
Executive Director's Report

April 2021

Cataloging Services

On March 24th, Manager of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray met with the ILS Committee of the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) to discuss the desirability of changing certain controversial subject headings in the catalog. Below is some background regarding this topic.

In January 2016, the American Library Association (ALA) Council adopted a resolution urging the Library of Congress (LC) to change "Illegal aliens" to "Undocumented immigrants." The resolution was in answer to a 2014 formal request from two Dartmouth College students. The Council argued that "the terms 'illegal' and 'alien', when used in reference to people, have undergone pejoration and acquired derogatory connotations, becoming increasingly associated with nativist and racist sentiments." The Council also argued that there is no explicit mandate from Congress that LC must follow the U.S. Code, and observed that both the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) Thesaurus and MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) use "Undocumented immigrants" and they are produced by federal government agencies.

In March 2016, the Policy and Standards Division of LC announced that "Aliens" should be revised to "Noncitizens" and that "Illegal aliens" would be cancelled and replaced by two headings, "Noncitizens" and "Unauthorized immigration." Related headings, such as "Children of illegal aliens", would also be addressed.

In April 2016, U.S. Representative Diane Black introduced HR 4926, the "Stopping Partisan Policy at the Library of Congress Act" which directed LC to retain "Aliens" and "Illegal aliens." It was not voted on, but in May 2016 the 2017th Congressional appropriations act contained this wording: "The Library of Congress is directed to make publicly available its process for changing or adding subject headings. It is expected that the Library use a process to change or add subject headings that is clearly defined, transparent, and allows input from stakeholders including those in the congressional community. The process should consider appropriate sources of common terminology used to refer to a concept, including current statutory language and other legal reference sources; and other sources, such as reference materials; websites; and titles in the Library of Congress' collection."

In May 2016, the Library of Congress stated that they would be accepting public feedback about the matter, but as of now they have made no formal statements, and they have not changed the headings.

In late November 2019, members of PLDA indicated to Mr. Wray that they were interested in changing the headings in the WLS catalog, and the conversation continued sporadically for the following year and a half, but there was no resolution.

At the March 24th meeting, Mr. Wray suggested that if changes were to be made, the ones intended by LC were preferred, since the WLS catalog has always followed LC standards; also, LC's approach allows for the differentiation of noncitizens who are in the United States with approval (foreign students, people with work visas, tourists, etc.) from people who have entered the country without authorization. The ILS Committee supported the changes, but decided to raise the issue before the entire PLDA at their April meeting.

In the meantime, Mr. Wray has been discussing the technical aspects of the possible changes with Angela Kilsdonk of the Equinox Open Library Initiative and Shannon Montes de Oca of Backstage Library Works (the company who performs authority updates of the WLS Catalog). While awaiting PLDA's decision, Mr. Wray began cleaning up the catalog by editing about 80 bibliographic records representing works about space aliens. These records mistakenly used the subject heading "Aliens" instead of the correct one, "Extraterrestrial beings." This was an overdue project.

Cataloger Melissa Glazer has completed the cataloging of New Rochelle Public Library's Israel Forum Collection. She and Cataloger Qingshe Ren will work with Mr. Wray on Harrison Public Library's #OwnVoices special collection. Mr. Wray and Harrison Public Library Director Galina Chernykh have been discussing the project, and the library is currently selecting titles for the collection.

At the request of WLS Manager of Special Projects Joe Maurantonio and WLS Project Relations Specialist Dana Hysell Alongi, Mr. Wray cataloged several Chromebook laptops and WiFi Hotspots. The equipment was used in the census project and will now be given to several libraries to be loaned to patrons.

Information Technology (IT)

The WLS IT Audit Committee continues to work on the Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the Integrated Library System (ILS) and the new billing structure. The SLA has been reviewed and is being modified by legal counsel. A final draft should be completed soon. The new billing structure was reviewed with the Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) on March 26th. This version takes into consideration PLDA's request to have the ILS service billed separately from all other WLS IT services in order to pave the way for an a la carte service model. The proposed model consists of 4 categories: ILS Maintenance, Network Managed Service, Device Support and Maintenance, and Wireless Service. While each category will be considered independently of each other, there are some uncontrollable overlaps. Efforts have been made to separate them as best as possible. Please note that Digital Content is not part of this model since WLS IT does not administer this service. Feedback has been received and addressed, and a final version is expected to be completed shortly.

