

February 2008

## Satisfaction Guaranteed -- A System of Asynchronous Desire

Kate Holvoet

*University of Utah*, [kate.holvoet@utah.edu](mailto:kate.holvoet@utah.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Holvoet, Kate (2008) "Satisfaction Guaranteed -- A System of Asynchronous Desire," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 20: Iss. 1, Article 12.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2694>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

**Where to Go Shopping ...**  
from page 39

older materials but focus on newer fiction and audiovisual popular items. **Wal-Mart** stores have many displays and signs to entice the browsing shopper to pick up and purchase items. Similarly public libraries display new titles and offer themed item displays to entice patrons to check out materials. Public libraries also provide “shopping lists” in the form of booklists or pathfinders on topics.

**Academic libraries more like a mall**

While public libraries are like the local **Wal-Mart** store, academic libraries are like the mall. Academic libraries have larger collections, more physical space, special collections, services, a variety of specialty stores, departments, desks, and offer breadth and depth to academic topics. Often as a public librarian, I have recommended that college students go to their academic libraries for more resources, primary documents, and greater selection of online databases.

**Where to Go Shopping for Information: Public Libraries or Academic Libraries?**

Public and academic libraries have different purposes and collections, both are needed by college students, whether they be traditional, nontraditional, commuter, and/or distance Ed students. As **Sara Fine** (1995) reminds, “Reference is not just about resources. It is about users...”<sup>1</sup> Libraries should support each other’s services, programs, and collections by referring college students to the library that best meets the student’s information needs. This can only

happen when both public and academic libraries are aware of what the other offers. College

students are shopping for information, are we sending them to the right store? 🌱

**Samantha L. Hastings**

*against the grain* **people profile**

Public Services Librarian, West Jordan Library  
1970 West 7800 South, West Jordan, UT 84088  
Phone: (801) 944-7646 • <SLarsen@slco.lib.ut.us>

**BORN & LIVED:** Provo and Riverton, Utah and Reading, England.

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor of Arts from **Brigham Young University**. Master of Arts from the **University of Reading**, Reading, England. Currently working on a Master of Library Science from the **University of North Texas**.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** Adjunct English faculty at **Utah Valley State College**. Associate librarian at **Orem Public Library**. Currently works as a public services librarian at the **West Jordan Library** and serves as the vice-chair of the **Utah Library Association’s** Young Adult Round Table.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Read, write, eat exotic foods, travel and play tennis.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** *Pride and Prejudice* by **Jane Austen**, *North and South* by **Elizabeth Gaskell**, *The Blue Castle* by **L. M. Montgomery**, *The Blue Sword* by **Robin McKinley**, and *The Perilous Gard* by **Elizabeth Marie Pope**. 🌱

**Endnotes**

1. **Fine, Sara**. (1995). “Reference and Resources: The Human Side” *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 21(1), 17. Retrieved November 26, 2007, from **Academic Search Premier** database.

## Satisfaction Guaranteed — A System of Asynchronous Desire

by **Kate Holvoet** (Head, Government Documents, Marriott Library, University of Utah, 295 S 1500 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84112; Phone: 801-581-8394) <kate.holvoet@utah.edu>

I have a confession to make. Whenever I walk into a library, I can’t remember the title or author of any book I’ve been meaning to read, or CD I’ve wanted to listen to. Unless I have a written list, I end up racking my brain, vainly trying to recall the name of any author I like, and then browsing the new books section, and then leaving, possibly empty-handed. Sometimes a large space and too many choices are overwhelming, inducing a sort of decision-making exhaustion. Once I graduated from library school, I drifted into buying books rather than checking them out. I went from having more time than money to having slightly more money than time, making a several hour trip to the library too expensive.

Thanks to several popular online book seller sites, I now have an extensive “to read” list. Online bookstore

catalogs often have features such as reviews, ratings, and recommendations that lead me to explore new authors, formats and subjects that I usually wouldn’t come across. What I like about the **Salt Lake County Library** system is that because of the way it is set up, I am 100% guaranteed to have a good experience before I even get there. I don’t have to remember that I read something about a book I wouldn’t usually be interested in — since I already added it to my “to read” list. And once a book is on my “to read” list, it makes its way to my library hold list. Sooner or later, I get an email that it’s in. Sometimes I can’t remember why I wanted it — but I know that I did — so I go and get it. This makes a sort

of browsing experience which means I read books of a sort I never would have read before — because it is so easy to just put them on hold and get to them when they become available. I can browse online, put the book on hold, and be notified when it’s ready, all without ever having to leave my house.

