

NYMA NEWS

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**Fires & Floods & Storms, Oh My!
Crisis Mode @ Fall Conference
By ELIZABETH F. STABLER
Librarian, Temple Emanu-El
Photos by Tina Weiss**

Disaster strikes: Mother Nature, or faulty wiring. As if budget cuts and the Web weren't enough, libraries often face other threats. NYMA's Fall Conference, "Emergency Preparedness in Libraries: Concepts and Experiences," held Mon., Dec. 5th, at Hebrew Union College, gave vital tips on how to manage on those days when things can go not just wrong, but horribly wrong.

No Wash-Out

Presenting "In the Years Following the Flood," Prof. Michael J Miller, Associate Librarian for Public Services at the Benjamin Rosenthal Library, Queens College, described his experience at the deluged Queens College library seven years ago, just three weeks after his arrival on the job. He makes the following suggestions:

*Make a plan and know where to find it during an emergency.

*Include contact information for appropriate members of finance, facilities and administrative offices.

*Include a list of which materials, equipment and furnishings to save.

*Think about what alternate space can be provided for staff should library be temporarily evacuated.

*Know what your insurance will cover and the deductible.

*Because mold begins to grow in 24-48 hours, have recovery plans up and running very quickly.

According to Miller, the flood, despite the hardship and damage, had some positive outcomes: the community had

(Cont'd on pg. 8)

Looking Back / Looking Forward

It's been a great year thus far for NYMA! We continue to offer interesting workshops on topics such as emergency preparedness and the world of e-books in library settings.

Thus far I've only heard good things about the programs (as negative as this may sound, criticism is also welcome -- may it be something that we can learn from). March will be a great month for NYMA, with two programs to further our knowledge—the Day School/High School workshop and a rare book workshop. More information will be forthcoming . . . hope to see you there.

Is there a future topic we should explore? Please be in touch, and let's make it a reality.

Professional development through our programs have advantages for all librarians—seasoned and newbies alike, not only can you learn about new and cutting-edge developments in the library world, but you can network with fellow colleagues and forge everlasting relationships.

To the NYMA board, thank you so very much for your work, assistance and guidance which enabled our programs. It is through teamwork, motivation of interested parties, creativity, encouragement and individuals who strive to learn and educate others that we will continue. From PR to proofreading, and from acting as a sounding board to ideas and thoughts for the future, every nuance adds to our group and allows each one of us to grow and learn from one another.

Chazak, Chazak! May we all continue on this path.

Tina Weiss
President, AJL-NYMA

I (as in Pad) B4 E (as in Reader)? Books & Other Devices @ Ref Workshop

**ELIZABETH F. STABLER, Librarian, Temple Emanu-El
& HALLIE CANTOR, Acquisitions, Yeshiva University**
Photos by Tina Weiss

So . . . what are *you* downloading these days?

Those of you who attended NYMA's 2012 Reference Workshop -- held Tues., Jan. 17th at The Abraham Joshua Heschel High School; organized by Leslie Monchar and Bruchie Weinstein; and hosted by Cantor Shimon Vogel, librarian at Heschel -- learned that you're not alone as far as our newfangled technology. "The eBooks are Coming, the eBooks Are Coming! What You Need to Know about the Changes in the World of Publishing" gave timid librarians a tour through a brave new world, where the printed word might go the way of horse and buggy sooner than we think.

Face of Book in Facebook Age

The program began with Ahuva Halberstam, High School Head. Enthusiastic about new technology, she declared, "We are on the cusp of a paradigm shift as we learn the potential of ebooks in education," yet lamented the greatest loss: "the multisensory impact of reading a book." Most important, however, "is that children continue to read and not just hop and browse about on Google and Facebook."

In his presentation "DRM, ePub, Mobi, AZW and Other Acronyms You Need to Know Before Ordering eBooks," the first speaker, Russell M. Neiss -- Director of Technology and Media Services, Rodeph Sholom Day School -- asked the question: What do we really mean when we say "E-Book?" He clarified both the types of technology listed in the title of his talk and the problems involved in the universe of ebooks in libraries.

Migration of books to the web is certainly nothing new, as evidenced by Project Gutenberg, which is making literally millions of them available, and other digitization activities going on in many libraries. Neiss pointed out that the full interactive potential of many vendors' devices and software has not been made available to users. In the future, the printed page will morph into a multimedia experience. One of the few fully realized examples of an interactive ebook is Sandra Boynton's book-type application *Moo, Baa, La la la!* Currently, however, some libraries of ebooks, for example Follett Shelf, are simply databases on an older model with clunky sign-in screens.

