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Leonard, Andrea (2012, October). *"Pop-up" Your Data! Kinesthetic learner in an E-Resources World?* Poster session presented at LITA Forum, Columbus, OH.

## **"Pop-up" Your Data!**

### **Kinesthetic learner in an E-Resources World?**

Andrea A. Leonard, E-Resources Librarian  
leonardaa@appstate.edu 828.262.7744  
Appalachian State University

#### **The Short Story:**

**If you are having trouble 'seeing' your systems and how they work, make a pop-up using paper, scissors, tape, and pencil or markers!**

**A pop-up is a tool that could:**

- **Improve your trouble-shooting abilities**
- **Improve your communication with vendors and technical support**
- **Help you see where preventative maintenance needs more attention**

**Which all can lead to:**

- **A reduction in eResources problems reported by patrons and library staff**
- **A chance to share with and enlighten your colleagues about the complexities of eResources systems**
- **The ability to state more clearly why we need rigorous metadata standards**

**Keep an eye on NISO's information industry standards projects! See: <http://www.niso.org/>**

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#### **The Long Story:**

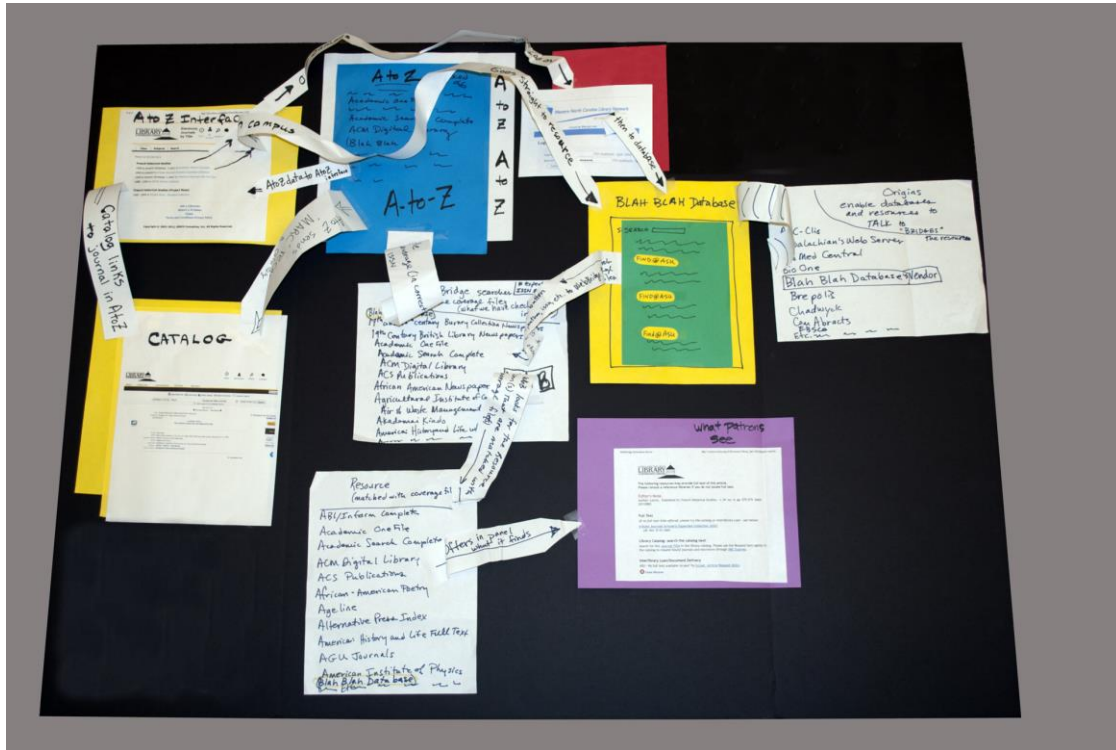
##### **WHAT? WHY?**

Do you have trouble understanding where the communications and metadata exchange breakdowns are happening between your OpenURL link resolver, databases, and your serials management system? Do you find it challenging to verbalize exactly what is happening effectively to technical support so that the problem can be truly solved? Are you a kinesthetic and visual learner in a sometimes untouchable virtual world? Do you love pop-up books? Just because you are the eResources Librarian doesn't mean that your learning style lends itself to the often very flat data and IT-driven online world.

##### **HOW?**

This poster session shares a way to create a simple paper pop-up of your e-resources systems so that you can actually see, touch, and follow the exchange of data. All you need is some paper, scissors, tape, and pencil for the basics. You can use colored construction paper and markers to

make it come alive and differentiate better between systems. Starting at the beginning of the point of data exchange, walk through each step and create a visual of the interfaces. Connect the interfaces together with strips of paper that indicate the kind of data that is being exchanged between the two. Add and connect as many systems or interfaces as needed – it can be as simple or as complex as you like. Here's an example:



Sometimes I draw a concept map on a piece of paper to figure out the paths I will need to follow. Remember, you don't have to be artistic! The point is to learn how the systems talk to each other and what they need to talk about.

## RESULTS!

My original intention in creating the concept maps and pop-ups was to learn more about our eResources systems so I could troubleshoot to solve problems and communicate better with vendor technical support. I had no plans for anyone else to see the pop-ups – they were for my own use. Over time, I realized that they had improved my understanding dramatically. My ability to communicate with technical support did indeed improve. I understand thoroughly now that routine preventive maintenance is a key to troubleshooting and fixing problems and we have established a calendar for routine tasks. From 2010-2011 to 2011-2012, the number of our eResources problem tickets submitted by patrons and library staff dropped by 12%.

A "pop-up" of your eResources systems may not only facilitate trouble-shooting and your own understanding, but could demystify them for your colleagues in the library and others who want to understand. Last spring, collaborating with three of my colleagues, we offered an in-house seminar on "A Day in the Life of an eResource" and used one of my pop-ups to help illustrate how our systems talk to each other.

You will not only begin to be able to verbalize problems better, but also be able to state more clearly why the development of rigorous metadata standards is so crucial when you “see” direct examples of data breakdowns. For instance, you might discover that your link resolver needs ‘Book Title’ data for a dissertation, but the system sends the title of the database as the ‘Book Title’ instead. The systems are using two different standards for the data and offer the patron the wrong information!