



# INTERCOM

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District of Columbia Library Association

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June 2006

DCLA, the American Library Association chapter of our nation's capital

- ◆ <http://www.dcla.org>
- ◆ 202-872-1112 (messages only)

### Upcoming DCLA Programs and Meetings

- ◆ June 13 (Tues.) 6:00-8:00  
DCLA Board Meeting (p. 6)
- ◆ June 23 (Fri) 10:00-noon  
Tour AT Lab (p. 7)

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## Thank You for a Wonderful Year by Kathryn Ray

I am grateful to each of you for making this, DCLA's 112<sup>th</sup> year, another success. Our program year began with Tom Friedman telling us his view of a flat world, and setting a standard of excellence for programming. Our interest group chairs put together an impressive array of professional development opportunities ranging from adult education to communication with coworkers to blogging. Tours included the Scottish Rite Temple Library and the preservation lab at the National Library of Medicine. We partnered with LC's Center for the Book and explored the Coretta Scott King award-winning children's books. Literary luncheons featured eminent writers Azar Nafizi, David McCullough, and Taylor Branch. DCLA offered testimony and wrote letters to the city council in support of the DC Public Library and sent a delegation to National Library Legislative Day on the Hill. We had fun, too. We enjoyed a great Fall Members' Reception at the Botanic Garden and joined SLA for a very successful games night. This year DCLA was the lead organization for the Joint Spring Workshop. Lorna Dodt and her committee were exemplary. Many thanks to each IG and Committee chair who put on a program for our members. Elaine Cline, DCLA's president-

elect, threw us a grand banquet with Helen Thomas as the featured speaker. We toasted the ALA Washington Office with the Spofford Award for their work in advancing libraries, Sharon Lenius with the Community Service Award for volunteering at the Fairfax County Public Library for 17 years, and Mike Kolakowski with the Distinguished Service Award for serving in more capacities than we can remember. Special thanks and a hearty round of applause went to Fran Buckley for heroic efforts in holding together the D.C. Public Library. The Ruth Fine Student financial award recipients, our future leaders, are Cambria L. Backus, Kimberly Peach, and Robyn Weisman.

### Legislative Day

One perk of being DCLA president is offering the Welcoming Remarks to the National Library Legislative Day delegates. Here is an excerpt of my remarks: Since 1894, DCLA has advocated for libraries and promoted collegial exchange among librarians. In that tradition, we are happy to continue our long partnership with ALA's Washington Office to make this Legislative day a reality. Today's thoughts are on libraries, freedom of information,

(Continued on page 6)

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2005-2006**

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The DCLA Nominations Committee  
(Jean B. Craigwell, Chair; Gail Avery, Michael Kolakowski)  
is pleased to announce  
the results of the election of officers for the

## 2006/2007 DCLA BOARD

VICE-PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT ELECT

Barbara Folensbee-Moore

TREASURER

Jennifer Jones

DIRECTORS

April King  
Jennifer Nutefall

Ballots were distributed to DCLA members in the April issue of *Intercom*.  
The deadline for receipt of ballots was May 1, 2006.

Many thanks to all the candidates for their willingness to serve DCLA.

## Instant Messaging Reference at American University

by Anne C. Osterman, Alex R. Hodges, and Andres Ciriello

Online reference services have been around the block. Librarians began using bulletin boards and email in the 1980s to answer reference questions. When virtual reference vendors such as OCLC QuestionPoint 24/7, Tutor.com/LSSI, Docutek, and a host of other now defunct companies put their products on the market, they prompted wide adoption of several virtual reference formats. Now, the instability of co-browsing (collaborative librarian and user Web browsing), which was the main interactive teaching feature, has led many libraries to drop these sometimes problematic virtual reference products and return to a basic online communication tool: real-time chat, or instant messaging.

While it does not come without difficulties—keeping statistics, maintaining transcripts and avoiding computer viruses, for example—instant messaging has been well received both by libraries and the user populations they serve. It's free, it's stable, and best of all, “75% of online teens—or two-thirds of all

teenagers—use instant messaging.”<sup>1</sup> Instant messaging is much easier to market than other online research help services, at least among the younger population in the United States, because it is already a familiar concept.



