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Medical Information -- When Limited Access Can Have Life Changing Consequences

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Medical Information — When Limited Access Can Have Life Changing Consequences

by **Sally Patrick** (Outreach Librarian, Utahealthnet Project Director, Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library; Phone: 801-581-6979) <spatrick@lib.med.utah.edu>

There is no subject where information being current, accurate and thoroughly validated is as critical as it is with medical information.

Health professionals including Physicians Assistants, social workers, nurses, dieticians, psychologists and others often work independently, without access to a hospital or academic library. Nowhere is there a group of users who, as librarians, should concern us more. For many, their only access to the journal literature may be through their public libraries.

Consumers of health information — which is all of us — want the best and most complete information when dealing with health and medical issues. They may or may not want to look at scholarly research materials — but, if they do, they should be able to.

Eccles Library is working very hard to "reach out" to everyone and bridge that gap because we believe access to health information is critical for all and there is a great deal out there that is evidence-based that most people can get to. There is a toll-free phone line (866-581-5534) for state residents that rings on the **Eccles** reference desk. **Eccles** has started **UHID**, a document delivery direct-to-the-consumer service which is available to all citizens of the state for materials in **Eccles'** collection. This service, unlike traditional ILL services from many health sciences libraries, is free to the end user.

The **"Eccles Outreach" Web page** lists services which are available for each clientele. We encourage libraries and library users throughout the state to use them:

> *"The primary route to reaching consumers all over the state is a partnership with public libraries."*

The "O" (Outreach) Team

In the delivery of health related information to consumers and independent professionals, a partnership between academic health sciences libraries and public libraries is mission-critical for both.

To work with public libraries and other groups, **Eccles Library** formed the **Outreach Services** team to offer "information access, service and innovation by working with Utah communities not located on **University of Utah** campuses."

Utahealthnet — *http://utahealthnet.org*

Utahealthnet was begun in 2005 as part of a **National Library of Medicine** grant to form a **Utah Consumer Health Information Infrastructure**. This project has two major goals:

1) To create a consumer health collaboration statewide around **Eccles Library**, public libraries, health departments and community-based health information providers. Currently **Utahealthnet** is comprised of over 30 such partnerships. The core partners who joined Utahealthnet at its start are: the **Utah Department of Health**, the **Utah Telehealth Network** and the **Utah State Library Division**. Most notably, the **Eccles Library** extends its outreach through a strong partnership with the **University of Utah's Health Sciences Center of Excellence in Women's Health**, **Community Health Centers** statewide and **Utah Navajo Health System, Inc.**

Eccles Library Outreach Services:..

The links below are intended to help off-campus communities find library resources and services. If you are...

University of Utah Students and Faculty (top)
http://library.med.utah.edu
- Remote Access to Library Resources — *http://library.med.utah.edu/ed/remoteaccess.php*
- Access to Reference Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/asklibrarian.php*
- Renew Library Materials Checked-Out to You — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/services/renew.php*
- Request an Article or Book
- Request Library Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/requests.php*
- Library Classes — *http://registration.med.utah.edu/classes.cfm?textonly=false*
- University of Utah Continuing Education: Distance Education Services — *http://continue.utah.edu/distance/index.php/*

Utah Health Care Professionals (top)
http://library.med.utah.edu/or/#top
- Access to Reference Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/asklibrarian.php*
- Request an Article or Book
- Request Library Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/requests.php*
- Library Classes — *http://registration.med.utah.edu/classes.cfm?textonly=false*

Utah Library Professionals (top)
http://library.med.utah.edu/or/#top
- Access to Reference Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/asklibrarian.php*
- Request an Article or Book
- Request Library Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/requests.php*
- Library Classes — *http://registration.med.utah.edu/classes.cfm?textonly=false*

Utah Health Information Consumers (top)
http://library.med.utah.edu/or/#top
- Consumer Health Links: Spencer S. Eccles Health Sciences Library — *http://library.med.utah.edu/km/chealth.php*
- Access to Reference Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/asklibrarian.php*
- Request an Article or Book
- Request Library Services — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/requests.php*
- Library Classes for Communities — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/oteam/classes.php* (Off-campus classes Guidelines) — *http://library.med.utah.edu/or/oteam/offcampusclasses.php*
- Utah Public Pioneer — *http://pioneer.utah.gov/* (Check out the Health section!)

"Free to All" Made Possible by an Academic/Public Library Collaboration

by **Barbara G. Preece** (Executive Director, Boston Library Consortium, Inc., 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02117; Phone: 617-262-6244) <bpreece@blc.org>

The **Boston Library Consortium** is an academic and research library consortium that bridges successfully the gap between academic and public libraries in both directions — since its very beginnings in 1970 the resources of the **Boston Public Library** have been available to the consortium's constituency throughout New England.

