

Access

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Chat Reference: Bringing a New Dimension to Information Services

by Hector Escobar, Jr

Imagine this. You are a student trying to finalize your references for a research paper. You remember what a reference librarian once told you during an instruction session: "We are here to help you, just contact us." Immediately you remember that you can contact them using chat reference. You simply click to the **Ask a Librarian** site and within a few seconds you are posing your question to a librarian live over the Internet. A few minutes later, you have your answer....instant gratification!

From 1995 to 2000, Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions overall have shown a 27% decline in reference statistics. Ohio State University went from 1 million reference questions in 1995 to 500,000 in 2000¹, a drop of 50%! This has caused libraries to realize two things: people are finding information on their own and they don't necessarily feel the need to come to the library, perhaps because of a preconceived notion that everything is available online. What can librarians do to meet these changing expectations for service? We can change the way we go about business in order to adapt to customer needs. So, we have introduced a tool which we hope will address the desire of some users to be able to interact with a librarian without having to come to the library.

Background

The Reference Department first began its trial use of chat-based software back in the fall of 2000 with the installation of a mock sample of Human Click, a project fostered by reference librarian Cameron Tuai. This met with the reaction by some as to why a new technology must be initiated when email reference worked perfectly fine. Perhaps the main reason to pursue this avenue was that, like any other technology, where we experience times of growth, decline and obsolescence, we would expect to experience the same fate with email service. You can compare the technology to watching movies on VHS and then having the arrival of DVD technology.

In the fall of 2001 an *ad hoc* committee was formed with members Andy Boze, Cameron Tuai, Chris Poehlmann and Hector Escobar. The committee explored reasons for incorporating chat and
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Libraries Welcome Nigel Butterwick

Effective March 1, 2003, Nigel Butterwick joined the University Libraries as associate director for user services. Butterwick comes to Notre Dame from Queen's University Belfast where he has served most recently as assistant director (user services), Information Services Directorate. In that capacity he was responsible for designing, delivering and marketing the services provided at five major branch libraries and several other Information Services locations. He holds master's degrees from Queen's in library science, in computer science and its applications, and in business administration. He has taught and published in the areas of database management systems, quality management and online information retrieval.



Notre Dame Photograph

Nigel Butterwick

Chat *continued from page 1*

determined it was worth pursuing, but emphasized that after a year it would analyze the results. After looking at costs and options from various software vendors, the committee selected Desktop Streaming in the spring of 2002. Two main reasons for selecting this software were cost and simplicity. However, while it seemed to work, we did suffer a high rate of missed calls due to this software's inability to interface with several operating platforms. The committee looked at this as a loss²; however, we realized that the software industry for this service was being improved and marketed, and hoped that we would find a product that actually worked. In fact, many institutions are analyzing their current software³ and are either deciding to switch vendors or selecting alternative methods of incorporating the same technology. During the summer of 2002, the committee decided to acquire new software.

Enter eLibrarian, a software selected for use in the Ohio Link academic library consortium. eLibrarian was selected over a number of other vendors based on price, features, and most importantly, its ability to serve users who use a wide variety of operating platforms, a feature that most, if not all, other vendors failed to offer. In January 2003, the Reference Department went live using this software.⁴

How it works

Just like accessing our email service, a patron clicks to a form. When the service is active, it so indicates. The patron simply clicks a button and a message is received on the other end that there is someone who needs assistance. The librarian then initiates a chat session and answers their questions. This is a very simple tool indeed, but with so much more gratification than email.

Librarians staff the software the same hours as the reference desk. A majority of other institutions staff their chat services either by having limited hours of operation during the week, or by using a paid consortium fee to have other libraries answer their questions which can increase expenses and limit access to local expertise. We liked the service aspects of providing longer hours of online availability. We identified our incoming chat requests from 2002 and found that peak times of use have been in the afternoon. eLibrarian allows us to have three concurrent librarian logins, meaning that we can have the Reference Desk logged in but also have two other "backup" librarians assisting from their offices. For example, in case the reference desk is busy or if the librarian is assisting patrons in person, librarians who are logged in from their offices can take the chat session. Or if a librarian at the reference desk, already in a chat session, suddenly becomes busy with students at the reference desk, they can then transfer a complete chat session to another librarian who is acting as a backup from their office. The librarian who is in their office can read the entire session transcript and pick up where the other librarian has left off.

