

Los Angeles County Library Restores Hours

County of Los Angeles Public Library (CoLAPL) officials are restoring service hours to all the libraries that previously saw their hours reduced owing to 2009–10 budget cuts. This comes after the Board of Supervisors approved this year’s \$178 million library budget, an increase of \$3.6 million. The system, one of the country’s largest, serves more than 3.5 million residents in 51 of the 88 incorporated cities of Los Angeles County.

Effective September 2, nearly all of the libraries will be open as many hours as they were before the cuts. All libraries will have their hours fully restored by the end of the fall.

This year’s increase is only a partial restoration of the library’s original budget, which was reduced by about \$5 million in 2009–10. As a result of that action, the working hours of approximately 39 of the system’s 85 libraries were impacted.

County Librarian Margaret Donnellan Todd said those lost hours were a blow to the communities that relied on those libraries for their computers and Wi-Fi and as a resource for finding jobs.

The library is primarily funded by a dedicated share of the property tax,

which during the recession actually went into negative growth. In addition, the county normally gives the library some general fund dollars. But those come from a combination of sales and property taxes, so that funding was reduced, too.

Todd called the situation “a perfect storm” and said she was forced to reduce the library hours as a result, but the county was able to keep from closing branches and laying off staff because it had strong reserve funds.

As areas in the state slowly recover from the recession, the board found that it was possible to restore hours. Todd has been getting positive response from community officials.

“For many of them, because the recession hit everyone hard, they even looked at trying to fund an extra day of service for their city [library], but they didn’t have the money either,” she said.

B.C. Digital Humanities Platform Looks To Grow

Fresh off of its second year of partnerships with six northeastern colleges and universities, Boston College’s Instructional Design + eTeaching Services (IDeS) department is beginning to look at ways to expand access to its proprietary MediaKron digital

humanities platform to other institutions, according to Tim Lindgren, senior instructional designer for IDeS.

“We’re trying to find a sustainable model for sharing it and also trying to enhance its capabilities for the kind of work that people here want to do,” Lindgren told *Hotline*.

Developed to help university faculty and instructors “tell stories with digital content,” this latest, 3.0 version of MediaKron is a freestanding HTML 5 application with a Drupal-based datastore and custom JavaScript written by IDeS. It is designed to make it easy for teachers to upload images, audio, video, and text to create dynamic, interactive learning sites on the web, with information displayed via time lines, maps, or slide shows, for example. MediaKron can also be used as a collaborative tool enabling students to work together on sites or create their own projects.

“We’re more and more seeing libraries as one of our exciting potential partnerships,” Lindgren said. “We’re hoping that this collaboration will solve some problems for them [in ways that] benefit the MediaKron project as a whole.... There’s a real effort to be part of a more open data sharing framework as we go along to figure out how we can both import from databas-

≡ INSIDE ≡

- Interview: Jim Schmidt2
- NYPL’s #Ireadeverywhere Initiative4
- Text Sets Advance College Readiness..4
- NYPL, Penn Partner for MOOC.....6
- LJ Names Associate News Editor7



Librarian of the Year

Library Journal is seeking nominations for the 27th annual Librarian of the Year Award to honor a professional librarian for outstanding achievement and accomplishments reflecting the loftiest service goals of the library profession.

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es but also make MediaKron available with its own [application programming interface], or some way that it can share data with other sources.”

Lindgren described MediaKron as a suite of interfaces that lower the barrier for people to get educational sites up and running. There are, he acknowledged, many tools that overlap with the platform’s capabilities—learning management systems, mapping and time line software, open source content management systems (CMSs) like WordPress or Drupal for running blogs or websites, and even digital humanities suites such as Omeka. With MediaKron, however, IDeS has worked to create a platform that offers a robust set of features but

requires minimal technical skills.

Judging by MediaKron’s documentation site, the learning curve should be minimal for users who are familiar with uploading content into a CMS such as WordPress.