Through this process I fell in love with audio books. I find that I listen to books that I probably wouldn’t read. There is something about the format that suits some books and makes them more compelling. I particularly tend to read non-fiction books as audio, but I do also read novels. The **Salt Lake County Library** system also offers eBooks for download, and the process works for me much the same as with printed books. I go through and find books I think sound interesting — I am reading a much wider variety than I might have in the print world.

*continued on page 41*



**Satisfaction Guaranteed ...**  
*from page 40*

This new browsing/requesting process has eliminated the biggest barrier between me and a good book — effort. Because I can put a hold on up to ten books at a time, I only go to the library when I know my trip is going to be successful. Every time I go to the library I leave with at least one book. Often, I pick up my book on hold and browse the new shelves, and pick up some more. I probably check out between ten and 20 books a month using this method. I always have ten books on hold, thanks to my very long “to read” list. As soon as I check out one book, I put another on hold. I can even put books on order on hold, which let me check out the fifth **Harry Potter** book from the library the day it was available for sale in bookstores.

I have heard people argue that browsing books on a shelf is better than browsing online. The opposite is true for me. It's easier to click on a link in an online bookstore catalog than to pick a book up off the shelf to read the cover blurb. All I have to feel is a tug of interest, and it goes on the list. I don't have to have any real sense that I am going to even like a book to put it on my list, and eventually check it out from the library. Friends and family use my list for gift giving, insuring that I get something every time that I am interested in reading, and that **Amazon.com** gets something out of offering their fabulous wish list service.

I am reading more books now than I ever have before, and reading more widely than ever. I check out more books from the library, and buy more books from the bookstore because I have an easier way to learn what is available, and to decide where I am going to get it.

But the bottom line, for both printed and audio-books, is that in the online world, I hear about and get intrigued by and stumble upon lots and lots of books that sound really interesting — through many more channels than I did in the pre-online world. And, because of the ease of keeping track and remembering that I wanted to have a look at something, I actually put my hands on a lot more books. And I read more of them and a greater diversity of titles than I think I would have in a print world.

*continued on page 42*



## **360 Counter** assessment tools make it easy to optimize the value of e-resources

- Compare results between different providers
- Generate customized reports
- Share report with stakeholders
- Make more informed acquisition decisions
- Optimize usage and value of your electronic collection
- Archive results for historical perspective

SERIALS SOLUTIONS®

## **360COUNTER**

Helping your library make better decisions



Serials Solutions 360  
E-Resource Access and  
Management Services

**SerialsSolutions®**

1-866-737-4257

360@serialssolutions.com

www.serialssolutions.com/C2

© 2007 Serials Solutions. All rights reserved. Serials Solutions is a trademark of Serials Solutions.

## A Quick Glimpse at Public and Academic Libraries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

by **Marie Paiva** (Volunteer Librarian, Addis Ababa University, and Anthropology, Economics, and Psychology Librarian, Marriott Library, University of Utah, 295 S. 1500 East, Salt Lake City, UT, 84112; Phone: 801-581-6273) <marie.paiva@utah.edu>

Ethiopia's 80 million people continue to live in a country with poor infrastructure in the Horn of Africa region. The population of Addis Ababa is estimated at 10-15 million and libraries have just recently been given some recognition. When I first came to this country as an **ALA-USIA Fellow** in 1997, most

people did not know the difference between a library and bookstore. I think that has changed somewhat today.

### **Public Libraries in Addis Ababa**

Public libraries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city are about 100 in number and vary

greatly in size. On Tuesday, a colleague and I visited the nearby **Addis Ababa Public Library** in Sidist Kilo. The Head Librarian, **Ato Tameru Abdisa**, met with us



*continued on page 42*

**Satisfaction Guaranteed ...**  
from page 41

It's a sort of system for asynchronous desire. Between **Amazon** and the County system, I don't have to find the idea interesting and actually go get the book at this same time. When I'd like to read it, I request it. Later on, I get it and then look it over and remember why it is that I wanted it. It's a new sort of browsing and it has let me read books I never would have read in the print-only world. 🌿

**Rumors**  
from page 22

**Speaking of newspapers**, see this article in the **Wall Street Journal** -- "Why Los Angeles Times Can't Keep an Editor," by **Emily Steel** (1/22/08, p.B1). We know the story. It's a matter of budget. Seems that the publisher wanted \$7 million in reductions. Ouch!

