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## People Profile: Laura Dawson

Editor

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customized browsing experience for the user. The use of browser add-ons, extensions, or plug-ins is not limited to the **Firefox browser**, other browsers can have them as well, but **Firefox** has an enormous amount of already existing plug-ins and it isn't too difficult to make your own.

Plug-ins, extensions, and add-ons can be helpful to Web users, but how do they fit into the library's purpose? What do they have to offer library users and librarians? In recent years there has been a proliferation of browser extensions that can be used to increase access to a library's resources. Today a user with certain extensions installed can store and share citations, access full-text scholarly articles, and search the library catalog, **Google Scholar**, **Yahoo!** without ever leaving the Webpage that they started from (even if it isn't a library or school related page).

What follows in this column is a short discussion of some Web browser extensions that can be used to bring the library resources to where the users are (the Web) and possibly bring them in to where they often aren't (the library). Most of the tools discussed here are for **Firefox**. **Firefox** is available to download for free at [www.mozilla.com/firefox/](http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/). A much more complete list of plug-ins, extensions, and add-ons for **Firefox** is available at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/>.

#### Zotero (<http://www.zotero.org/>)

This free downloadable **Firefox extension** allows users to gather, organize, and analyze sources that they find while searching online. **Zotero** is a good combination of features from citation management programs such as **End-Note** and modern Web applications such as **Del.icio.us** and other social Websites. With **Zotero**, users can store author, title, and publication information and then export the information as a formatted reference. They can also tag things, interact with other users, and perform advanced searching. **Zotero** isn't compatible with older versions (less than 2.0) of **Firefox** so individuals who want to use this tool will have to update their browser if they haven't already done so. **Zotero** detects when a book, article, or other resource is being viewed and with a mouse click finds and saves the full reference information to a local file. If the source is an online article or Webpage, **Zotero** can optionally store a local copy of the source. Users can then add notes, tags, and their own metadata through the in-browser interface. Selections of the local reference library data can later be exported as formatted bibliographies.

#### ConQuery

(<http://conquery.mozdev.org/>)

**ConQuery (Context sensitive web Query extension)** is an extension for **Firefox** users that allows them to highlight any text that they see on a Webpage, right-click, and automatically query that text in any one of a number of search engines such as **Yahoo!**, **Google**, and

## against the grain people profile

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**BORN & LIVED:** Glen Ridge, NJ; Seaford, DE; Brooklyn, NY.

**EARLY LIFE, FAMILY, EDUCATION, FIRST JOB:** Parents were Presbyterian ministers. Grew up in a small town in Southern DE, near the beaches. Went to **Mount Holyoke College**, entered publishing in NY, stayed in the book industry ever since.

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES:** Active in **Book Industry Study Group/BISAC** – chair of the **Identifiers Committee**, and member of many other committees (**Digital Standards, Metadata**, etc.).

**IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO:** Cook, read, cook, ski, cook, work out, cook, do crosswords and jigsaws. Cook.

**FAVORITE BOOKS:** I have a wide-ranging palate — love immense novels with lots of plot like *Anna Karenina* and *The Little Friend*; I love light, fun books like **Armistead Maupin's**; I am reading **Janet Evanovich** now, at my mother's urging; I also love small beautiful novels like *Diary of a Country Priest* and *Benito Cereno* and *Heart of Darkness*. I just love a good story, well-told.

**PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD:** Rudeness in public, political obtuseness, and clogged toilets. Also the way my kids keep flipping on the TV when my back is turned.

**PHILOSOPHY:** A good tomato is worth its weight in gold. A Yemeni cab driver told me that once, and he is totally right. A good tomato can make a great meal, which can make a great evening, which can affect your whole week, etc.

**MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT:** There are a few: Conceiving of the **Bloggapedia** idea and realizing it was a really good one; consulting to an audiobook company and helping it strip down its database and rebuild it according to industry standards (that was very gratifying); being made chair of the **Identifiers Committee** for **BISAC**; starting *The Big Picture*, a newsletter that covers the areas in which I consult.

**GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW:** The same as my goal is now — helping an industry in transition from print to digital get a little more comfortable with new and interesting ways of doing things. My father's favorite book was *The Two Cultures* by **C.P. Snow** (Dad was an engineer before he was a minister), and I see a lot of my life as bringing together the technological and the intellectual. It'd be nice to see some real synthesis of the two that is meaningful and useful.

**HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:** I'm really pleased to see the increasing relevancy of libraries — the other day I was in a meeting and a kid in publishing who's also in grad school was talking about how surprised he was at all the resources available at his college library, and it just warmed my heart. I think with the services that libraries can offer now — online reserves and renewals, database searches from home, viewing rare books and manuscripts online — things are going to explode for this industry and I'm really thrilled to be a part of that. 🌱

others (including the library catalog if a plug-in for this search is created). Instead of having to copy and paste the text into a search engine or library catalog or having to type the information in a search form, searches are queried easily which makes the user's browsing experience go more smoothly. **Duke University's Ford Library** makes **ConQuery** available to its users on a Webpage (<http://library.fuqua.duke.edu/firelib.htm>), provides detailed instructions on installing and configuring the extension, and has created several plug-ins for the extension

that customize the extension to local needs and interests. If you're interested in learning how to make a **Firefox plug-in** visit the **Mozilla Developer Center's** page for creating plug-ins ([http://developer.mozilla.org/en/docs/Creating\\_OpenSearch\\_plugins\\_for\\_Firefox](http://developer.mozilla.org/en/docs/Creating_OpenSearch_plugins_for_Firefox)).

#### OpenURL Referrer

(<http://www.openly.com/openurlref/>)

Created by **Openly Informatics**, now **OCLC Openly Informatics** (<http://www>.

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