After the end of every chat session users are automatically sent a web survey. The survey is used as a tool of quality assurance, by assessing whether reference librarians are able to answer users' questions. When librarians are not logged in, the chat web page indicates so and allows users to click our email form as a default.

Future of live electronic reference services

When the **Ask a Librarian** site first began it started out simply as a point of contact to email the Reference Department with research questions and inquiries. This has progressed into offering patrons a variety of options⁵. We now offer patrons three ways of contacting the Reference Department remotely: chat, email and phone. The future of chat and remote reference services is unknown given the rate at which technology evolves. Some possible future avenues include voice-over ip, video-over ip and knowledge databases that can provide instantaneous responses. Whatever the situation may be, we hope to keep up with technological innovations in order to address patrons' questions with accuracy and efficiency, no matter what type of communication avenue people seek to use.

1. Brian Kenney, "Live, Digital Reference," *Library Journal* v. 127, issue 16 (Oct. 1, 2002): 48.
2. From March 20, 2002 to December 31, 2002, there were 719 questions posted on chat, of which only 228 were answered in completion.
3. Joshua Boyer, "Virtual Reference at North Carolina State: The First One Hundred Days," *Information Technology and Libraries* v. 20, no. 3 (Sept. 2001): 124.
4. Ask a Librarian chat service is located at: <http://asklib.nd.edu>
5. Ask a Librarian site is located at: <http://asklib.nd.edu>

New Features from Ex Libris

by Donna Stevenson

It has been about a year since the Libraries' web catalog was upgraded to version 14.2 of the ALEPH500 software. Since then we have improved the navigation in the catalog and begun to add new features; many more are in the pipeline. Some additions have been modest, while other projects, such as adding the **My Account** function that will open up possibilities for many personalized services, are more ambitious. We have also started work on a Reserves Catalog and recently purchased two newer Ex Libris products, DigiTool and MetaLib. The following will briefly describe these new features and ongoing projects.

My Account

Introduced last fall, **My Account** is a new feature available from the top row of links on the catalog screen. Choosing this link allows you to sign into the catalog and access information about your loans and holds. It allows you to renew all your materials or renew individual items. Having a way for individuals to sign into the catalog will allow the Libraries to add more personalized features. One feature that we are beginning to investigate is allowing patrons to place holds on materials through the catalog.

New Titles

After doing a search in the web catalog, the results are listed in reverse chronological order by year of publication (i.e., materials published most recently are listed first). What this doesn't tell you is which materials have become available most recently, no matter what their publication date. Since December, information is being added to indicate when an item first became available to library users. We are now investigating the best ways to use that information, whether as part of an existing search, a separate search, an email service or a new titles service separate from the catalog.

Multi-base Searching

Each search in the Libraries' catalog currently runs against Notre Dame information only. We are working on a search that will give results for multiple catalogs, not only searching the three MALC catalogs that share our Aleph software (Saint Mary's, Holy Cross and Bethel), but also other catalogs through a Z39.50 connection. (Z39.50 is an international communication standard for computer systems, primarily library and information related systems.) Our initial testing is focused on adding the Notre Dame Law Library Catalog to the search, but it opens the possibility to add almost any library catalog.

Reserves Catalog

The Libraries' reserves service allows instructors to have materials in great demand available to students for short loans if in print or available electronically, if appropriate. These materials could include items such as journal articles, problem sets, class notes, past exams, library books or an instructor's personal copy of a book. We are currently working on a Reserves Catalog that will provide access to all reserve materials by course number, course name or instructor. The work being done will also better automate the process behind the scenes for organizing the materials to be made available.

DigiTool

The Libraries recently purchased **DigiTool**, an Ex Libris product that is designed to support the building, management and copyright control of digital collections. Digital collections are groups of data in electronic format which are similar in some way, such as having a common theme. Such data could include photographs or scanned documents. This product has been used at other libraries to provide access to scanned images of special collections materials.

MetaLib

The Libraries have also recently purchased **MetaLib** from Ex Libris. This product is described as "an information portal that provides libraries, institutions and consortia with a standardized user interface for managing today's hybrid information systems." For the user, this provides the possibility of a single web-based interface that allows searching across multiple databases and library catalogs. It is a way to group important electronic resources and display them by subject. Its features include the ability for an individual user to create a personalized list of resources, and an e-basket service to store selected documents.