And now, with its **Open Content Alliance (OCA)** project — it will be working in the other direction — as the first large library consortium to announce a self-funded partnership with a major digitalizing project, the **OCA**, the **Boston Library Consortium** is providing materials with none of the restrictions that apply to materials scanned by **Google** or **Microsoft**.

Boston Library Consortium

The **Boston Library Consortium, Inc. (BLC)** is an association of 19 academic and research libraries located throughout New England. Founded in 1970 at the behest of the graduate school deans, the **Consortium** is dedicated to sharing human and information resources to advance the research and learning of its constituency. The **Consortium** supports resource sharing and enhanced user services through programs in cooperative collecting, access to electronic resources and physical collections, and expedited interlibrary loan and document delivery. This year the **Consortium** entered a new partnership with the **Internet Archive (IA)** to digitize materials in its collections. Among the leaders of this project is the esteemed **Boston Public Library**, which quickly identified collections for the projects and also provided space to house the **Northeast Regional Scanning Center**.

Boston Public Library

Founded in 1848, the **Boston Public Library (BPL)** was the first large free municipal library in the United States. The present Copley Square location has been home to the library since 1895, when architect **Charles Follen McKim** completed his "palace for the people." In 1972 the library expanded its Copley Square location with the opening of an addition designed by **Philip Johnson**. Today, the **McKim** building houses the **BPL's** vast research collection and the **Johnson Building** holds the circulating collection of the general library and serves as headquarters for the **Boston Public Library's** 26 branch libraries. Home to the library of **John Quincy Adams**, second president of the United States, the **BPL** is the only public library in the country that also serves as a **Presidential Library**.

The **BPL**, one of the first members of the **Consortium**, also serves as home to the **BLC** offices, and provides the **Consortium's** constituency through a variety of services including resource sharing, cooperative collection development and a consortium card program that allows students/faculty/staff from the member libraries to use the vast resources of the **BPL**.

BLC and BPL join OCA:

Most recently, the **Consortium** including the **Boston Public Library** joined together to work with the **Internet Archive's Open Content Alliance**. The **Open Content Alliance** (*http://www.opencontentalliance.org/*) represents the collaborative efforts of a group of cultural, technology, nonprofit, and governmental organizations from around the world that will help build a permanent archive of multilingual digitized text and multimedia content. The **Internet Archive** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that was founded in 1996 to build an Internet library, with the purpose of offering permanent access for researchers, historians, and scholars to historical collections that exist in digital format.

> *"Fortunately many great libraries are weighing the alternatives and choosing to go open instead of putting public domain material under perpetual restrictions."*

According to **Brewster Kahle**, digital librarian and founder of the **Internet Archive**, "Fortunately many great libraries are weighing the alternatives and choosing to go open instead of putting public domain material under perpetual restrictions."

The **BLC** and its member libraries, including the **Boston Public Library**, have partnered with the **Open Content Alliance** to build a freely accessible library of digital materials from the 19 member libraries. The **Consortium** will provide high resolution, downloadable, reusable files of public domain materials. The digitization efforts, using scanning technology from the **Internet Archive**, are based in a scanning center housed at the **Boston Public Library**. The **Northeast Digital Scanning Center** was unveiled on September 20, 2007. **BPL** President **Bernard Margolis** said, "The **Boston Public Library** is pleased to host this innovative collaborative effort. It is exciting to see the application of the latest in digital scanning technology of the **Internet Archive** to the enormous task of converting the rich book collections of the **BLC** libraries for easy access by people around the world. We are, in the most basic and important meaning of the word, "enriching" the world. As we open these books we give opportunity for their use in many new and expanding ways for new and expanding audiences. We are doing what libraries as supposed to do."

The **Boston Library Consortium's** project is self-funded. It pays ten cents a page to the **Internet Archive** and receives in return a variety of file formats that are stored by **IA** and available to the library to download. The center will serve as a northeast regional center; currently scanning materials from **BLC** members, including the **John Adams Library** funded by a grant from the **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**, it is also scanning materials from the **Biodiversity Heritage Library Project** (*http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/*). It is anticipated that other libraries in the region will join the scanning project in the near future.

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2) To create an up-to-date consumer health information portal for Utah.

The primary route to reaching consumers all over the state is a partnership with public libraries. One of the ways this is done, primarily for rural public libraries is through the "Quick Links" off the **Utah State Library Division's Homepage**. Citizens seeking health information are directed to **Utahealthnet** as their default search. Since Utah is a rural state, the T-1 high speed Internet access provided in public libraries is often a rural citizen's lifeline to accurate, up to date health information.

In addition, the **Eccles Health Sciences Library** is also a **Regional Medical Library for the MidContinental Region** in the **National Network of Libraries of Medicine MidContinental Region** that also has a commitment to provide outreach services to Utah communities.

Conclusions

Putting all these resources together doesn't solve the problem unless someone solves the "last mile" issue — getting the information into the hands of those who need it

This will be accomplished through public libraries — in a partnership between academic/public libraries to best serve all of the users of all our library systems. 🐾