The idea for MediaKron originated almost a decade ago, when IDeS was working with faculty to create customized sites for individual courses. While these sites were useful for the purposes of those specific courses, the investment of time and resources required to build customized sites was not scalable.

“We wanted to figure out ways to make what they had done available to other people,” Lindgren said.

The IDeS team began building the platform in 2006 using Drupal, but

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VP, Group Publisher Ian Singer
Editorial Director Rebecca T. Miller
Editor Lisa Peet

Contributing Editors
Cesar Bustamante Jr., Kate DiGirolomo,
Matt Enis, Bette-Lee Fox, Carly Okyle,
Meredith Schwartz, Carolyn Sun

Art Production Designer
Josephine Marc-Anthony

Creative Director Mark Tuchman

TO CONTACT HOTLINE:

Editorial
Phone: (646) 380-0700
Fax: (646) 380-0756/0757
E-mail: LJHotline@mediasourceinc.com
123 William St., Suite 802,
New York, NY 10038

Advertising
Roy Futterman or your LJ rep
Phone: (646) 380-0718
rfutterman@mediasourceinc.com

Classified
Howard Katz, Classified Manager
Phone: (646) 380-0730

Production
JoAnn Powell, Production Manager
Phone: (646) 380-0741

Subscriptions
Phone: 800-588-1030
www.libraryhotline.com/sub

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Interview with Jim Schmidt

On October 1, *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal* will host their fifth annual virtual conference, “The Digital Shift: Libraries @The Center.” RB Digital is a Gold Sponsor, and *Hotline* reached out to Jim Schmidt, RB Digital’s VP of sales and marketing, to address libraries’ role in the transformation of our culture from analog experiences to digital ones.



With mobile use creating an expectation of access everywhere, how is the library world rising to that challenge?

While is it easy to get swept up in reports of digital success stories, I think we all recognize that the library still serves an important role in distributing physical products and, sometimes equally importantly, in providing a safe environment for social interaction. The most successful libraries appear to be those that recognize the possibilities of a digital future while retaining the value of a traditional past.

How do libraries best support key community needs?

Some of our favorite success stories come from “nontraditional” partnerships that the

library has forged with the local community to fund specific areas of interest. In some cases, companies actually help fund career training/retraining services, and the library needs only the where-withal to ask. It is not uncommon for libraries to find “sponsors” within local communities to fund specific needs within the library. Libraries can take those traditional sources of revenue and modify them to work within a digital environment.

Now that all of the Big Five publishers offer ebooks to public libraries, what is the next step?





Unlimited access for a flat fee, fixed limits on circulations, pay per checkout, and pay per use are all models that are currently being used in libraries. All of these models are trying to strike a balance among publisher business needs, library budgetary constraints, growing patron demand, and mobile lifestyles. Time and experience will tell if one model will rise to the top, or if we will live in a world of many flavors.

To register for the free virtual Digital Shift event, please visit ow.ly/Bf2IU.






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MediaKron really began to take off in 2012, when a \$500,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation helped fund additional development and the expansion of the project to six partner

institutions: Boston University, Bucknell University, Clark University, Dartmouth College, Providence College, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

The grant was extended in 2013,

enabling Boston College and its partners to continue producing and showcasing new projects, such as Digital Dubliners, a student project developed at Boston College. The project, which has since been converted into an iBook, is a virtual guide to James Joyce's *Dubliners*. MediaKron is currently a proprietary solution that is only available to faculty, staff, and students at Boston College and its partners, but Lindgren reiterated that IDeS was ultimately aiming to make the platform more broadly available.

“Text Sets” To Advance College Readiness

Student Achievement Partners (SAP), a nonprofit founded by lead writers of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that creates and disseminates free education resources, announced its first training dates for its Text Set Project. The project brings together teams of librarians, educators, and suppliers to develop units of instruction—or “text sets”—to support teaching college readiness and CCSS. The initial sets will be annotated bibliographies of recommended multimodal, multigenre collections of free materials on a range of topics for the classroom.