Using flexible and powerful Ex Libris products, the University Libraries, alongside other prestigious academic institutions, are working on many interesting projects. Our goal is to provide better searching capabilities, improved access to resources, and more personalized services tailored to our patrons' needs.

The USA PATRIOT Act and Libraries

by J. Douglas Archer

On October 25, six weeks after the horrendous events of September 11, 2001, with little external input, no public hearings, but nearly unanimous, bipartisan support, Congress passed the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act, more generally known by its acronym, the USA PATRIOT Act (Public Law 107-56) <<http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d107/d107laws.html>>. Much of the bill is concerned with domestic and international transfer of funds and related business records. However, since there are no restrictions on the definition of "business" in the Act, records of all entities, public and private, for profit and not for profit, are covered – including libraries.

Digression for standard disclaimer: the author is not an attorney and nothing in this article should be construed as offering legal advice or counsel.

Most libraries in the United States, including the University Libraries of Notre Dame, affirm the confidentiality of patron records. Most states recognize patron privacy as a positive value necessary for unintimidated use of libraries by citizens as they exercise their First Amendment rights. Most states, including Indiana, protect this value by statute.

Such protection has never been absolute. Patron-librarian communications do not enjoy the level of protection afforded doctor-patient or priest-penitent communications. Patron records have always been subject to court order requiring their production based on probable cause. However, such protection has been drastically reduced under the USA PATRIOT Act.

Instead of "probable cause," a relatively stringent requirement, agents now only need to show that the request is "related to" an ongoing terrorism or intelligence investigation, an exceedingly low threshold of proof. In other words, it's now far easier for government officials to go on fishing expeditions. The desire by law enforcement for lower standards is perfectly understandable in a time of terror. Whether it is wise in relation to library records is another matter.

In addition, and far more disturbing, is the possibility of an accompanying secrecy or "gag" order preventing the recipient of such a court order from telling the target or anyone else about the existence of the order. Again, the rationale for this is perfectly understandable. In a terrorism investigation, the authorities may not want the target of the investigation to

know that they are “on to him” – or her. However, this secrecy provision makes it extremely difficult for anyone, including Congress, much less the body politic, to monitor the use or potential abuse of these new powers.

Such gag orders are not new. Grand juries have issued subpoenas and judges have issued search warrants under cloaks of secrecy with some frequency. The disturbing part of this Act is, again, the extremely low level of justification required for their issuance coupled with secrecy provisions. In an ideal world such orders would only be issued for the best of reasons with the best of intentions and the utmost restraint. We don't live in an ideal world.

In addition, the Attorney General has revised the guidelines under which the FBI conducts domestic surveillance. The FBI is also, apparently, making wider use of a little known tool, the national security letter, to initiate inquiries without the need of a court's approval. Once again, this is not surprising in the current situation, but neither is it comforting to those who wish to be free in what they choose to read and research. Lastly, the drafting of potential legislation is underway in the Justice Department which would further expand the data gathering and data sharing powers of the FBI, CIA and related agencies. Text of this working document, “Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003” was leaked on February 7 and is available as this is written from <http://www.publicintegrity.org>.

The library community operates under the assumption that what one reads does not necessarily indicate anything about what one will do with the information obtained. Citizens should be at liberty to choose to read what they will, when they will. Reading about terrorism does not indicate that one is a terrorist just as reading about cooking does not make one a chef. But making such reading potentially suspect does undermine the very nature of public and academic libraries as limited public fora for the explorations of the mind.

The library community as represented by the American Library Association (ALA) is monitoring the use of these powers. Surveys to date are inconclusive. It is clear that the number of federal inquiries is up, but it is unclear what authority is being cited to initiate these inquiries. This lack of clarity was to be expected given the possibility that secrecy provisions have been invoked. ALA is also encouraging Congress to revise the USA PATRIOT Act to provide higher standards for subpoenas and search warrants for library records and clearer oversight by the appropriate congressional committees of administrative actions authorized under this and similar acts. ALA Council's resolution is available at <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/usapatriotresolution.html>.

