The Saskatchewan Multitype Library Board (MLB) held its September General Meeting on the Multitype Database Licensing Program (MDLP) on September 24th in Saskatoon. The Board also met on September 25th.

**September General Meeting on MDLP**

All partners agreed to renew the current products after reviewing the estimated costs. The e-book selection guidelines were approved, though some editing is yet to be done. The committee recommended three new products to evaluate: Small Engine Repair Reference Center; Canadian Points of View Reference Centre; and Access Science. The committee also recommended evaluating EBSCO’s health and business resources and comparing them with current MDLP subscriptions from Gale in those subject areas.

The afternoon session focused on future directions for the program. There was general agreement that it will be difficult to expand the core group of products due to budget constraints among partners. It is also increasingly difficult to find additional products that meet the needs of all sectors, so the committee was asked to investigate some options. The committee will create a future development strategy document, identifying options for the program’s future growth (e.g. joining with other consortia or providing an opt-in method for adding new products). Keeping the program static was also discussed.

Other issues such as Remote Patron Authentication (RPA) need attention, since some partners cannot make full use of the databases. Many partners stated that promotion and awareness are important for them. Training on the use of databases has been successful in some library regions, including Southeast and Palliser. Both are willing to share information and resources with other libraries and the Ministry of Education. Some partners expressed a desire for a central place to share training and promotion materials. Real time chat or other technologies could be used in place of future September meetings.

**Project Proposal for a Guidebook for School Libraries**

Bryan Wilson, who represents the Saskatchewan School Boards Association on the Multitype Library Board, has been a leader in a project to develop a guidebook that will help school trustees, boards of education and senior administrators of school divisions make decisions regarding school libraries. The Ministry of Education and other stakeholders will contribute to this project. The guidebook is ultimately intended to raise awareness about the benefits of school libraries among administrators and outline a pathway with supports for determining resource allocation.

**Digitization Update**

The proposal under consideration for 2008/09 was withdrawn due to unexpected circumstances. The pilot projects that were awarded grants in 2007/08 have been invited to submit proposals to expand their projects. The Saskatchewan Digital Alliance (SDA) will review the new proposals and provide recommendations to the Board about the outlined plans.

Over the winter, the SDA will be reviewing its mandate and developing new strategies for promoting and facilitating cross-sector cooperation on digitization. They will also begin planning for a session or pre-conference session related to digitization at the 2009 SLA conference.

[Since the meeting, the Board, under advisement from the Saskatchewan Digital Alliance, has recommended that Provincial Library allocate the $19,000 Digitization Pilot Project Grant to phase two of the “Our Legacy” portal. This project was developed through a partnership between the University of Saskatchewan Library’s Special Collections Department, the University of Saskatchewan Archives and the Pahkisimon Nuye-áh Library System (Northern Saskatchewan Archives). It has preserved and improved access to a variety of materials that record the traditional lives of the First Nations and Métis peoples of the north. The Prince Albert Historical Society and the Poundmaker Cree Nation will contribute to phase two of this project.]

**Provincial Panel on Student Achievement**

The Provincial Panel on Student Achievement was created to provide the Minister of Education with 10-20 recommendations for improving Pre-K-12 student achievement. The panel consists of the Ministry of Education, academics, teachers, administrators, First Nations authorities, school board members and...
educational leaders. The Board is also an official member of the panel, represented by Joanne Beltramini, Coordinator of Information and Library Services with Regina Catholic Schools. The Board has been given a tentative date of February 11, 2009 to make a presentation to the panel that will bring evidence of the role of libraries in student achievement.

Library Directors Survey

The Board received excellent responses to their revised survey from library directors in Saskatchewan. The survey addresses recruitment and retention challenges, strengths and weaknesses of library education, continuing education supports to individual library staff, the hiring and training of managers and more. Provincial Library has begun to analyze the results by sector and summaries of the findings will be shared with the library community. The Board plans to provide library schools with these results in order to help them meet the needs of future students, especially those from Saskatchewan.

Government and Libraries Forum

The Government and Libraries Forum will be held at Queensbury Downs, [changed to October 19-20, 2009]. This will be an opportunity for public libraries and provincial government to identify common ground between the government’s agenda and the Saskatchewan Public Library System Strategic Plan and explore potential strategic alignments between public libraries and government.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Multitype Library Board will be held in Regina. [New date: February 2, 2009]

Information on MLB is available at www.lib.sk.ca/staff/multitype/
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