The library distributed this sticker during its annual Valentine's Day library celebration. The sticker acts as a reminder to the community that it can contact librarians online via AIM. (Graphic design by Jonathan Silberman)

This spring, the Washington Research Library Consortium decided to close its collaborative Virtual Reference Service, and some WRLC libraries chose to staff their own instant messaging reference services. Gallaudet

University led the way and American University, George Washington University, Catholic University and George Mason University followed suit. American University's instant messaging pilot project, which this article discusses, ran through May 1, 2006.

For the pilot project, American University chose to offer the service with AOL Instant Messenger, or AIM, because of its popularity. The software used to bundle multiple chat services (AIM, Yahoo! and MSN Messenger) together, such as Trillian or GAIM, proved problematic. We also chose limited hours—1:00-3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, our peak hours of the WRLC virtual reference service.

Planning considerations included training and service procedures. Many of the librarians interested in staffing the service had used instant messaging before, but some had not. In response, we organized training sessions based on individuals' needs.

*(Continued on page 5)*

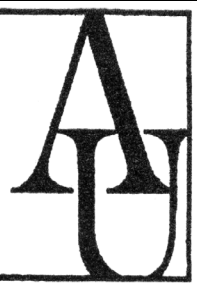
(Continued from page 4)

These sessions included an introduction to the procedures we developed for saving transcripts and recording statistics (including question type, patron type, session length, and time of day). We tried to choose these statistics carefully because they would be used to measure the success of the service and ultimately help determine the service's future.

To promote the service, we encouraged members of the AU community to add our screen name, askaulibrary, to their buddy lists. The library's graphic designer created several poster designs, one of which had the AOL buddy icon with a speech bubble that reads "Chat Smarter: askaulibrary." These posters were placed in AU's dormitories, library, and shuttle buses. In addition to general promotion, such as an ad in Facebook along with ads and articles in university newspapers, we promoted the screen name during the library's Valentine's Day celebration by handing out stickers with a cute chipmunk and the phrase

"\*hug\* a librarian from the comfort of your computer: AIM:askaulibrary."

In the end, we believe that the pilot project was successful. The response from our users and service providers was very positive. Many users told us how much they appreciated the service, and service providers responded unanimously

	<p><b>Contact AU Library:</b>  <a href="http://www.library.american.edu">www.library.american.edu</a>          202-885-3238  <a href="mailto:research@american.edu">research@american.edu</a>          AIM: AskAULibrary</p>
<p>When users at the physical reference desk write down on scrap paper search strategy suggestions or a call number, librarians ink stamp the scrap paper with our additional service contact information, including the AIM screen name.</p>	

in a satisfaction survey that AU should continue to offer the service and should expand its hours. The service received a solid number of chat interactions—an average of just over one per day, or 67 total—and we built a buddy list of over 60 AU community members. (By way of comparison, during the same time last year, AU community members asked 106 questions through the

WRLC virtual reference service. Although the instant messaging pilot had fewer questions, it was a new service instead of an established service, and it was staffed for only 10 hours per week as compared to the consortium's 32 hours.)

Due to the success of the pilot project, AU Library has decided to continue the IM reference service with expansion plans to be decided in the future. We also have purchased headphones with incorporated microphones and will begin experimenting with VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). Instant messaging holds great promise for providing reference service at our users' point of need.

<sup>1</sup>Lenhart, A., Madden, M. & Hitlin, P. (2005). *Teens and Technology: Youth Are Leading the Transition to a Fully Wired and Mobile Nation. Reports: Family, Friends & Community*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved May 9, 2006, from [http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP\\_Teens\\_Tech\\_July2005web.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Tech_July2005web.pdf), iii.

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*Anne C. Osterman and Alex R. Hodges are reference and instruction librarians. Andres Ciriello is a systems analyst.*

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**June 2006**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**July 2006**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND MEETINGS**

**June 5 (Monday) - June 6 (Tuesday)**

**Book Blitz II: Tackling Complex Cataloging Rules.** Sponsored by the Federal Library and Information Center Committee Education Working Group. 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Dining Room A, Madison Bldg., 6th floor, 1st and Independence Ave., S.E. Contact: 202-707-4800.

