Against the Grain

Wandering the Web -- What's in Your Toolbox?: Online Resources Keeping LIS Professionals Informed

Africa S. Hands MA, MLIS
Hands On Research Solutions

Recommended Citation

Wandering the Web — What's in Your Toolbox?: Online Resources Keeping LIS Professionals Informed

by **Africa S. Hands, MA, MLIS** (Owner, Hands On Research Solutions)

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Coordinator, Collection Services, Western Kentucky University Libraries) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>

*Column Editor's Note: Africa Hands is an independent researcher and owner of **Hands On Research Solutions**. She provides customized research services to faculty, professionals, and organizations. She also facilitates training workshops on effective Web search techniques, Web 2.0, and social media among other topics. — **JM***

Librarians and informational professionals are sometimes expected to know it all, or at least be able to find desired information and resources. To keep up with our diverse and ever-changing field of librarianship and related resources, we need a little help from our friends — fellow librarians, bloggers, content aggregators, and others who readily share resources so that we all can be informed. For this column, I received help from my online friends in a very active LinkedIn Group — LIS Careers. By no means an exhaustive list, what follows are various online resources that keep us connected to and abreast of the LIS field. Consider adding these to your RSS feeds and daily reading lists.

ACRL Insider — *www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider* — A Weblog of the **Association of College and Research Libraries** aimed at keeping members and other interested professionals informed on activities, services, and programs of the division. Features include Member of the Week (MOW) interviews offering a glimpse into the work of current members, podcasts of conference talks, recently published books on academic librarianship, upcoming events, related news articles outside of the **American Library Association**, and a Good Reads widget highlighting the MOW bookshelf — useful for professional development reading.

BestBizWeb ENewsletter — *www.bestbizweb.com* — A free subscription-based monthly e-newsletter highlighting business research sites. Each month, five free and/or fee-based resources are described with direct links to the online resource, user tips, and notes about its useful from a business research perspective. Categories of resources include: government information, databases, business related apps, news sites, search engines, and company information. Readers are encouraged to nominate sites for inclusion in the newsletter edited by **Robert Berkman** from *The Information Advisor*.

FUMSI — *www.fumsi.com* — Practitioner-written articles offering real-world tips on finding, using, managing, and sharing information. Part of the FreePint family of online and print information resources, **FUMSI** articles present case studies, user tips, and insight into a variety of information resources organized by how the individual user handles information, allowing users to easily focus on the topic most relevant to their needs. Article topics have included patent and business research resources, managing social media, using **SharePoint** to manage information, and reviews of special collections and topical online resources. Articles are available online, and a magazine subscription is available with feature articles, job postings, and additional value-added content.

Future Ready 365 — *futureready365.sla.org* — A blog is dedicated to librarians and informational professionals who are preparing for the future. It features contributors from the **Special Library Association** community addressing the question: *How are you future ready?* With a daily post by a different informational professional, **Future Ready 365**, is for forward-thinking LIS professionals, library school students, and career changers. Recent topics include: using networking tools to improve communication and work flow paths, embedded librarianship, and adapting to end-user needs with value-added information deliverables. Though sponsored by the **Special Library Association**, topics are applicable to all librarians, particularly those interested in career management. To view previous posts, see the Calendar of Posts.

Hack Library School — *hacklibschool.wordpress.com* — A collaborative blogging effort by, for, and about library school students (and several recent graduates). Eleven editors share a breadth of experiences and interests in librarianship and a common goal of redefining the library school experience. Articles have focused on advocacy for LIS students, recommended reading, conference notes from the student perspective, professional development and moving into the profession, and actively applying LIS education to real-world settings. Podcasts called "Two-Minute Insights" feature interviews with an array of LIS professionals, authors, and library school students.

LISWire — *liswire.com* — An online news and press release service for companies and organizations wanting to communicate news to the LIS community. Releases include vendor product and service announcements, calls for papers, and career/job change announcements. From the same editors of LISNews, LISWire differs in that there are no news stories, interviews, or commentary from personal bloggers. Press release writing services are also available for libraries and librarians.

LLRX.com — *www.llrx.com* — An independent Weblog by librarian, **Sabrina Pacifici**, providing articles on legal, library, IT, competitive intelligence, and other resources and information. While focusing primarily on law and technology resources for legal professionals, a hallmark of the site is a regularly-updated guide to competitive intelligence resources. The guide is organized by type of resource with live links and annotations on search engines, blogs, news alert services; business information sites (free and fee-based); and online people tracking services to name a few. The homepage has articles across the spectrum of law, technology, and librarianship, namely information management and law library management.

No Shelf Required — *www.libraries.wright.edu/noshelfrequired* — A blog about eBooks, audio books, and digital content moderated by academic librarian, **Sue Polanka**. Aimed at keeping librarians and publishers informed about the fast-changing eBook industry, **No Shelf Required (NSR)** provides links to articles of interest; vendor and association news; audio interviews with eBook publishers, aggregators, and distributors; and commentary and conference notes from **Polanka**. Winner of the **2010 Salem Press Library Blog Award** in the academic category, **NSR** has news of interest to public, school, and special librarians alike.

Planet Cataloging — *www.planetcataloging.org* — An aggregation of over sixty national and international blogs related to cataloging and metadata maintained by **Jennifer W. Boxmeyer** and **Kevin S. Clarke**. This mostly full-text feed has news, opinion, conference information, association announcements and awards, changes and updates impacting the field, best practices, and even email snippets related to the practice of cataloging. Blogroll includes such vendors as **OCLC** and **Library Thing**.

The Scholarly Kitchen — *scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org* — An independent blog of the **Society for Scholarly Publishing**, edited by **SSP** member **Kent Anderson** with frequent contributions from librarian **Rick Anderson** and others from the publishing field. With insightful blog posts on the future of scholarly publishing (particularly in the STM field), open access, and related reports, the site has an energetic readership offering thoughtful comments that advance the discussion beyond the blog posts.

What I Learned Today — *www.web2learning.net* — Librarian **Nicole C. Engard** runs this site related to libraries, technology, and most things open source. A key feature of the site is **Engard's** regularly-posted list of bookmarks of various Websites, articles, and gadgets she's encountered that day. From a trusted name in library technology circles, this site provides a way to stay abreast of technology useful to libraries and that enhance productivity of busy informational professionals. 🐦