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People Profile: William Gee

Editor

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Challenges

Difficulties are faced when ILL encounters eBooks in commercial collections, most notably **NetLibrary**, **ebrary**, **EBL**, and **Questia**, and through research databases, such as **PsycBOOKS** and the **Springer eBook Collection**. It is with these eBooks that deep concerns surface over user preferences, cataloging, resource sharing settings, accessibility, and “loanability.” As tech-savvy **Millennials** and others continue to insist on full-text electronic library resources, it seems that the trend within the library community is that eBooks will only grow in importance. Thus, concerns regarding eBooks by ILL departments need to be shared and addressed.

Some patrons still are reluctant to use eBooks. **Joyner’s** borrowing and document delivery services have begun to receive requests for titles available in our **NetLibrary** collections. These requests were not made by patrons who had failed to check the online catalog; rather, these patrons had deliberately chosen not to use our **NetLibrary** eBooks citing as their reasons convenience, access to computers, and health concerns. After canceling such requests because the titles were owned by the library, we began to fulfill the requests for print versions when we realized that our library exists to serve our patrons, that not all patrons can use or want eBooks, and that the ILL code does not prohibit requesting a version of a title that is not owned. Thinking that if we knew which patron groups preferred print books to eBooks or which subjects were frequently avoided as eBooks we could tailor training and collection development accordingly, I reviewed the transactions but found no trends. What is clear, though, is that while some loathe eBooks, many others have become accustomed to using, often even demanding, e-articles for their research and also are quickly adopting eBooks. Libraries and ILL departments should do all that we can to seek to further understand patron research behaviors regarding eBooks and to meet the format desires and needs of all patrons.

Through **OCLC WorldCat** and **Joyner’s** own online catalog, our eBook holdings are discoverable not just by local patrons, but by libraries and individuals worldwide. As such, **Joyner ILL** lending has begun receiving requests for eBook titles from other libraries. These requests currently must be denied, for our eBooks are locked behind proprietary licensed interfaces that prohibit loans or copying, much like many e-journals are. Not being able to loan or photocopy a class of library materials is not a new problem for interlibrary loan staff, however; there have always been materials that libraries could not or would not loan to other libraries, most often special collections (genealogy, archival papers, etc.) and audio/visual materials. Yet, unlike those items, eBooks are not one-of-a-kind and are not recorded on a medium that can easily be damaged in the mail. What is paradoxical with eBooks, and e-journals for that matter, is that

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C. William Gee

BORN & LIVED: Born in Rome, Georgia; attended college/grad school in Mt. Berry, GA, Reading, England, United Kingdom, and Knoxville, TN; now live in Greenville, NC.

EARLY LIFE: I enjoyed reading *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, playing with Lego, and playing computer games, especially the King’s Quest series and the SimCity/Earth/Life/Ant franchise.

EDUCATION: BA in History & Political Science from **Berry College**; MS in Information Science from the **University of Tennessee**.

FIRST JOB: The **Bonner Foundation** funded my first job in college as a tutor and counselor at the Boys & Girls Club of Rome, GA. My first real-world job was in human resources for the City of Rome, GA. My first library job after graduate school was as a part-time reference/circulation/interlibrary loan assistant at **Berry College**.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I am a member of **NCLA** and **ALA**, where I am most active in the **NMRT** and **RUSA-STARS**.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Attend fine arts events, concerts, and lectures and volunteer in my community through my church, the Jaycees, and other agencies.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I tend to read books on church/state/society relations, both present-day and historical. On the lighter side, I read *Get Fuzzy*, *Dilbert*, *Unshelved*, and *Calvin & Hobbs* comic collections and have liked pop fiction by **Jeffrey Archer**, **Boris Starling**, **Dan Brown**, **Michael Crichton**, and **John Grisham**, among others.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Patrons failing to return interlibrary loan paperwork causes some annoyance, as does having to pay for Wi-Fi at airports and hotels. Mostly, though, I am disturbed by the level of intolerance, rudeness, wastefulness, and self-centeredness evident in our society.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I hope to have achieved tenure or made significant progress toward it, though thoughts of earning another graduate degree have also entered my mind.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Libraries will continue to remain important cultural and academic centers, though perhaps more as gathering spaces than as book warehouses. Much more information will be available online, though I worry that it will not be readily accessible to people outside of their local institutions or that people will be able to find it or afford it. Initiatives to reform copyright and scholarly publishing hopefully will result in greater access to information for lower costs. The major problem I fear that is facing libraries is that our society expects information and everything else to come easily and quickly — this erodes research and understanding. Libraries have a role to play in democracies to expand knowledge and freedom, to fight censorship, discrimination, and ignorance, so I hope we stay committed to those tasks, too. 🌱



libraries have less latitude to lend from their collections, even as methods of transmitting documents physically and electronically are constantly improving. This restricting trend is dangerous because patrons are able to discover that materials exist outside of the library like never before and then learn that they cannot

access the information — further bolstering the popular misbelief that libraries cannot meet the information needs of today’s patrons. Should libraries not take action, our market share will continue to fall to search engines and the commercial vendors to which they connect,

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