In early March WLS IT held an information session to explain the WLS IT Device Support and Wireless services plans. This was an outline for PLDA to understand the new wireless service which will become active in the third quarter of 2021. An explanation was also provided of what devices will be supported in-library beginning with the new SLA agreement.

The Library Data Specialist position has been through two rounds of interviews, but unfortunately, a viable candidate has not been found. The post is still open and re-canvassing has begun. In the meantime, WLS IT has contracted with a development company for a trial period to try to automate some of the work duties which would have been part of the role of the Library Data Specialist.

The open position of the part-time Support Technician is also in the final stages of being filled. Several candidates have been interviewed.

Public Innovation & Engagement (PIE)



Community Conversation: Resilience: Phase 2 -- *Trauma-informed care is an approach in the human service field that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. (This was the lesson of our Westchester Resilience Coalition screenings of the film RESILIENCE.) This approach requires an understanding of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life- including that of service staff. Our focus at WLS has been to emphasize resilience as a response to trauma, i.e., recognizing and strengthening the ability of individuals and communities to feel safe, connected, and able to take appropriate action.*

Both Elena Falcone & Krishna Horrigan have been accepted as "Trauma-Informed Champions" and participants in the **Westchester County Trauma-Informed Learning Collaborative**. This collaborative recognizes that translating the need to become trauma-informed into a comprehensive and actionable plan can be a daunting task for organizations and communities. Training leadership is being provided by the [Institute for Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care](#) (University of Buffalo). Their vision is to promote and support a shared approach for expanding and sustaining trauma-informed care throughout the county by:

- 1) offering a process, framework and tools for implementing and measuring trauma-informed care;
- 2) building a referral network of trauma-informed agencies within and across service sectors; and
- 3) forming a workgroup/cohort of trauma-informed Champions and organizations who work both independently and collectively toward necessary changes in practices, policies, and culture.

PIE's intent is to integrate several aspects of this approach – trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, empathy-driven problem solving, social justice – into a program that addresses the experiences of library staff serving the public. We also anticipate using what we learn as part of our ongoing work with the Westchester Resilience Coalition. We are excited at the possibility of using the [ARTIC survey](#) (Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care) as a means for benchmarking and building trauma-sensitive services in libraries.

Concurrent with this work, we continue to have strong agency and public demand for Westchester Breathes programming (Breath-Body-Mind). Additionally, requests to support facilitated explorations of the film *RESILIENCE: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope...* continue!

PIE is working to enact the ambition to "turn outward," as expressed by Rich Harwood of The Harwood Institute during the 2019 WLS Annual Meeting. This refers to an orientation toward service that makes the community and the people the reference point for getting things done.

In addition to actively seeking feedback from current clients of our programs, we have launched a survey to get a read on community needs. The survey is offered in both English (outreach.tiny.us/survey) and Spanish (outreach.tiny.us/survey2). Responses received by the end of May will be shared with the WLS Board's Strategic Committee. The survey will be open throughout the year and will promote via our websites and other outreach.



Special Projects

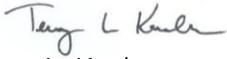
Joe Maurantonio has been working together with Pat Brigham to define and clarify several funding sources for WLS' digital equity projects. The first project, a collaboration between RXR, WLS and the Stem Alliance, has distributed over 60 renewed PCs to families in Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Montrose and Peekskill. Both Joe and Dana Hysell Alongi have ordered, inventoried and are preparing devices for distribution via NY CARES Act funding. These devices will be offered through WLS to libraries in communities where need has been identified.

WLS Trustee Institute

The Special Projects team has been working with Manhattanville College to present some engaging presentations through Zoom. The first of these programs will be held on April 21st at 7 p.m. as a Trustee Institute focusing on *Design Thinking for Libraries* offered by Dr. Alison Carson, the Director of Manhattanville's Center for Design Thinking.

The next program, which will be held on May 13th at 7 p.m., is entitled, *Social Poetics: Coronavirus Haiku*, a conversation with Prof. Mark Nowak and the Worker Writers School. Via a selection of haiku written by "frontline workers" during the COVID-19 crisis, attendees will gain a better understanding of the moments of protest, solace, wonder, certainty, love and strife the workers encountered during this most difficult time. All interested can register via the [WLS Evanced calendar](#).

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director