**June 7 (Wednesday)**

**SID/DIW June Planning Meeting.** Society for International Development/Development Information Workgroup Meeting. Noon – 2:00. Development Information Center Conference Room. 1001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Suite 300 South. Bring photo ID. No reservations required. Contact: Kenlee Ray 202-483-2423 KenleeR@aol.com.

**June 7 (Wednesday) - June 9 (Friday)**

**Beyond Borders & Bindings: Society for Scholarly Publishing 28th Annual Meeting.** Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel, Arlington.

**June 11 (Sunday) - June 14 (Wednesday)**

**Special Libraries Association Annual Conference.** Baltimore, MD

**June 13 (Tuesday)**

**DCLA Board Meeting.** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. For location, contact: Elaine Cline, 202-647-3002, ClineCE@state.gov.

**June 14 (Wednesday) - June 16 (Friday)**

**6th Annual Symposium on Intellectual Property.** Sponsored by the Center for Intellectual Property, University of Maryland University College. UMUC Inn and Conference Center, Adelphi, MD. Contact: <www.umuc.edu/cip/symposium>.

**June 22 (Thursday)**

**ALA Annual Conference,** New Orleans, commences.

**June 23 (Friday)**

**Assistive Technology Lab/Kellar Institute and Assistive Technology center/Johnson Center Library Tour.** 10:00 a.m. – noon. Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human disAbilities, George Mason University. Contact: Patrick Timony, 202-727-1335, patrick.timony@dc.gov.

**LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARIES**

**Henriette D. Avram** died of cancer on April 22. A pioneer in library automation, she led the landmark MARC Pilot Project at the Library of Congress and shepherded the adoption of the MARC format nationwide. Her obituary in the April 28 *Washington Post* reveals that she had no formal training in library science. She had been a pre-med student for two years and took advanced math courses after joining the National Security Agency, where she worked as a systems analyst and programmer before joining the Library of Congress in 1965.

**Ginnie Cooper** has been appointed executive director of the D.C. Public Library. According to the May 19 *Washington Post*, she will assume her new position in August. Ms. Cooper has served as executive director of the Brooklyn, N.Y. library system since 1993 and has also served as the director of the Multnomah County Library in Portland, OR.

The **Carnegie Library** building at Massachusetts and New York Aves., N.W. is the new home of the National Music Center, according to the March 31 *Washington Post*.

*(Continued from page 1)*

literacy, and their importance in a democratic society. As your delegation fans out to visit your state’s representatives and senators, contemplate this irony: the residents of the Nation’s capital have no voting representation in Congress. In the House, we have a fabulous delegate, but she can’t vote. We have no Senators. It’s “kinda” unbelievable, isn’t it? It’s not a problem that we can solve today; however, while you are here, please consider visiting the Washingtoniana Division of the ML King library to learn more about it!

Final Good-byes

This year, we launched our electronic version of *Intercom*. This could never have happened without Susan Randolph, our retiring *Intercom* editor, and Tracy Myers, our Webmaster. A very special thanks to Susan and Tracy. Finally, thanks to the Executive Board who made the second Tuesday evening of the month a lot of fun.



## Tour

Kristine Neuber, the Assistive Technology (AT) and Web Accessibility coordinator for the Kellar Institute will give a tour of the AT lab and the Johnson Center Library's AT center.

Friday, June 23  
10:00 a.m. – noon

Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human disAbilities  
George Mason University

Sponsored by  
the DCLA  
Adaptive Services Interest Group

No charge

For more information, contact  
Patrick Timony  
202-727-1335  
patrick.timony@dc.gov

### Internet Link of the Month

## OAster

<http://oaister.umdl.umich.edu/o/oaister/>

Looking for something like “an account of the manners and customs of the Aborigines and the state of their relations with Europeans” by Edward John Eyre? Or Eyre’s “Journals of expeditions of discovery into Central Australia and overland from Adelaide to King George’s Sound, in the years 1840-1”? Try OAster!

OAster is a project of the University of Michigan Digital Library Production Service, whose goal is “to create a collection of freely available, previously difficult-to-access, academically-oriented digital resources.” The collection at the current time contains 7,328,353 records from 634 institutions worldwide. These digital records include items such as electronic books, online journals, audio files, images, movies, and reference texts.

