Polk Library Newsletter

Spring 2015

Getting Our Head in the Cloud

Despite some storms, the cloud-based Alma catalog is coming

Content written & edited by:
Scott Belile
& Communications Librarian, Joshua Ranger

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
OSHKOSH

Big. Really big. Eighteenth largest in the country big. The collections of the libraries of UW Madison are both enormous and world famous. Add to them the books, government publications, archival collections, media, maps, special collections and other materials of the other 25 UW campus libraries as well as those of the Wisconsin Historical Society (the largest state historical society in the nation) and you have a single collection with few rivals. Until now, this collection has been managed by multiple versions of the same information system starting with card catalogs and, more recently, vast databases on library mainframes. For years, UW library leaders wished for a true union catalog, one that would bring this massive collection together (at least intellectually) in one place. Last fall, a first step toward this was realized with Search@UW, the public facing, one-search-box discovery tool. This year, the second half will be implemented: the back-end, the workflow, the motor that grinds the sausage. This cloud-based system is called Alma and to call it complicated is to court understatement.

So complicated it turns out that on January 9th, in the first days of the month-long final implementation process, UW System librarians decided to delay the go-live date due to concerns over performance. More about that later.

Alma's early implementation began over a year ago as library staff members began to prepare data from the various catalogs of UW System libraries to be combined into a single database. Over 150 years of doing things similarly—but not identically—had to be rectified as the idiosyncrasies and adjustments of generations of catalogers were massaged into a single approach. Think MILLIONS of square pegs being whittled to fit into MILLIONS of round holes. Over 100 librarians have been actively involved in the data cleanup, patron database development and training required to get Alma in place. These professionals are also developing common policies and workflows that will bring consistency across the more than 70 libraries found in UW System.

While many of the changes will only be noticeable behind the scenes, users will see and interact with some of the improvements themselves. Universal Borrowing (UB) will become even more seamless. Users will simply request an item and the system will send word to the best candidate library for obtaining the item quickest. If none are available in System, the request will transition directly into an external one and be sent to libraries outside of UW System. Real time availability will notify the user as soon as the item has arrived and is ready for pickup.

New policies that will accompany the System will bring a common maximum lending period for books (two years for faculty) as well as a limit on the number of items a user can have on loan (500). Replacement fees will be set at $100; however, we will have the flexibility to work with patrons to offer "real cost" replacement fees if Polk staff can find the item for less. Also for the first time, archival collections of the state's peerless Area Research Center network (a partnership with the Wisconsin Historical Society) will be discovered alongside books and articles, introducing these unique sources to many new potential users.

Behind the scenes, the improvements will bring a much simpler path to cataloging and even purchasing new materials. Also, as the entire system is cloud-based, there is no longer the dependance on client applications and this will free library staff from unique workstations and desktop support headaches.

As mentioned earlier, the complex project has experienced a temporary delay as preliminary testing of the UB functionality proved unsatisfactory. Polk and its System partners know how important UB is to faculty, students and staff and therefore determined that time with the vendor was needed to ensure this important service works.

As of press time, the new "go-live" date is the end of May, a very agreeable date to Polk staff as it means no mid-semester disruptions of services to our users. As go-live draws near, Polk Library director Patrick Wilkinson will again share the series of informational bulletins (a series that began in December) so that users can stay up to date on planned outages and policy changes the transition will involve.

Polk 101's Getting Graphic
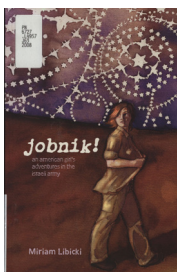
Graphic novel lovers rejoice: New to Polk 101 this spring is a display where readers can easily peruse and check out more than 100 titles.

The books were previously shelved in Polk Library's Education Materials Center and Leisure Reading Room with other books. Now, brought together, they are easier to find with their decorative covers facing outward. Popular titles include The Walking Dead, 300, Persepolis, Blankets, Snowpiercer, The Watchmen and Maus.

