive takeaway that will resonate with the audience.
- Consider a follow-up study to collect data on a specific interaction.
- Engage in activity-based costing to ensure that you know the real cost of a service. This activity estimates the cost of production with the cost of the resources used in the process.
- Calculate your TSCORE - the total salary spent in technical services divided by the acquisitions budget. Ideally the number is less than one.
- Conduct a priority and performance evaluation. This assumes that users can recognize the benefits they receive from information. You list your library services using terms your clients understand (jargon-free). You can include services you are thinking about offering. In a survey format, your clients rate the priority of each service and then rank your performance in performing that service. Mix the order in the second part to discourage patterned responses. Evaluate gaps between performance and priorities. Services with low priority and low performance should be discontinued. Those where priority exceeds performance need improving, possibly by shifting resources.
- Do a cost-benefit analysis. Ask your customers to identify benefits and compare to your costs. Two of the key benefits may be helping the organization avoid negative consequences and saving time.
- Figure out what outcome measures are relevant to your organization. For example: the ability to improve a policy or plan, proceed with the next step in a project, decide upon a course of action, avoid the loss of funds, prevent litigation, find new business, increase revenue, etc. Focus on your contributions to these outcomes and share the information with decision-makers.
- Evaluate your "differentiators." Why are you better than your competitors, including Google? Frequent factors are customer intimacy (your clients will share more with you because they know it will lead to more value,) service innovation and leadership, and operational excellence. Measuring value is meaningless without communicating it to someone. Write articles in your organization's internal communication vehicles, tell your stories, and seek external validation in awards and accolades. You will need to repeat your message often to effectively communicate your value.

Joe mentioned a number of red flags that signal a crisis in creating value for our organizations:

- You are doing the same things you were doing five years ago
- Your share of the pie is decreasing (budget, staffing, etc.)
- Your TSCORE is greater than one

If you see your library in any of these scenarios, act now! Every library can benefit from learning more about library effectiveness measures and the following books authored by Joe Matthews are great places to start:

1. *The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services*. Westport, CN: Libraries Unlimited, 2007.
2. *The Bottom Line: Measuring the Value of the Special Library or Information Center*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 2002

Tracey Carmichael is the Manager of Knowledge Management Services at the BC Securities Commission.

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Taking the Strain out of Stress

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By [Sandra Boutilier](#)

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Stress is a reality in all our lives, whether in our personal or professional worlds. On September 20th, SLA members gathered at the downtown YWCA for a seminar entitled "Taking the strain out of stress" to learn some techniques to better cope with and minimize the stress that it is so prevalent in today's society. BrainFit presenter Guy Pilch started the session by reminding us all that even though we experience stress physically, it is the mind that controls the stress response, and that there are things we can do to decrease our stress levels.

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Guy first had us think about how we can change Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs) into Positive Automatic Thoughts (PATs). The first step is to acknowledge the negative thoughts we all have (these are often an automatic negative response we have to a specific situation, thing or person), then decide if they are truly accurate and not exaggerated. Ultimately, the goal is to replace the automatic negative thought with a positive one. To use an example all librarians can relate to, imagine a situation where you are stressed out by a particular patron. First, acknowledge that you have negative thoughts about that person, and try to catch those thoughts as soon as they happen. Next, decide if your reaction is truly justified or if you have an exaggerated negative response (i.e. is the person really that bad)? Try to think of some positive thoughts that you can have the next time you see this patron (i.e. they always have a challenging question that will be interesting to tackle). If you practice these positive thoughts, they will replace the negative ones that you were originally saddled with. Your problem solving skills are better if you are not in a state of stress, and you are more likely to use new and innovative methods to find a solution. Controlling our response to stressors is key to better mental performance and avoiding chronic stress.

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The seminar covered a number of different stress relief exercises, and we were reminded that it is better to take regular moments throughout the day to de-stress, rather than to save up for one big stress release (for example, a vacation). Stress relief exercises, or even just taking a moment to disengage and take time to reflect, should be part of everyone's workday.

After discussing what our "hot button" issues were, and how to deal with situations where they might get pressed, Guy ended with the concept of Ikigai or "reason for life". Once we have each discovered our own Ikigai, we can focus on it when the little (and big) stresses of our 21st century lives threaten our health and mental fitness. Mindfulness and taking time out for oneself are not indulgences, but rather necessities if we are to work smarter and find a healthy balance in our lives.

Sandra Boutilier is a News Research Librarian at the Pacific Newspaper Group Library.

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2007 Librarians Run for the Cure

[Leadership](#)

By [Linda Yan](#)

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On September 30th, 2007, Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure raised \$26.5 million. This year's Run attracted more than 170,000 Canadians in 53 communities across the country. In Vancouver, more than 12,000 people braved the unrelenting rain for the worthy cause.

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Do you know that 215 Librarians Run for the Cure team members participated in the event from 19 different Run Sites across Canada? They also raised a total of \$38,750. The Toronto Run Site had the most team members with 32 participants in total. The Edmonton Run Site raised the most money with a \$9705 total.

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In Vancouver, Mr. Todd Mundle (*Associate Librarian - SFU*) raised \$1272.34 and made it to the Top Five Individual Fundraisers among all the Librarians Run for the Cure national team members. Todd also ran a very impressive 20:30 time for the 5 km course. Ms. Frances Main (*Research Specialist - Canada Revenue Agency*) and her husband completed the course in less than 30 minutes. Well done, Todd, Frances and Ian!

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September 30th was a beautiful, sunny day in the rest of the country, but it rained heavily in Vancouver. According to the event MC, this was the first year that it rained in Vancouver's 16-year Run for the Cure history. The grim weather might have slowed down some people, but it did not deter any of the determined crowd from completing the 5 km route.

This was my fourth year participating in this event, but my first year as a walker. Due to the heavy rain, the race looked like a race of colorful umbrellas and ponchos, to borrow the MC's phrase. It was very heart-warming and inspirational to walk among men and women of all ages - from high school students to seniors. Walking in the rain, I saw families from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, friends from different neighbourhoods or schools, colleagues from various organizations, and kids with their parents and grandparents. Many people dedicated their Run to a close family member, a teacher, a colleague, or to a toddler daughter -to eradicate breast cancer from her future vocabulary. At the end of the day, the soaked t-shirts, pants and shoes felt like a badge of honour for many people. I felt motivated to participate again in future years regardless of the weather!

Mark October 5th, 2008 on your calendar for next year's Run. I hope to see many of you on the Librarians Run for the Cure - Vancouver team. For more information, please contact:

Linda Yan
Team Captain for Vancouver
Research Specialist at the Canada Revenue Agency
Email: yanlb@yahoo.com



SLA WCC members Linda Yan and Frances Main show off their t-shirts

Linda Yan is a Research Librarian with the Canada Revenue Agency in Vancouver, BC.

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New Members

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The Western Canada Chapter welcomes all new and returning members. Unfortunately due to a recent change in member information systems at SLA headquarters, we have been unable to generate a report of new members for this bulletin. If you are a new member, please take a moment to send a short bio to [Anne O'Shea](#), Bulletin Editor, which will be published in the next issue of *Wired West*.

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Schachter, Debbie. "Info Pros Can Chart a Path to Excellence by Adopting Principles of Management." *Information Outlook* 11.11 (2007): 44-45.

----- "The New Secrets to Success: Change, Leadership, and Expertise." *Information Outlook* 11.10 (2007): 40-41.

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----- "Employee Learning May Outrank Customers-First Initiatives." *Information Outlook* 11.9 (2007): 44-45.

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