OAster has an easy to use search interface that allows you to search its records by keyword, author, title, or language. You can also choose to limit your search to text, audio, video, image, or dataset, as well as to how the results are sorted. On the left side of the results page, the institutions from where the records are retrieved are listed. One could spend a lot of time at this site just looking at its unique resources. –Tracy Myers, dclibrarian@gmail.com.

# DCLA thanks these individuals for ....

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Andres Ciriello  
 Erin Clougherty  
 John Y. Cole  
 Barbara Conaty  
 Eileen Deegan  
 Jenifer Grady  
 Nancy E. Gwinn  
 Alex Hodges  
 Tracy Myers  
 Anne O. Osterman  
 Noel Rutherford  
 Patrick Timony

## Volunteering for National Library Legislative Day

Alice Anamelechi-  
 Oladokun  
 Lavonda Kay Broadnax  
 Fran Buckley  
 Elaine Cline  
 Jean Craigwell  
 Barbara Folensbee-  
 Moore  
 Andrea Gruhl  
 Jennifer Jones  
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 Shirley Loo  
 Jennifer Manning  
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 M-J Oboroceanu  
 Susan Randolph  
 Luz Sadak  
 Bill Tuceling  
 Bill Turner  
 Barbara Webb  
 Pamela West



## Insightful Ideas on Professional Competencies: 2006 Joint Spring Workshop by Eileen Deegan

During springtime in Washington, DC, traditional events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival awaken residents and visitors to the season's natural wonders. Since 1967, another traditional event, the Joint Spring Workshop (JSW), has been enlightening DC-area information professionals about major issues and trends impacting their field. At this year's Workshop, "21st Century Competencies for Information Professionals," five prominent leaders—Jane Dysart, Roberta Shaffer, Dr. Eileen Abels, Rose Dawson, and Donna Scheeder—spoke about the knowledge, skills and abilities practitioners must cultivate if their careers are to continually blossom.

Nearly 130 participants attended the day-long April 25 Workshop at the Library of Congress' Mumford Room, which was jointly sponsored by DCLA (the 2006 Lead Association), DC/SLA, LLSDC, and FLICC. Following Workshop Committee Chair Lorna Dodt's welcome and introductory remarks, each speaker presented her ideas on critical competencies.

Given the speakers' varied specializations, each offered distinctive interpretations and stories. Nevertheless, their presentations emphasized many of the same or related competencies. Thus, one can infer that certain competencies, such as focusing on the big picture, taking risks, planning, partnering, problem solving, and exercising political savvy, are core for information professionals—whatever one's specialty. The following summary provides selected highlights from each speaker's presentation. At a later date, a video recording of the JSW will be available for viewing via the FLICC Online Video Library (<http://www.loc.gov/flicc/vidlib.html>).

In commencing her keynote address, "ComPetencies & Information Professionals," **Jane Dysart**, a Principal of Dysart & Jones Associates and expert in information management, strategic planning, and organizational structuring, polled audience members on whether they had noticed, and were irritated by, the capital "p" in "ComPetencies." When many raised their hands to signal "yes," she

good-naturedly commented: "I hope some of the things I say irritate you, so you will mull them over."

Jane quickly revealed another reason for using the capital "p." Each of the 15 key competencies she discussed can be expressed in a single word that starts with "p". At the outset of her presentation, she defined "competencies" as "a specific range of skills, abilities, or knowledge enabling or qualifying someone to perform a particular function or carry out selected responsibilities." Competencies, she said, constitute a profession's foundation and are a basis for professional growth and performance measures. Throughout her keynote, she

*"Competencies constitute  
a profession's foundation  
and are a basis for  
professional growth and  
performance  
measurement."*

elaborated on ways to put the 15 key competencies into action. She also recommended various books (e.g. *Now Discover Your Strengths*), articles (e.g. "Why Libraries Fail & Tips for Staying Alive"), and Web sites (e.g. [www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm](http://www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm)) whose examination of competencies is useful for information professionals.