Head of Collections and Technical Services Ronald Hardy hopes the improved accessibility will increase circulation numbers of Polk's graphic novels.

Although many are quick to assume graphic novels equate to comic books because of their paneled cartoon setup, the formats are not quite the same. Comic books often amuse or tell a superhero story and are periodicals that do not resolve a story by the last page. A graphic novel, as its name suggests, is an illustrated story that establishes a setting, develops its characters and introduces and resolves its story's conflicts within the front and back cover.

Graphic novels may tackle darker, more emotional topics than comic books, such as sex crimes and genocide. Many of them are based on real-world history. Browse Polk 101's collection and you'll see the diversity in subject matter: the Aztec Empire, Jeffrey Dahmer, the September 11 attacks, Margaret Sanger, the Rwandan genocides, Roberto Clemente, the Dust Bowl, the Holocaust and Harry Houdini.
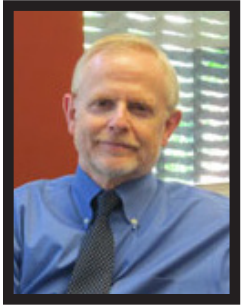
"It's a unique format for both storytelling and art," Hardy said.

The graphic novel collection occupies the space left behind when Polk eliminated its print magazine collection as part of a phase out of print periodicals. While Polk successfully transitioned to all-online

Polk Library

Letter from the Director: Before the Cloud

by Patrick Wilkinson

I began my graduate education in library science at Indiana University long before the cloud. It was 1976. Libraries cooperated in a limited way by mail, but generally only BIG libraries allowed researchers to access information in depth. Most librarians and most library users saw little way that was going to change. Most librarians but not all . . .

There was a strange experiment that had been developing in Ohio since the late 1960s called the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC). The head of OCLC, Fred Kilgore, spoke at American Library Association Annual Conference in 1976 and gave a presentation that was described by *American Libraries*[1] as ". . . heady, science fiction stuff." This "heady stuff" was that computers in libraries were transformative not some narrow, specialized issue. Computers, Kilgore argued, would "personalize and humanize library functions." He predicted things that seemed futuristic to his audience such as that the Library of Congress would no longer be seen as the de facto national library that "The national library is the nation's libraries [connected] . . . ."

American Libraries continued that Kilgore "predicted a golden age when on-line libraries hooked into data bases like those of Lockheed, SDC, MEDLINE . . . ." The amazing thing about Kilgore is that he not only envisioned the future but played a major part in creating it. Now his OCLC is an information organization that connects libraries in 113 countries and has a worldwide catalog (WorldCat) of over 2 billion items that is used for a variety of library functions.

Thus, our new cloud based discovery and management systems—eventhough ironically they are not OCLC products—are based on a vision that seemed like "science fiction" when I started my career. I wonder what the next big things for academic libraries will be. Certainly, increased information literacy instruction, greater involvement in online learning and better physical and virtual learning spaces need to be in the future. Where in your teaching, learning and scholarship do you need greater support. I would be happy to hear.

Patrick J. Wilkinson

1 "Centering Down": ALA Centennial," American Libraries, September 1, 1976 (Vol. 101/No. 15):1707.


(continued from previous page) academic journals in 2012, the library still subscribed to some "popular interest" and trade magazines. Increased expenses for academic titles have necessitated the full phase out of this remainder of print subscriptions. Today, many articles from these last titles are still accessible through Polk's licensed databases. Polk Library will continue subscribing to print newspapers.

Filling the space left vacant are materials that are not as easily accessed via digital means. Graphic novels have yet to find a strong electronic counterpart, according to Hardy.

"The graphic novel format doesn't really translate to the computer screen," Hardy said. Artists drawing for the Web often keep their works short to reduce scrolling and swiping on the reader's end, whereas graphic novels are lengthy and make full use of every pages.

