Access the Web – Staff Development
by June L. Power, M.L.I.S.

Over the summer, at least in libraries that operate on an academic schedule, staff development or continuing education, often becomes a focus, as staff persons prepare to expand their skills for the upcoming year. So this summer, as I and my staff worked hard to further ourselves and to expand our services, I spent some time browsing websites related to the topic of staff development. I found not only some websites that are immediately useful for library professionals and paraprofessionals who desire to take advantage of professional development opportunities, but also some websites that serve as models for training programs at the state or local level. However, I was more surprised but what I didn't find. Despite many hours of browsing, I did not find as many general library training and development resources as I anticipated. There were many library and local resources, which were not readily applicable outside of the venue for which they were created. Many state and regional library associations, as well as ALA, offer continuing education opportunities, and most incorporate both in-person and online formats. However, more generalized resources seem to be lacking, providing an opportunity for publication and collaboration on this topic, which would come as a welcome remedy to the current deficiency.

The Infopeople Project

http://infopeople.org/

Aimed at library workers in various types of California libraries, The Infopeople Project serves as a model staff development module. The California Library Training Clearinghouse makes available information from both forthcoming and past training opportunities, which are available in various locations, online, and through webcasts. The archived materials – which I found the most immediately useful part of the website – includes training agendas, Power Point presentations, and associated training documents. Just reading the list of programs may spark ideas for workshops or presentations for your own library or local library association.

Certified Public Library Administrator Program

http://www.ala-apa.org/certification/cpla.html

This ALA-affiliated website provides information on the Certified Public Library Administrator program, which "is a voluntary post-MLS certification program for public librarians with three years or more of supervisory experience." CPLA certification may assist in improving career opportunities and as a nationally recognized body, aims to "improve the quality of library service through the provision of practical knowledge and skills essential to successful library management." For public library personnel interested in advancing in the management ranks, this program would be an asset.

LISCareer.com – The Library and Information Science Professional's Career Development Center

http://liscareer.com

Aimed at new librarians and informational professionals, and those considering the jump into the professional track, LISCareer.com provides articles and print and online resources in the areas of career planning, education, finding a job, networking, mentoring, interpersonal skills, leadership, and publishing. The news tab on the website links you to the associated blog, LIScareer News, located at http://liscareer.blogspot.com/. LISCareer.com is currently on hiatus as the creators work on their book, A Day in the Life. However, the wealth of information remains available, and the book promises to be valuable as well. The bookstore tab provides an annotated bibliography of career resources. For experienced librarians, LISCareer.com is a place to get your publishing efforts off the ground, as they are always looking for contributors.

TheArcLink.org

http://www.thearclink.org/forLibrarians/

Sometimes professional development can be targeted to a specific need. ArcLink.org, for instance, offers Internet Instruction for Librarians Serving People with Disabilities. The workshop developed by ArcLink.org provides three online sessions aimed at helping librarians work with people who have disabilities as they use the Internet. Specifically targeted programs like these are wonderful for adding to your resume to show the diversity of your job skills. Also, if you are looking for a particular job that requires such a job skill, these types of programs allow you to specifically target the areas in which you need to gain skills. This particular program is immediately useful for librarians working with disabled patrons, but also serves as a model for how other topic-specific online training can be accomplished.

Yale University Library –Staff Training and Organizational Development

http://www.library.yale.edu/training/stod/home.html

While portions of the website are applicable only to employees of Yale University Library, there is a great deal of good general information on their Staff Training and Organizational Development Website. The Career and Staff Development section offers assistance with cover letters, resume writing, developing a career plan, a planning tool for use in the development of learning activities and guidance in the area of professionalism. The Staff Resources Library offers a list of print and electronic resources and the Training and Education Resources page provides links to relevant online training sites. Explore the Library Training Practitioner's Toolkit and Training Exchange Page- which while quite bare, can serve as an outline for a local training module. The emphasis on

mentors and trainers, and information about utilizing them, may also be found on the website.

LibrarySupportStaff.com

http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/

While once a useful website, LibrarySupportStaff.com has not been recently updated, most likely due to the retirement of the individual maintaining the page; the last date of update I could determine was July 2005, though some pages had not been updated since March of 2005. Some of the useful sections on the website were On-the-Job Help, Sites for Staff, Education4You Sites, Finding a Job, Citations and Web Publishing.   The site provides a link to http://librarysupporter.blogspot.com/, a companion blog that was active until this past January. The Sites for Staff page provides links to professional association groups for support staff as well as discussion lists, informal groups, and useful websites. The On-the-Job section provides a list of websites that is fairly extensive, and serves as a handy librarian's index to the Internet, but doesn't cross that border into an overwhelming number of links. Another index of websites is devoted to online learning sites where a variety of subjects may be found, including a number of graduate entrance test resources, PC troubleshooting, and links to tutorials by specific vendors – but beware that many of the sites have commercial connections, though many others have no associated cost. Despite the outdated nature of the website, there is still some useful information to be found there.

Associates

http://associates.ucer.edu

Associates is an online e-zine for Library Support Staff, which is published and emailed 3 times a year in March, July, and October. To subscribe and have this e-zine delivered to your email automatically, visit http://associates.ucer.edu/subscribe.htm.   The website has wonderful indexing, allowing you to browse the archive by title or author, or by issue. While not specific to Access Services, as Associates covers all areas of library work, this e-zine covers many of the topics that front line support staff deal with on a daily basis and provides a means for beginning to think more professionally and visualizing work in a library as a career more than a job..

Libsup-L

http://mailmain.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/libsup-l

Libsup-l is a discussion list that is focused on library paraprofessional staff, but not limited to paraprofessionals/support staff. Like Associates, this discussion list deals with all library-related topics that may be of interest to support staff. Networking is one of the key components of professional development and is not always easy to accomplish in smaller libraries where there is less opportunity due to staffing levels or less funding for

travel, or where funds are limited to use by "professional librarians." Therefore, the online milieu has proved quite worthy in its ability to support these vast communities that exist online for individuals to share their questions and work practices with others that have similar needs and situations. Libsup-l is one of those communities – there are a fair number of posts to the list each day, but not so many that the list becomes overwhelming. The list may also be received in a digest format. For support staff persons, or those working closely with them, this discussion list is very useful in maintaining an awareness of current topics in the library field, discovering useful resources for everyday work and professional development, and for making those networking connections that are so vital to a career in a field based on sharing and collaboration.

LibraryHQ Resources

http://www.libraryhq.com/resources.html

What was a useful website, has since sunk into the ennui that is common to the ephemeral online resources. What were useful sections – the News Source, Conferences/Seminars, and New Technology Titles sections, now serve as models of what a good training module would include, as the information itself is outdated. The site is mainly useful now for its index of websites related to library technology and the Internet, Legal Concerns, Library Access, Library Education, Library Development, and Library Employment provide information for those wishing to further their career in libraries.

ALA's Library Lists and Discussion Groups and
State and Regional Library Organizations

http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/discussiongroups/listaladiscussion.htm
http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/chapters/stateandregional/stateregional.htm

Getting involved in your local library organization is the best way to further your library career and to continue to develop professionally. Not only do you get to learn yourself from workshops and programs, but often you have the opportunity to give presentations yourself on things you are doing at your library, which is a great thing to add to your resume or portfolio, whether your are a professional or support staff. ALA serves as a good clearinghouse of information on accredited schools and library lists and discussion groups, the latter being an especially useful tool for library practitioners needing information about a specific topic. Networking is so important, and it's always nice to find somebody else working with the same issues as yourself.