The first three text set training sessions will take place in Chicago (September 16–17), Seattle (November 12–13), and Clark County, NV (February 23–24). The sessions consist of two-day programs with registered teams of one to two librarians and three to five educators. Each team will be paired with a trainer experienced in developing text sets who acts as a “coach” and helps the team develop and curate a unit of instruction that will support classroom studies on a range of topics and levels.

Text set training involves sharing research about the critical role knowledge-building plays in reading suc-

NYPL Sees Success with #Ireadeverywhere Initiative

On August 5, the New York Public Library (NYPL) launched a social media initiative using the hashtag #Ireadeverywhere. Participants can post pictures of themselves on social media reading in whatever location they wish to via that hashtag. People have taken pictures at hair salons, in front of the United Nations building, and on ferries and subways. Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, author of *The Handmaid's Tale*, took a photo reading among wildflowers, and *Sesame Street* character Cookie Monster shared a picture of himself reading at his grandmother's house.

“The response to this initiative has been tremendous,” said Angela Montefinise, NYPL's director of media relations. “Readers from across the globe have participated, sharing photos of themselves reading...in wrestling rings, in tattoo chairs, and just about everywhere else. The campaign has allowed us to spark real excitement around reading, as well as interest in the New York Public Library and all libraries.” Johannes Neuer, NYPL's director of digital engagement, said, “According to hashtracking.com, the library secured 35 million impressions with this campaign, and that's just on Twitter alone.” The library staged the campaign on all of its social media accounts, including Instagram, which Neuer said led to hundreds of new followers. The thousands of participants generated about 10,000 tweets, and with celebrities like Mindy Kaling and LeVar Burton participating, some reached millions in the Twitterverse. “The campaign generated 15,000 visits to the library's website,” Neuer said, noting that approximately half of those were from first-time visitors.

The Clinton Foundation took part, tweeting a picture of former secretary of state Hillary Clinton reading to her daughter when Chelsea was a young child. “Reading aloud regularly to young children is one of the most effective ways to enrich early language and literacy skills,” said Patti Miller, director of the Clinton Foundation's Too Small To Fail program, which focuses on closing the “word gap,” the difference in vocabulary and literacy levels among socioeconomic classes. “We hope this image...inspired parents, grandparents, and other caregivers to read to their own children from the very beginning.” *Reading Rainbow* also publicized the campaign.

“Promoting reading may seem an obvious thing for a library, but in today's world it's clear we need to shift from mainly opening our doors and letting people in to actively reaching out to cultivate experiences around reading [and] experiences that let readers share with each other, in person, and online,” said Christopher Platt, acting vice president of public service and director of reader services for NYPL.

One lesson of the campaign, Montefinise said, “is that libraries can share their mission and make a real impact on the online conversation without big marketing dollars. Most libraries are working with very limited budgets [for promotion]. With social media and some creativity, libraries can promote themselves extremely effectively, generating engagement and excitement without financial investment.”



cess, including sequencing an effective set, supporting coaching, and selecting books and articles. As part of the project, each team must produce an annotated bibliography—the text set—accompanied by teacher instructions and recommendations, along with a variety of tasks to ensure students have learned from what they have read. Following the sets’ ongoing development, the models will be shared for free with educators through open education resource channels (including Edmodo and www.achievethecore.org).

The effort behind the Text Set Project is driven by the curricular shift toward college and career readiness standards—most notably CCSS.

Despite the controversy and confusion around CCSS, the standards are here to stay—even for those states that have repealed them or are in the process of repealing them, said Marc Aronson, a Rutgers University lecturer in the School of Communication

Columbia University’s Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library acquired the Jane C. Loeffler Collection of Research Papers on American Embassies. The archive includes the documents, photos, architectural drawings, interviews, and research papers donated by architectural historian Jane C. Loeffler, author of *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America’s Embassies* (1998).