Hardy encouraged readers to let library staff know how they feel about the graphic novel display setup in Polk 101. Library users are also welcome to suggest titles they would like Polk to purchase in the future.

Polk Library

Take Me to Your Kiosk
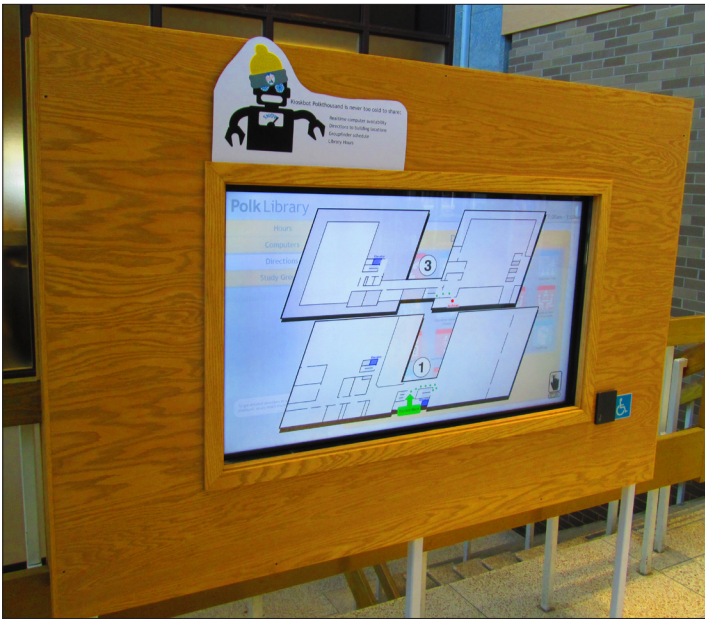
Sometimes finding your way around Polk Library can be challenging, especially compared to other buildings on campus. In other buildings visitors are looking for a classroom or office, while at Polk they may seek something as small as an octavo book, a DVD, or a two-page pamphlet. Of course, they may also be looking for a room. Adding to the complexity, the availability of certain destinations in the library are in constant flux, like an open group study room or desktop computer. Certainly, no static wayfinding sign system can handle all of these needs.

Enter the Polk Library kiosk, nicknamed the "Kioskbot Polkthousand." Funded by the Student Technology Fee program, Kioskbot is a touch screen, interactive device that provides helpful information to individuals traveling through Polk's lobby. Programed by STEP student Nicholas Nadeau, the kiosk communicates wirelessly with library applications to give real time information about the library's reservable spaces, hours and the location of open computers at any time.

Maccabee Levine, Head of Library Technology Services reported that since it went live in October, people have used Kioskbot for directions over 900 times. "And it's been for places all over the building, from the group study rooms to Psychology and Testing Services downstairs, so we're glad that this is helping a lot of people, " added Levine.

Aided by his supervisor, library web developer David Hietpas, Nick programed the interactive map to not only show where a location in the library is but also a suggested route to get there. A small animation provides a path on the screen that will take visitors to the various places in the Polk Library building. A possible update in the future could alert students to when the campus shuttle is nearing the stop closest to the library, so they can time their departure back to a distant parking lot (especially helpful in the winter months).

"Nick and David did a great job with the whole project," Levine stated. "Some UW Madison IT staff toured Polk recently and were very impressed with the kiosk, so maybe a good thing will keep going."

Not only was the experience helpful in developing Nick's skills, but building the tool in-house proved far less expensive than off-the-shelf products. The computer technology was paired with excellent craftwork courtesy of UW Oshkosh carpentry and electrical staff. An existing building map case was retrofitted with the mountings, additional power and cooling fans necessary to safely enclose the large screen HDTV that serves as the kiosk's screen. The result is a handsome tool and bright addition to Polk's entrance.

Need Some Good News?