The 15 key competencies Jane outlined were:

- Partnering (establishing relationships and working with others who have skills we lack)
- Passion (caring about the information profession and its issues)
- People (exercising leadership and interpersonal skills)
- Perceptions (being aware of customers' perceptions, needs and desires)
- Perfection (realizing we *don't* need perfection, and using the 80/20 rule to move ahead)

- Picture (seeing the big picture in our organization, community and world)
- Planning (aligning with our organization and community via our strategic plans)
- Play (thinking creatively, trying new things, learning from others who think differently)
- Political (influencing key stakeholders and getting things done)
- Positioning (defining our markets and impacting clients)
- Practice (building skills in safe environments, and bringing lessons learned to our work)
- Presence (exhibiting confidence, being seen and heard, doing "vicious self-promotion")
- Presentations (communicating ideas, securing commitments, and influencing outcomes)
- Problem Solving (finding information, solutions and partners, and creating products)
- Professional (using business techniques and thinking like a business person)

Jane's JSW handout is available at the Dysart & Jones Associates Web site (<http://www.dysartjones.com>) via the "Presentations" link.

FLICC/FEDLINK Executive Director **Roberta Shaffer** opened her presentation with her favorite story about a resourceful children's librarian at the Cleveland Public Library who moved to Washington, DC and sought employment in this "not very child-friendly" city. Despite having no background in law, he obtained a library job at a well-known law firm, and after six months, became the library director. Later, when asked by his former Cleveland Public colleagues what it's like being a law librarian, he quipped: It's really no different, "except the chairs are bigger." In short, Roberta's humorous anecdote suggested that information professionals can capitalize on their well-honed core competencies, and apply them in quite diverse settings.

Roberta noted that competencies should not be looked at in a vacuum, as they are intertwined with a

profession's values and attributes. She said that values—a set of principles that guide beliefs and actions of an individual or group—change slowly. Moreover, attributes—inherent characteristics that are describable and closely associated with a specific person, group or object—may or may not change. However, competencies, comprised of knowledge, skills, and abilities, do change over time.

In discussing which values, attributes and competencies are needed by 21<sup>st</sup> Century information professionals, Roberta pointed to the master list she has been compiling since 2000. One very notable feature of her list is its profusion of words beginning with the letter “p.” Amused by the fact that Jane's list also emphasized “p” words, Roberta assured the JSW audience that while she and Jane had not collaborated on their presentations, there was significant agreement between them about which proficiencies are most important. Roberta's list identified more than 50 wide-ranging values (e.g.; Purist, Pollinator), attributes (e.g.; Pro-activist, Persistence), and competencies (e.g.; Project Manager, Personalization).

**Dr. Eileen Abels**, Associate Professor at the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies (CLIS), spoke about “The Role of LIS Programs in Preparing Librarians of the Future.” She highlighted the challenges that Library and Information Studies (LIS) programs must grapple with. For instance, LIS programs must determine:

- Whether they are preparing students to be librarians or information professionals
- Whether their purpose is to provide training or education
- What is common or core to all information professionals
- How they can accommodate a wide range of specializations, and
- Whether they should change the curriculum by adding new courses or by integrating new content

As an example of how CLIS is preparing librarians for the future, Eileen described the College's development of a required management course. The course resulted, in part, from a realization that many MLS graduates will be working in mid-level and high-level

managerial positions—some as soon as they step out the door. CLIS' required course is designed to develop such competencies as the ability to plan, implement and evaluate; strategic-thinking skills; and knowledge of management theory and processes.

In the last part of her presentation, Eileen asked the JSW audience two questions that elicited considerable verbal and written feedback:

1. What did you learn in your LIS program that proved to be essential in practice?
2. What *didn't* you learn in your LIS program that you found to be essential in practice?

In reply to the first question, some said collection development, cataloging, team-work, and searching skills. Some said the essential skills they did not learn were human resources management, budgeting and justifying one's existence, and financial management.

The JSW's engaging afternoon speakers kept the program sailing along. Following lunch, the Alexandria Library System's Deputy Director, **Rose Dawson**, explored how competencies gained as a youth services librarian enhance one's overall professional expertise. In her presentation “Youth Competencies: It's not just kids stuff,” Rose laid out the seven competencies established by the ALA's Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) and recounted interesting ways she has put these competencies into action.