(Cont'd on pg. 6)

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Committee chairs are not elected officers; welcome volunteers: *NYMA News* is published twice a year: Winter/Spring & Summer/Fall, by the NYMA Committee. For questions/comments, contact Hallie Cantor, 383 Kingston Ave #81, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

(Reference Workshop, Cont'd from Pg. 2)



AHUVA HALBERSTAM: "We are on the cusp of a paradigm shift."

Even for technology experts this technology is, in his words, "a big mess." Each major vendor has proprietary software and devices, none of which talk to each other – Nook vs. Kindle, iPad, Android, Kobo, tablets. The effect is akin to playing a European or Israeli DVD on an American system: each talks a different language. Accessing media, then, becomes a regional and somewhat closed experience.

Neiss highlighted the four major "problems" in trying to incorporate ebooks into libraries. The first: What device to use? Not only is each device different, but proprietary. He does not recommend Kindle, as Amazon is ignoring emerging standards. The ideal device, not yet developed, should have ePub and Adobe Digital Editions software. Calibre, an open source device, is excellent, but it is not getting the ebooks.

Second: How to find and obtain ebooks through jobbers? Or is everything these days available through Apple stores or Amazon? Of all publishers, only one -- Random House/Bertelsmann Vorlag -- has made ebooks

available to libraries, preferring instead to sell only to individuals. Ebooks are also limited in scope, as no publisher has taken advantage of the Epub software's capacity to incorporate video, audio and canvas into their ebooks. Ebsco and Ebrary have their own, respective subscription services.

Third: Licensing. At present only larger libraries or library systems can afford to license with Overdrive. Because the distribution system for journal articles was developed earlier and on a different model, it is still more open despite attempts to limit access. Ironically, libraries are not even obtaining the content – rather, the rights to the content – which can disappear once it goes "out of print," or these days, "out of the Cloud." Other issues such as self-publishing, which Amazon has planned, can compromise quality of content, let alone accessibility.

For libraries, managing an ebook collection is currently a nightmare. Librarians must deal with limited numbers of downloads/users for each ebook, severely limited use of interlibrary loans, complicated account and payment for the devices and downloads, copyright laws, and organization of usernames to access the ebooks. In addition, electronic devices are fragile and easily lost (or stolen!).

Which brings this all to the final problem: obsolescence of hardware. Betamax, anyone? While a 14th century Haggadah is fully accessible, poetry stored on 3.5-inch floppies is not. In short, Neiss does not recommend that libraries acquire ebook technology until these problems have been resolved.

Neiss ended his talk with a tongue-in-cheek video clip on the latest achievement: the printed book. Its features:

- *Energy efficient -- no batteries needed!
- *Easy on the eyes!
- *User-friendly -- simply turn the pages!
- *Never goes out of style!

Because of the last reason alone, this marvel just might stay on the library shelf years from now, long after the e-version (or its licensing) has expired and the supply of apps – and Apples – go by way of Atari.



RUSSELL NEISS: "This technology is a big mess."

Going Mobile

Due to a work-related emergency, Peter W. Tobey, Director of Sales and Marketing, Salem Press, was not able to present "Use, Popularity, and Value in Libraries." Nevertheless, Leslie Monchar stepped in and ably reported on Mr. Tobey's thoughts. Leslie had the opportunity to work on a project for Salem Press in the summer of 2011, when Salem, which markets bundles of electronic database reference materials to libraries, bought H.W. Wilson's databases.

According to Leslie, Tobey feels that ebooks will grow in importance in libraries. Although published books will continue to be produced, the market will be less robust. Readers will want to use different format and different times or circumstances.

An example of the potential for ebooks is the *Betty Crocker Mobile Cookbook* (one on which he had worked): the cookbook app suggests recipes based on ingredients the cook has entered. Reference especially, which lives and dies on its ability to remain up-to-date and accessible, would greatly benefit from the digital. Nevertheless, print will always be around – only less needed.

A lively discussion followed about the challenges librarians have encountered. Some of the attendees pointed out the issues

with vendors' arbitrarily ending libraries' access to a product upon publishing a new edition within months of the original purchase. Clearly, while ebooks have opened up



LESLIE MONCHAR:

"The market for print will be less robust."

a brave new world, there is no such thing as a world without problems, and the digital is bound to present many.

The workshop, with attendees from as far as Baltimore, was a great success and provided an excellent opportunity to learn as well as to share information on important new technological developments.