

Nexus

A RYERSON UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY THE LIBRARY ISSUE NO. 13/DECEMBER 2001

REFERENCE SERVICES IN A DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

CHAT goes academic—meeting library users at point-of-need

Diane Granfield, *Head of Reference Services*

"I've been looking for a journal article in Criminal Justice and Behavior. I want it online, can you help?"

"I'm looking for a book on ink drying-time."

"Need help for a term paper looking at the importance of an infant spending its first moments with its mother."

"How do I check an e-book out?"

"How do I get into your databases from home?"

"I need information on an organization – its Web site doesn't give me much. Articles?"

Ryerson students asked more than 90 questions like these on the Library's new digital reference service, *Ask a Librarian LIVE*, in November. The pilot service allows librarians to interact with students through the use of real-time, Web-based, chat software. Once logged on, the student and librarian engage in a text-based conversation where they are both able to "push" Web sites and interact with the resources on-screen. In addition, librarians can show Power Point presentations and send documents. At the conclusion of each session, participants receive a complete transcript of their session via e-mail that includes links to all Internet resources shared during that session.

Although the Ryerson Library turnstile counts and circulation figures have shot up from last year, many students opt to do much of their research away from the Library or campus. The Library's considerable investment in electronic resources, as well as the growth in size and importance of continuing and distance education at Ryerson, has meant a steady increase in the use of our licensed databases from home, office, student residence and labs. But have our library users been enticed into cyberspace without us? How are students doing out there?

In addition to an overwhelming, accessible, diverse and exciting mix of Web resources, our students have access to thousands of journals through our full-text, licensed databases on the Web. Identifying resources, developing effective, critical

research strategies, and evaluating the information retrieved can challenge the abilities of inexperienced researchers. Furthermore, Library services, designed to support on-campus users, need to support the information needs of individuals involved in distance learning.

To address these challenges, we have developed a number of proactive, innovative and flexible approaches to reaching our students wherever they are "in" the Library. A range of alternate services now complements on-site reference assistance and instructional sessions. All students, faculty and staff can use our e-mail reference service, telephone call-center, online library research tutorials, Web-based subject guides, and a *Frequently Asked Questions* Web page. An integrated library system

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Lynn Murdoch, RMIT University Library



Ryerson Distance Education Librarian, Susan Patrick, demonstrating *Ask A Librarian LIVE* in Australia.

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LIBRARY

Reference services continued

facilitates the cataloguing and delivery of Internet resources, including e-books, and most recently *Ask a Librarian LIVE*.

Ask a Librarian LIVE was the subject of a proposal by Diane Granfield, head of Reference, and a group of Ryerson librarians. The project received a portion of Ryerson's McConnell Foundation grant. Ryerson is currently one of only five Canadian university libraries offering a chat reference service. In looking to the future in this fast-evolving digital milieu, the Library hopes to explore extending services beyond opening hours by partnering with other libraries in complementary time zones throughout the world.

Ryerson Library a hit in Australia

Our Distance Education librarian demonstrated the LSSI (Library Systems & Services) chat software to a number of libraries in Australia this past summer. The Australian librarians showed a strong interest in the potential of the service and Ryerson Library continues to communicate with them as we proceed through the trial and evaluation phases of this pilot project.

The LSSI² software's state-of-the-art features hold much promise in achieving the goal of providing the same quality of reference service over the Internet that was previously available only at the reference desk. One student, who responded to an online satisfaction survey of the *Ask a Librarian LIVE* service, admitted to not visiting the library before, and stated, "now I can get help wearing my bathrobe!"

1 "Push" - To send online Web pages to the user in real time.

2 *Ask a Librarian LIVE* uses software developed by eGain Communications Corporation distributed through LSSI's (Library Systems & Services) Virtual Reference Service.

Ask a Librarian LIVE

Ask a Librarian is closed for the holidays and will reopen January 7, 2002.

www.ryerson.ca/library/ask.html

STACKING THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOUR

Natalie Briggs, Lead Hand, Stack Maintenance, Access Services Department

Shelvers are a vital and energetic component of the Ryerson Library workforce. There are 20 shelvers at work in the Library in the fall and winter terms and 3 in spring and summer.

To prepare the Library for the average 4,000 daily users, shelvers arrange 1,200 chairs around 200 tables, 196 study carrels and 185 workstations on eight Library floors.

In the 80 hours each week that the Library is open, these hard-working employees will gather, distribute, sort and shelve an average of 13,000 books and journals.

Shelvers assist users with equipment like photocopiers, microform copiers, the Card Value Centre, and change machines, in addition to performing minor maintenance and identifying machines that require service calls.

More important, shelvers - often the first staff member new users approach - are the human link between the online library catalogue and the books on the shelves. Shelvers refer users to services within the Library and elsewhere on campus, and respond to inquiries about Library policies and procedures as well as the location of books and their loan period.