Rose stressed the following points about “The Big Seven” ALSC Competencies, which appear in italics:

1. *Knowledge of Client Group* means knowing who your clients are, and what they need and want.
2. To develop your *Administrative and Management Skills*, participate in planning and budgeting, problem-solving, and decision-making activities and training.
3. Crucial *Communication Skills* are writing skills and versatile verbal skills that equip you to communicate with children, teens, administrators, and the outside community.
4. The two important areas of *Materials and Collection Development* are knowledge of

the materials, and the ability to select appropriate materials and develop a children's collection.

5. *Programming Skills* entail the ability to design, promote, execute, and evaluate. They also entail presenting a variety of programs, utilizing the talents of library customers, and providing outreach programs that meet community needs and library goals.
6. *Advocacy* is promoting awareness of, and support for, the library. Be ready to take advantage of unexpected opportunities to promote your library. Utilize effective public relations techniques and develop partnerships with “sister agencies.”
7. Maintain your *Professionalism* by participating in professional organizations, keeping abreast of current trends, and strengthening your skills.

In the preface to her presentation, the afternoon's final speaker, **Donna Scheeder**, remarked that she spoke from the perspective of someone who has lived through huge changes during her 37-year career as a special librarian at the Library of Congress. Still, she said, a number of professional functions have remained basically the same. For instance, we remain one of the few professions in which clients will tell us “what they don't know.” Given this backdrop of change and continuity, Donna, currently the Director, Law Library Services, at the Law Library of the Library of Congress, detailed three multi-faceted competencies that enable information professionals to excel—knowledge, leadership and courage. The following paragraphs recap selected ideas from Donna's presentation.

Knowledge encompasses a commitment to continual learning; knowledge of your organization and of the future; and business and management, and professional knowledge. Having knowledge of your organization means you know about its business, culture, and processes, and how decisions are made. Understanding your organization's decision-making process allows you to influence it.

Having professional knowledge means you know about information resources, tools, and techniques. As technology

tools can be your friend or enemy, it's essential to "understand enough about a tool to turn it into your friend." Moreover, using statistical techniques is more important than ever for proving the value of what you are doing.

Having business and management knowledge allows you to manage change, analyze return on investment, and budget. Budgeting involves determining what you want to do, how it will further strategic goals, and how much it will cost.

Leadership means showing the way, and is the art of bringing people together to get the right things done. You don't have to be a manager to be a leader. "Everyone in this room should be a knowledge leader."

Leaders get things done by working with people, and today's workplace is a collaborative environment. Leaders need the ability to build partnerships and alliances, network, and use compromise to build consensus.

Courage connotes seeing change as opportunity, taking risks, tackling tough problems, filling the void by doing something you don't normally do, changing jobs when you get stale, and standing by your professional convictions.

All the JSW speakers participated in the day's final activity, the panel question and answer. Questions posed by the audience members included: how competencies fare in bureaucratic environments; how long-time employees can be motivated; what information architects do; and why electronic things are called "virtual." Finally, each panelist replied to the question "What are the trends librarians should be looking at?" Their answers were:

- Social tools and social computing (e.g.; instant messaging)
- How users access information (e.g.; libraries should be in the life of the user)
- Tagging and community-produced metadata (e.g.; anyone can put a subject heading on something)
- Devaluation of information (e.g.; folksonomies)
- Customer service.

In her closing remarks, DCLA President Kathryn Ray recalled that the concept for the JSW emerged from the "Idea Day" convened by former DCLA President Elizabeth Stone to reinvigorate the Association. The JSW "idea" was to hold an all-day workshop that would explore one topic in depth. The first JSW, held in 1967 and organized by Dr. Stone, addressed the "Problems of Automation and Manpower." Now, fast-forwarding to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it's clear from the 2006 JSW, with its extensive, authoritative insights into competencies, that this traditional event remains a great idea.

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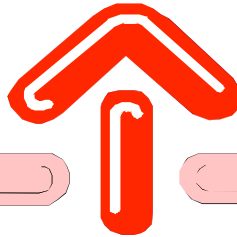
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