Since many civil libertarians argue for the complete repeal of the Act, this action by ALA is hardly radical. However, given the uncertain mood of the nation and of Congress, it is probably the most that can be hoped for. ALA does not seek a total exemption of library records from judicially mandated disclosure, but rather a standard of confidentiality high enough to assure the average patron that he or she may read without fear of capricious government intrusion or intimidation. The goal is to assure that federal officials must follow the law and the law must contain standards tough enough to assure the liberties necessary for the maintenance of a free society.

In consultation with the University Counsel's office we have developed and are implementing a brief, clear procedure to guide all of our personnel from senior administrators to student employees. Our intent is to be good citizens in every sense – cooperating with lawful orders while providing maximum confidentiality for our patrons.

The procedure is very simple: if approached by a person claiming to be a government agent requesting user information, we are to politely inform them that we are not authorized or able to release such information ourselves, but that we will call the University Counsel's office and our immediate supervisor for assistance in interpreting the nature of the request, the authority under which the request is being made, and the appropriate actions to be taken by the University. Hypothetically such a response could include, but is not limited to, immediate compliance in the case of a valid federal search warrant, a court challenge of a subpoena, or a polite refusal of an informal request for information. Federal agents on a legitimate mission will in all likelihood expect, understand and respect such action.

Further information concerning intellectual freedom, especially library patron privacy, can be found at ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom web site <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif>.

Bales Appointed Assistant Engineering Librarian

Aaron Bales has been appointed to the University Libraries' faculty as assistant engineering librarian, effective December 1, 2002. Bales has been employed in the Libraries in several capacities over the past ten years, most recently as branch supervisor in the Engineering Library. He received his master's degree in library science from Indiana University in 2001, and holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Harvard (*cum laude*, 1988).



Notre Dame Photographic

Aaron Bales

Our Man in Havana: In Search of Notre Dame's First Architecture Graduate

by Jane Devine-Mejia

In 1904 Eugenio Rayneri Piedra became the first graduate of Notre Dame's architecture department. He had arrived from Havana in December 1899 to begin his studies, along with his younger brother Virgilio (B.S. Eng. 1905). At that time, the University was promoting itself vigorously in Latin America, seeking new students from Mexico, Cuba and other former Spanish colonies. As the first Catholic university in the United States to offer a degree in architecture, Notre Dame was part of a national trend toward academic architectural education, which had started at MIT in 1865. When Rayneri enrolled here, there was no university program in Cuba and so some students went to Spain or the U.S. to earn their degrees. Although Cuba did have a school for master builders, it was not until after the Spanish American War, in 1900, that the University of Havana established its school of architecture and engineering.

With his Notre Dame diploma, Rayneri had the credentials to set up a successful practice in partnership with his father, Eugenio Rayneri Sorrentino. He is best known today as the technical and artistic director on the construction of Havana's magnificent Capitolio, home of the Cuban congress from 1929 until 1959. However Rayneri also made an important contribution to the development of El Vedado, the residential district where he built homes for his family and designed mansions for many prominent citizens, including Gerardo Machado, president of Cuba from 1925-33. Rayneri was among the small group of architects that flourished during the early years of the republic and exemplified what is now called the "eclectic" period, when a remarkable variety of styles coexisted and blended into Havana's urban fabric. His career is an interesting case study of how an individual architect helped to define the appearance of a modern neighborhood and to represent the aspirations of the post-colonial elite.

Apart from his practice, Rayneri was active in furthering the cause of Cuba's professional architects. He was a founding member of the Colegio de Arquitectos de la Habana in 1916 and served as its first president. Yet today Rayneri is largely overlooked. His name appears briefly in surveys of Cuban architecture and urbanism, but there has been no study of his legacy nor his role in creating the architectural image of the young Cuban republic. Most studies of Cuban architecture concentrate on the colonial period, though there is growing interest in 20th-century design. Books such as Eduardo Luis Rodríguez's *La Habana: arquitectura del siglo XX* (1998) and John Loomis' *Revolution of Forms: Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools* (1999) are prompting an examination of modern Cuban architecture. Preservationists are also intrigued by the array of architectural styles still evident in Havana. On the whole, however, there has been little published on the eclectic period.