Equally valuable is the role shelvers play in security procedures, alerting patrolling security officers to situations involving violations of the Library and Student Codes of Conduct, (i.e., theft and vandalism). Members of the shelving staff are often the first to notify security of environmental hazards in the Library such as plumbing leaks, and to identify broken furniture or fixtures that could be hazardous.

Student Shelvers

Our staff appreciates our student shelvers. Library administrators survey them annually, to secure feedback and improve service as an employer and to obtain their unique and valuable perspective on the Library's reputation in the Ryerson student community. Shelvers offer many helpful suggestions about how the Library can improve and promote Library services.

Employment at the Library provides student shelvers with knowledge that they may not have otherwise acquired about Library resources.

Edwin Boithi, fourth year Chemical Engineering student shelper, states: "During group work, I'm assigned to do research because I know how to retrieve Library materials. Understanding how to read a journal citation is also very helpful in my thesis research".

The company hired me for my co-op placement last year because "I had worked independently as a shelper, sometimes without direct supervision. That made me reliable. I know I can be composed and professional under pressure, from trouble-shooting the copiers."

Julie Chan, a third year Business student shelper agrees.

"I was hired as Library shelper in my first year, and I remember being intimidated by the many floors of the Library. Shelper-training helped with my orientation in the Library, and the entire University ... even helped improve my speed in my summer job."

Library employment is also beneficial to student shelvers because it provides them with transferable skills, highly valued by employers in their career fields. Operation of the Ryerson Library is a group effort, and an integral part of that effort is the shelving staff. The Ryerson community benefits from this positive reciprocal arrangement.

Shelvers maintain the order that is essential for effective information search and retrieval in the Library collection.



Edwin Boithi:

Recognizing *our* donors

Dario Ruberto



Marcelle Lean, about to launch the Virtual Donor Wall.

www.ryerson.ca/library/donors/donor.html

At a celebration held in the Ryerson Library and Archives in November, President Claude Lajeunesse officially thanked Lorraine Monk for her gift of fine art photography books. Marcelle Lean, chair of the Board of Governors' External Relations Committee, launched the Library's Virtual Donor Wall. The event drew several renowned Canadian photographers including Tony Hauser and Marilyn Westlake (pictured at right) and Paul Hoeffler. Claude Doucet, Ryerson archivist, and Peter Higdon, curatorial manager of the Mira Goddard Study Centre, looked on as Ms Monk completed her dedication.



Paul Hoeffler

Chief Librarian Cathy Matthews (lf) assists Lorraine Monk as she signs her book – one of the 110 fine art photography books Ms Monk donated to the Library.

Did you know that you can also support student learning and excellence at Ryerson by designating your Annual Fund contribution to the Library?

If you have already made your annual fund donation and wish to designate it to the Library, please contact Helen Deslauriers at the Office of University Advancement at 416- 979-5000, ext. 7469 and request that it be designated to the Library.



Thank you for investing in our students and in the University's library holdings.

FACULTY/STAFF PLEDGE FORM

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I wish to remain anonymous in donor recognition listings.

All gifts to Ryerson qualify for income tax credit.

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E-mail: alumni@ryerson.ca Web site: <http://www.ryerson.ca/alumni>

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency Registration Number 119130383RR0001. Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3

25-Year Club welcomes 3 Library inductees

ON NOVEMBER 30, Ryerson Library had the privilege to see three additional employees presented with commemorative pins and official certificates as they were inducted into the Ryerson University "25-Year Club." Chief Librarian Cathy Matthews and supervisors Liz Bishop, Brian Cameron, Ophelia Cheung and Daniel Phelan, as well as many invited guests, welcomed **Adrian Bevis, Rosita Leung** and **Jim McKelvey** into the club. At a ceremony and reception held in the University commons, President Claude Lajeunesse congratulated more than a dozen new "25-Year Club" members on their contributions toward helping make Ryerson a great place to work and study.



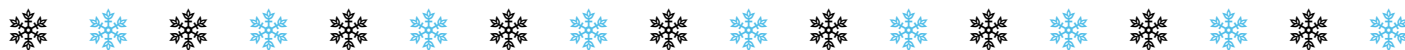
Charlotte Broome

Visitors to the library

Ron Besse, Ryerson's "Investing in Futures" campaign chair and **Gordon Cressy**, vice president University Advancement, received an update on our top fundraising priority, the Information and Learning Commons. The team viewed a Power Point presentation on our plans to increase content, to improve accessibility, and to redesign our space to accommodate and support learning, teaching and research, and capitalize on our expertise.

◆ **Carol Stephenson**, president and CEO of Lucent Technologies, visited in November with President Claude Lajeunesse and Debbie Chant. Cathy Matthews, chief librarian, demonstrated how a well-resourced, technology-enhanced library environment supports the academic vision and allows student and faculty accessibility twenty-four hours, seven days a week.

◆ **Representatives of the National Library of Canada** visited in October to discuss the Collaborative Digital Reference Service project. ◆ In November, a **University of Western Ontario study team** came to Ryerson to share information about Innopac, the integrated library cataloging system used by both universities.



Happy New Year from the Ryerson Library Staff

Nexus

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