The **Civil War on the Western Border** website from the **Kansas City Public Library, MO**, received three honors: Award for Excellence in Public History from the Society of Civil War Historians; Award of Merit from the American Association for State & Local History; and the Autry Public History Prize from the Western History Association.

The **Music and Theatre Library of Sweden** selected **Innovative’s Sierra Library Services**

Platform. Its holdings include 120,000 books, 378,000 pieces of sheet music, 40,000 theater scripts, and 30,000 special collection items.

The **Association of Research Libraries (ARL)** and the **University of Washington, Seattle**, announced the winners of the 2014 Library Assessment Conference poster session: “In the Mix” from Ohio University, Athens; “Evaluating Library Contribution to Student Success” from Ryerson University, Ont.; and “Using GIS To Facilitate Data-Driven Decision Making” from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

The **U.S. Government Printing Office** designated **Sitting Bull College Library, Fort Yates, ND**, as the first digital-only member of the Federal Depository Library Program. The library will be developing an online government information collection.

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and Information. “The reality is that even in states that have rejected or modified elements of the [Common Core English Language Arts] standards, a great deal of the [standards’] emphasis remains the same.”

CCSS require that students prove college readiness skills, such as reading attentively and producing text evidence to support their opinions and interpretations. Librarians are uniquely positioned to assist students, stated Meredith Liben, English-language arts and literacy team director at SAP, because of their training and expertise on evaluating books and articles and understanding the features and qualities of text that make it rich and complex. In addition, she says, text set training is an opportunity for librarians to help train fellow teachers.

NYPL, Penn Partner for MOOC Support

This fall, the New York Public Library (NYPL) will team up with the University of Pennsylvania’s Kelly Writers House (KWH) to provide a space for participants in professor Al Fil-



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reis’s popular online course, Modern and Contemporary American Poetry—“ModPo” for short—to meet.

Filreis, the Kelly Professor of English in Penn’s School of Arts & Sciences and the founder and faculty director of KWH, has been teaching the course in various forms for 30 years. By 1999, the class was fully online as a series of live webcasts, many of which originated with KWH.

Penn is committed to its Open Learning Initiative, offering the public access to high-quality courses and expanding the university’s reach. The university was an early adopter of massive open online courses (MOOCs) and in 2012 began collabo-

rating with the online education company Coursera. This fall, 34 courses taught by Penn faculty will be available through Coursera, including the latest incarnation of ModPo.

Over the past three years, more than 115,000 participants have taken ModPo, which covers the work of modern and contemporary U.S. poets. No previous knowledge of poetry is necessary to enroll in the ten-week course. Each week participants are introduced to a new collection of poems, accompanied by approximately two hours of prerecorded video discussion. They may then go over the material in regularly scheduled live webcast sessions, or in an online conversation forum at any time.

Now, New York-based ModPo students will have the opportunity to talk about what they’re learning in person. Beginning September 11, the Hudson Park Library in Greenwich Village is hosting a series of gatherings every Thursday for ten weeks, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The first session will be hosted by Filreis himself.

NYPL instituted a partnership with Coursera earlier this year, as part of its Learning Hubs Initiative, which arranges free in-person discussion groups to enhance selected courses. Luke Swarthout, director of adult education services at NYPL, explained that as libraries already play this role for people looking to pursue interests outside of an academic setting, the collaboration with Coursera

People

Anthony Auston was promoted to Director of the Palatine Public Library District, IL, following the retirement of **Susan Strunk**. He was previously the Assistant Director.

Kathryn Dorchies was named Community Engagement Manager at Cranston Public Library, RI. She has been the library’s Library Assistant since 2007.

Patricia M. Duck retired as Director of the University of Pittsburgh’s Millstein Library, Greensburg. She had been with the university for 28 years.

Carol Mahoney was appointed Acting Director of the Boston Public Library Founda-

tion. She had recently retired as the Director of the Greenwich Library, CT.

Mendy Pfannenstiel has been promoted to the position of Director of the Arkansas City Public Library, KS. She was previously Arkansas City Public Library’s Adult and Teen Services Librarian.