I discovered Eugenio Rayneri while editing *100 Years of Architecture at Notre Dame: a History of the School of Architecture 1898-1998* (1999). Curiosity took me to the University Archives, where I found various clues: a letter from

his father, ledger books with the Rayneri brothers' student accounts and class records, a few photographs. With these fragments, I began searching for information on Rayneri's career. It was a frustrating undertaking. I soon learned that early Cuban architecture journals are not indexed, that Rayneri was not listed in any of the standard Cuban biographical sources and scarcely appeared in histories of Cuban architecture. During two visits to the Avery Library at Columbia University, I combed through the *Colegio de Arquitectos* journal (1917-19) hoping for some sign of Rayneri's presence. There I discovered many photographs of buildings he had designed as well as mentions of his service to the Colegio.

With a list of Rayneri's clients and photocopies from the journals, I travelled to Havana in 1999 and spent a week identifying and photographing extant buildings, most of which were still recognizable from published photographs. Architectural historian Eduardo Luis Rodríguez generously helped me to locate several of the houses and confirmed that my inventory of Rayneri's buildings was unique. Unfortunately it turned out that the Colegio de Arquitectos archives had been destroyed in the Revolution and that Rayneri's personal papers were unlikely to have survived after his family left Cuba in 1960. The National Archives was a possible source, but researchers are required to provide property lot numbers to retrieve documents, and I had no time for this painstaking work. This meant that published records and interviews were likely to be the only way of reconstructing Rayneri's career.

Having exhausted all the published sources I could identify, I applied for the Byrne Fund grant that supports Notre Dame librarians undertaking original research. This \$1,000 award gave me the opportunity to use library collections at the University of Miami and conduct several crucial interviews. Thanks to Dr. Diane Just and Professor Robert Levine, I received accreditation as a visiting scholar at Miami's Center for Latin American Studies and access to the outstanding Cuban Heritage Collection and to the Richter Library. There I found copies of period journals, social directories that identified the "who's who" of Havana's elite and *Historia de familias cubanas*, an invaluable genealogical guide that provided histories of many Rayneri clients. From these sources, I could create profiles, including occupations, family connections with other clients and political affiliations. But the most extraordinary result of my trip was discovering that two of his three daughters were living in Miami and were eager to help. I am indebted to architecture professors José Gelabert-Navia and Jean-François Lejeune for their aid in finding Rayneri's family and other architects who had known him.

All of these sources have yielded an extensive inventory of Eugenio Rayneri's work and the background information needed to assess his contribution to Havana's architectural and urban development. In March I presented my research at the Latin American Studies Association conference, a welcome opportunity to share it with other scholars of Cuban architecture. This project has also helped me to build our Architecture Library's Cuban collection, which supports faculty and student research and travel to the island.

As an architecture librarian, I find it very rewarding to combine personal research with collection development that serves long-term needs. I hope my work has shed some light on a neglected period in Cuba's architectural evolution while adding a chapter to Notre Dame's history by documenting one of the University's most distinguished graduates.

Further reading:

Alvarez-Tabío Albo, Emma. *Vida, mansion y muerte de la burguesia cubana*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1989.

Cuba theme issue. *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*. Miami: The Wolfson Foundation of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, 1996.

Llanes, Lillian. *Apuntes para una historia sobre los constructores cubanos*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1985.

Rodríguez, Eduardo Luis. *La Habana: arquitectura del siglo XX*. Barcelona: Blume, 1998.

Truitt Awarded Lazerow Fellowship

Marc Truitt, head of the University Libraries' Library Systems Department, and Katharine Farrell, Truitt's former colleague at Princeton, are this year's winners of the Association of College and Research Libraries' Samuel Lazerow Fellowship, an award funded by the Institute for Scientific Information in honor of ISI's former senior vice president. The fellowship is awarded for the year's best proposal for a research project tied to library collections or technical services. Truitt and Farrell's project intends to develop standards for articulating and encoding acquisitions data within the context of an integrated library system. The award carries a \$1,000 cash grant and a citation to be presented at the American Library Association's annual conference in Toronto this June. Congratulations, Marc, on this very prestigious achievement!

Hesburgh Library Basement Opening Celebration Scheduled for September 18, 2003

The newly renovated basement of the Hesburgh Library will be ready for use just before the beginning of the fall 2003 semester. We have scheduled an official opening celebration for September 18 – to coincide with the date, in 1963, when the Hesburgh Library formally opened.

We shall announce specifics of the celebration closer to that date, and look forward to your joining us for this very



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