Polk Library now has the Springer Journal Collection.
Find it at uwosh.edu/library

Polk Adds 1900 Springer Journals, You Won't Believe What #732 Is!
UW Oshkosh Students, Faculty and Staff now have access to hundreds and hundreds of new journals in the STEM fields and Social Sciences.

Polk Library

It's not your father's microfilm machine! Last semester, Polk Library debuted two new digital microform devices to replace a variety of single-purpose, legacy machines. With one located in the UW Oshkosh Archives and Area Research Center and another on the library's first floor, the machines provide access to microfilm, -fiche and -card, reviving some often overlooked collections of historical materials. From centuries old British parliamentary debates to last month's Oshkosh Northwestern, from 19th century Fond du Lac County court records to Hunter S. Thompson pieces in 1970s-era Rolling Stone, these are materials that are often are not available for free online. Still, Polk's legacy equipment didn't always make accessing these materials easy, enjoyable or, at times, even possible: Polk's last working microcard machine fizzled out several years ago.

Today, it's all sizzle and no fizzle with the "ST Imageview III." With autofocus, digital zoom and scanning directly to jpg, tiff or PDF for email or flash drive storage, the new machines add much new functionality to older formats. The computerized tool can create searchable PDFs of typed pages and can even "drive" itself (some restrictions apply) by scanning and advancing the film on its own.

Funded by Student Technology Fee funds, the scanners are state-of-the-art and user-friendly giving users no excuse not to embrace old, but reliable, formats.

Raymond Rowe Paints India

This spring, Polk Library's first-floor art gallery transports visitors across the world with UW Oshkosh student artist Raymond Rowe's paintings of urban life in India.

An art education major who plans to graduate this spring, Rowe traveled to India three times between 2008 and 2013 to visit extended family. His five oversized paintings depict the everyday events he witnessed including a woman chopping fish in an alley, men scaling sunlit stairs, a traffic jam of three-wheeled taxi carts called auto rickshaws. His camera captured the original scenes, but after returning to the United States he took to a paintbrush to portray what he saw.

"I believe capturing these moments in paint allows the subject to come alive, more so than would be possible through the photographs from which I paint," Rowe wrote in his artist statement. "By painting the subject, I am sharing what I felt while I was there."

He started his series by painting the traffic jam scene, titled "Rickshaw Canyon," in November and December 2011. The four other paintings followed one at a time between summer 2013 and fall 2014.

The artwork was previously displayed on campus in the Arts and Communication Building and Reeve Memorial Union and off campus in Fond du Lac. Rowe said he enjoys publicly displaying his work because the conversations between artist and viewer are an important part of art.

Rowe's paintings strike a balance between melancholy and sunny, combining browns, greys and blues with striking use of gold. Rowe sets each scene candidly to show Americans how life moves in the subcontinent where many of them will never travel.

"While India is half a world away and may seem exotic to most, the experiences of its people are not," Rowe said. "By painting the humdrum of the Indian experience, a scene which is taking place half a world away is far more accessible and familiar, intimately cinematic, mundanely beautiful."
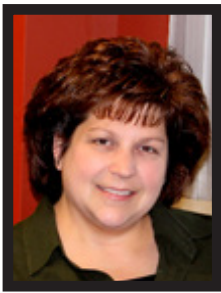
Before coming to UW Oshkosh, Polk Library Budget and Policy Analyst Mary Schneider spent five years in prison. She wasn't there to serve time, though. She was managing finances for the women inhabiting the maximum-security Taycheedah Correctional Institution.

Schneider joined Polk's staff in 2006 as a financial specialist and advanced to her current role, where she oversees Polk's budget, building issues, staff and student hiring. She said Polk's work atmosphere differs drastically from that of the correctional institution.

At Taycheedah she had to run rigorous background checks before hiring inmates to handle her office files. She couldn't bring in her cell phone, scissors, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, letter openers or mechanical pencils because prisoners could turn all these objects into weapons.