[online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120086036844103713.html?mod=blog](http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB120086036844103713.html?mod=blog)

Forgot to tell you that the **Georgetown (SC) County Library** was one of five libraries in the US to receive the **National Medal for Library Service** given by First Lady **Laura Bush** and the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**. The subscription library was started in 1908 by Miss Susan Allston. She, with the help of Mrs. Congdon and Mrs. Weston Rosa, canvassed the entire community for book donations and

*continued on page 49*

**A Quick Glimpse ...**  
from page 41

and then showed us around the facility.

Public libraries in Addis Ababa are 30 years old, and the municipality moved this one to its current location four years ago... The actual building was constructed about 75 years ago and belonged to a well off individual. It is a solid stone building with an intricate inlaid woodwork interior, and large windows with security grates. It sits in a shaded compound full of trees, bushes, flowers and a few benches off of a major road in Addis Ababa.

This library is one of the larger and better equipped libraries and is open five days a week from Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30-5pm. Everyone has free entrance with any ID. The staff of 15 includes librarians, security personnel, and custodians. The current budget for acquisitions is about USD \$4,500 per year; and they do occasionally receive donations from private organizations and NGOs. The librarian indicated that many of these gifts are older materials.

The users are mostly from nearby high

*against the grain*  
**people profile**

Head, Government Documents and Microforms Division  
(the comma is my favorite part of my title!)  
University of Utah, 295 S 1500 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84112  
Phone: 801-581-8394 • <kate.holvoet@utah.edu>

**Katherine Gail Holvoet**

**BORN & LIVED:** Born in Aberdeen Army Proving Grounds hospital — lived in Maryland, Virginia, Iowa, Nevada, Florida, Niigata prefecture (Japan), and Aichi prefecture.

**FAMILY:** My son **Jackson** (pictured below) is now nine months old and aspires to be a Labrador retriever — he chews on electrical cords and my shoes, with a particular interest in my good, black, work shoes. He had the brilliant taste to be born on my husband's birthday, March 8th, so I can't forget either (or conversely, I'll forget both at the same time).

**EDUCATION:** M.A. in Library Science from **University of Iowa**, B.A. in Studio Art from **University of Iowa** — that's why I lived in Japan for three years. I couldn't get a job in the US with a B.A. in Studio Art.

**FIRST REAL JOB:** Soda jerk in an old fashioned pharmacy.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** I went into government documents because the information is fascinating, and because even if everything goes online, people still need help finding what they are looking for.

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Quilt, read read read, agitate for greater common grounds freedoms with my home owner's association.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** Trashy romance novels, *The Gift of Fear* (it's not about what you think it's about), *A Wrinkle in Time*.

**PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD:** When people use the word nauseous incorrectly. One never feels nauseous, one feels nauseated.

**PHILOSOPHY:** Today is the only (insert full date here) that I will get to spend with my family and friends — how do I want to spend that time?.

**MOST MEANINGFUL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT:** Finishing my 30-page paper on the symbology of **Elvis'** jumpsuits. As a result of that experience, I learned that writing papers is easier if you have roughly two sources per page, rather than 1/10 of a source per page, and I pass that hard won knowledge on to stressed out college students every semester. 🌿



schools and colleges, and the library contains 220 seats. Current statistics show about 400 users per day. The collection consists of 20,000 volumes which do not circulate. The library does have growth space. Some users come in to use the collections, while others are looking for a reading room where they can use their own workbooks and textbooks.

There are seven computers with word processing only, and a small collection of juvenile materials. Almost everything is in English, with a few items in Amharic. There is a Subject and Author-Title Card Catalog for users.

We toured around the building, which is on two floors, and then visited an annex at the back. Just as **Ato Tameru** indicated, most of the titles I picked up appeared older and well used. The volumes I randomly chose ranged in date from 1974 to 1997 and dealt with architecture, Ethiopian history, and management. We visited Reference and Documents, the Periodicals Room (which only held newspaper) and three Reading Rooms. Almost all the

seats were taken at about 11 A.M., and it was very, very quiet. I saw two public bathrooms, not perhaps as nice as those at home, but they did exist.

The current challenges **Ato Tameru** indicated to us included the problem that the city administration does not show enough interest in the library. If they did, he feels he could have more staff and a bigger budget. Also, theft is a problem everywhere, and **Ato Tameru** suspects about 100 titles a year are stolen. Currently, the library has no cataloger.

Other worries are that the library is unable to provide a photocopy service or Internet access. (The Head Librarian himself has no Internet access in his office). There is no children's area, and he would really like to see one. In this compound, there is a private organization nearby that offers Internet service for a fee. I saw about 4 out of its 36 computers being used.

Our discussion included the importance of

*continued on page 43*