Rebecca Saunders has retired as a Librarian at Bay County Public Library, Panama City, FL. She has worked in the field for 46 years.

Bobbi Truesdell retired as Director of the Schoolcraft Community Library, MI. She had been in the position for 12 years.

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was a natural progression. The first NYPL Learning Hub collaboration, a study of 20th-century photography called “The Camera Never Lies,” began meeting in August.

Coursera has more than 50,000 users in the New York City area, and while there have been local get-togethers, a group coordinated through NYPL will be able to provide additional services. Swarthout hopes that the course will engage participants with the NYPL collections that contain material from the poets studied. Over the next year, NYPL will be selecting additional classes.

The idea of a public gathering space changes the game somewhat for MOOCs. They were originally conceived as learning opportunities that could be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection, without much concern for building physical communities among users. But many MOOC participants don’t stay the course. Interest has grown in the question of whether the support libraries can provide—such as physical meeting places, supplementary materials, and one-on-one help from librarians—can make a difference.

LJ Names Peet Associate News Editor

Lisa Peet has taken over as *Library Journal’s* associate news editor and editor of *Library Hotline*, effective September 2. A graduate of Pratt Institute’s master’s in library and information science program, Peet previously served as editor and researcher at the Darwin Manuscripts Project at the American Museum of Natural History.

Earlier, Peet served as associate editor of *The New Leader*, helping transition the publication’s archives to Columbia University’s Rare Book

and Manuscript Library and produce an online version with the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship. Peet contributes to several literary websites including her own Like Fire

plus Bloom, The Millions, Open Letters Monthly, and more.

To share news leads with Peet, please email her at lpeet@mediasourceinc.com or call her at 646-380-0722.

Branching Out



flooring, and the ideal orientation to make the most of natural light. Designed by Humphries Poli Architects, with White Construction Group as contractor, the project also includes a fireplace, a conference room, and two study rooms.

Never one to rest on its laurels, the **Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML)**, OH,

The **Fairmount Heights Branch** (pictured) of Prince George’s County Memorial Library, MD, finished its renovation project earlier this month. The 16,887 square foot library includes 58 public access computers, a digital media lab, an enlarged children’s section with an sf/outer space theme, a wireless laptop area, a new customer service desk, a new Americans with Disabilities Act–compliant restroom, a meeting room kitchenette, new energy-efficient windows, and fresh flooring and paint throughout. The project, led by Gant Brunnett Architects, also features LED lighting and an improved HVAC system. The project cost approximately \$1,190,000.

was to open its Marion-Franklin Branch on September 15. The 4,000 square foot branch, the 22nd member of the system, is situated in the former media center of what was the Beery Middle School. The school closed down four years ago, according to the *Columbus Dispatch*. The space was leased by CML from Columbus City Schools for five years at \$1 per year. The facility is considered an “express branch,” providing books, computers, free wireless access, at-cost printers and copiers, early literacy preparation for families, homework help, and several full-time staff. Start-up costs are estimated at \$400,000 to \$500,000, per the *Dispatch*.

The new **Sheridan Library** of the Arapahoe Library District, Englewood, CO, opened on September 13. The 10,000 square foot building replaces the 3,200 square foot facility that had been located in the Sheridan High School for more than 40 years, according to YourHub.com. The library encompasses a number of sustainable features, including skylights, proximity to public transportation, a high-tech roofing system that regulates temperature and exposure to weather, recycled

Two new YOUmedia spaces will launch at the Chicago Public Library’s (CPL) **Woodson Regional Library** and the **Sulzer Regional Library**. These drop-in spaces for teens ages 14–18 include tools for digital design, 3-D printing, robotics, coding, and digital music production. The CPL YOUmedia spaces, which initially opened in 2009, are supported via a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation through the Chicago Public Library Foundation.

Send information on groundbreakings and ongoing and completed building projects to blfox@mediasourceinc.com

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