Her office was in the heart of the prison, so any lockdown enacted during an escape or a disturbance prevented her from going home, too. "I definitely was happy to get this job," Schneider remarked on joining Polk. "I don't have the students climbing up the fences trying to get out."

Schneider lives in Rosendale with her husband Kent. Her twin daughters Holly and Missy both attend UW Oshkosh and even work at Polk in a variety of roles.

As a family they travel to their cabin in the Nicolet Forest during the summer, where Schneider particularly enjoys boating, fishing and watching the wildlife. The four also always get together with extended family for Sunday night dinners. "Family is very important to us," Schneider said. "My mom and dad instilled that into us when we were kids."

When she's not bonding with her family, Schneider enjoys landscaping at home and crafting.

Good Semester :)   Bad Semester :(

It was a Good Semester For:

...staying busy when Polk's instructional librarians taught 252 sessions amounting to over 5000 student contacts. Instead of single sessions in courses, Polk staff are providing more multiple information literacy sessions scheduled at the times of need for student research projects.

...finding a place to work when GroupFinder reservations hit a new term record with, 1339 reservations for group study rooms.

... Ken Burns junkies as Polk licenses the PBS Streaming collection.

...getting to know us as Polk staff, responding to suggestions from last year's LibQUAL+ survey, begin wearing nametags

It was a Bad Semester For:

...for getting a tan after Polk's Library learned its group study room reservations increased from 37 in the summer of 2013 to 133 last year.

...for Starbucks after Polk invests in two 4.75 gallon cambro coffee servers to meet the demand of hundreds of Polk Mountain Lodge all-night-study guests.

....getting lost after Polk installs its new interactive kiosk (see page 4)

Polk Library

STAFF NEWS

Maccabee Levine, *Head of Library Technology Services*, joined the UWO Senate of Academic Staff. He also served on the search and screen committee for the new Assistant Vice Chancellor for Information Technology / Chief Information Officer position.

David Hietpas, *Library Web Developer,* was the winner of the January STAR award for University Staff. David's impact on the Polk's online services cannot be overstated. Working with Polk staff and an impressive array of STEP students, David has created some of Polk's most popular online applications including GroupFinder and ANVIL. In addition to improving the library's services, David regularly assists other campus Plone developers as they develop their own applications.

Paulette Feld, *Library System Support,* was the winner of the February STAR award. Polk Library's Information Technology Services division won back-to-back STAR awards with the recognition of veteran University staff member Paulette Feld. Feld is in charge of support of Polk's myriad computing devices. Her tireless work to bring online Polk's four hard working high-speed scanners have earned her the pity and respect of her peers and the antipathy of the photocopy salesman. She tamed the devices which provide a paperless option for reproduction in three locations in the building.

Ted Mulvey, *Information Literacy Librarian*, attended the American Library Association's Midwinter conference in Chicago. Ted served as Vice Chair for the Information Literacy Standards Committee, which approved the new information literacy framework that will replace the Association of College and Research Libraries (ARCL) original standards, adopted in 2000. Ted also served as Vice Chair on the ACRL Academic Library Trends and Statistics Editorial Board.

Erin McArthur, *Distance Education Librarian* with Brent MacWilliams and Bonnie Schmidt (College of Nursing) co-authored the *Wisconsin Diversity Assessment Tool* (WI-DAT), which provides an integrated outcomes–focused approach to assess, monitor and evaluate the status of diversity within nursing education programs. The WI-DAT was developed as part of a pending grant with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

STAR award winners Paulette Feld (top) and David Hietpas (bottom) with their adoring fans.

Polk Library

Polk 101 By the Numbers

Academic Computing's survey of computer users gave Polk some insights of users of Polk 101.Out of 96 respondents who listed Polk 101 as their most used lab

85% use Polk 101 to print papers

90% claim its convenient location as a reason they use Polk 101

61% report using Polk 101's computers for more than an hour a week

62% were juniors, seniors or grad students

Polk Library