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## The Research Library at the National Institute of Standards and Technology: 2003 Federal Library of the Year

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The year 2003 was a very exciting and challenging year for the Research Library at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). In early 2004, library staff had the opportunity to celebrate their achievements when they learned the library was named Federal Library of the Year for 2003 by the Federal Library and Information Center Committee (FLICC) of the Library of Congress. The Research Library was "recognized for its technological innovations and comprehensive knowledge management systems that proactively provide the tools necessary to support new programs, superior customer service and the agency mission" (see *News from the Library of Congress*, March 9, 2004, <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2004/04-049.html>). Some of those innovations and knowledge management systems are described in this article.

At the same time, Wilma ("Sissy") Riley, a NIST Library technician, was named 2003 Federal Library Technician of the Year by FLICC. Sissy was recognized "for her dedication to service excellence in support of the mission of the NIST Research Library and the core values of the NIST Information Services Division" (see *News from the Library of Congress*, March 9, 2004, <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2004/04-049.html>).

FLICC award winners from the NIST Research Library, as well as award recipients from other federal libraries, were honored at the twenty-first annual FLICC Forum on Federal Information Policies March 25 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. They received their awards from Dr. James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, and were guests of the forum.

### Background

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is a nonregulatory federal agency within the

U.S. Department of Commerce. Its mission is to develop and promote measurements, standards, and technology to enhance productivity, facilitate trade, and improve quality of life. NIST is the home of two Nobel Prize winners and renowned for its research on the sinking of the Titanic, and has made contributions to the investigations of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

The NIST Research Library's mission is to support and enhance NIST's scientific and technological



FedLib2003= l to r, FLICC Executive Director Susan Tarr, Librarian of Congress Dr. James H. Billington, Information Services Division Chief Mary Deirdre Corragio, Electronic Information and Publications Group Lead Barbara Silcox, Acting Technology Services Director Dr. Belinda Collins. Photo by Robin Smith at FEDLINK

community through a comprehensive program of knowledge management and superior customer service. The library's primary customers are the researchers in the NIST Laboratory programs. The laboratories conduct research in the physical and engineering sciences, including building and fire research, chemistry, electronics and electrical engineering,

information technology, manufacturing engineering, materials science, and physics.

The Research Library, located on the main NIST campus in Gaithersburg, Maryland, serves a population of 2,700 and has a collection of more than 300,000 items. The library has a staff of fifteen. It is one of three working units within the Information Services Division (ISD). The other units focus on NIST publications and the museum program. All members of ISD work together on teams and special projects, bringing together a broad spectrum of expertise and talents.

### NIST Virtual Library (NVL)

The NIST Research Library has long had a strong Web presence in the form of the NIST Virtual Library (NVL). The NVL is a critically important information tool offering NIST scientists and researchers access to valuable databases and full-text electronic

journals. The library's public Web site (<http://nvl.nist.gov>) provides access to the library's online catalog, links to NIST Web resources, and information and news about the Research Library.

First launched in 1994, the NVL underwent an extensive redesign in 2001. At that time, a content management system was implemented, allowing about twenty staff members within ISD to contribute to the development and maintenance of the Research Library's Web site. Customer input, in the form of usability testing and focus groups, helped Research Library staff redesign the NVL as a much-improved navigation system with better access to valuable scientific resources.

#### Laboratory Liaison Program

As the 2003 Federal Library of the year, FLICC commended the NIST Research Library staff on its Laboratory (Lab) Liaison Program, which promotes collaboration between NIST researchers and the Research Library. This program is intended to offer the NIST Laboratories one point of contact in the Research Library for questions, in-depth research, collection development suggestions, and issues about accessing resources. The lab liaisons currently serve seven NIST Laboratories and three NIST programs. Plans for expanding the program are under way. The program has a strong emphasis on marketing, and the lab liaisons frequently use the monthly Division newsletter, *ISDirections*, to market library products and services and educate the Research Library's current and potential customers.

In existence for barely more than a year, the Lab Liaison Program has accomplished much during this short period of time. The lab liaisons, in collaboration with researchers in their assigned labs and divisions, have developed a list of core journals. Core journals are protected titles during times of budget constraints and possible cuts. They perform collection development with the helpful input of subject specialists in the labs. The lab liaisons are currently working on in-depth division profiles, and they track new employees and follow up with them to ensure that new NIST staff members have the resources and services they need from the Research Library.

#### NIST Integrated Knowledge EditorialNet

Members of the Research Library staff are currently collaborating with other members of ISD on the design and development of a NIST-wide knowledge management system, the NIST Integrated Knowledge EditorialNet (NIKE). NIKE is a broad, ambitious effort to gather, organize, and make available all of the products of NIST's research.

When launched in 2004, NIKE will consist of an all-electronic manuscript submission and tracking system for authors, a database containing metadata for NIST-authored publications, an archive of manuscripts, and a digital library of published documents connected to the Research Library's online catalog.

NIKE is being made possible through the efforts of many. ISD staff has worked with IT experts to define technical requirements that meet the business requirements. Lab liaisons have worked closely with NIST researchers/authors to verify citations and update records being migrated from the old publications database to the new system. Most importantly, ISD customers have been consulted at various times in the planning and requirements phases to determine what they want and expect from NIKE.

#### WiFi Hotspot

In 2003, the NIST Research Library became the first and only NIST WiFi Hotspot. NIST researchers are able to check out preconfigured wireless laptops for searching the online catalog, reading and sending e-mail, and performing database and electronic journal searches on the NVL. The portico just outside the glass wall on the east side of the Research Library has become a popular spot for wireless laptop users on a comfortable, sunny day.

#### Research Library Advisory Board

The NIST Research Library learns much about its user community through the Research Library Advisory Board (RLAB), established in 2003 to enhance two-way communication between NIST researchers and the Research Library. The role of RLAB is to communicate customer needs to library management, recommend directions for library collections and services, and communicate information about library products and services to the NIST community. RLAB members have embraced their role, becoming active advocates for the Research Library.

#### Summary

A large part of the Research Library's success in 2003 was made possible through careful planning and by listening closely to Library customers. In being named the 2003 Federal Library of the Year, the NIST Research Library recognizes the valuable input it receives from its customers, the researchers, scientists, and support staff at NIST. This customer-focused approach will continue to serve the NIST Research Library well as it develops future innovative systems, services, and applications.