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The modern public library seeks to foster literacy and education, and forge lasting relationships with members of its community. Readers' advisory service is a popular way to meet this goal. Web 2.0 is playing an increasingly important role in online library services. This study is a content analysis of a sample of 84 public library websites in North Carolina to determine the current level of use of Web 2.0 for readers' advisory. The results show that 65 public library websites in North Carolina offer readers' advisory services online; 7 of those websites are using Web 2.0 technologies to provide readers' advisory services online. The author concludes that these seven sites are good examples of how to implement Web 2.0 for readers' advisory. Other North Carolina public libraries can learn from these websites, though further research is needed to gain the perspectives of users.

Headings:

Reader guidance

Web 2.0 -- Library applications

Public libraries – North Carolina

THE USE OF WEB 2.0 FOR READERS' ADVISORY SERVICE ON NORTH
CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARY WEBSITES

by
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Introduction

The modern public library seeks to foster literacy and education, and forge lasting relationships with members of its community. Readers' advisory service is an important part of achieving these goals. The enthusiasm for and focus on reading inherent in readers' advisory service promotes literacy and education. The interaction between librarians and community members in a readers' advisory interview builds and strengthens relationships (Saricks, 2005). It is important to study readers' advisory services, both from a service provider perspective and from a user perspective so that libraries can continue to develop and enhance the level of service they provide. Recently, libraries have begun to offer services online, including readers' advisory. In particular, more libraries are adopting Web 2.0 technologies for their diverse capabilities (Kroski, 2008).

Web 2.0 technologies are also primarily about fostering information literacy and increasing interactivity and dynamic communication in a medium that was once static. Kroski (2008) says "Web 2.0 has come to mean a complete paradigm shift in the way that people create and consume information on the Web today" (p. 2). People think of the Web in completely different ways now than they did only a few years ago. It is much easier now for people to publish and customize their own content on the Web, and to make contributions to others' content through tagging, commenting, and sharing. These developments provide libraries with ways to increase community interaction by

having users contribute and feel that they are part of the larger vision and goals of the institutions they support. It is important to study these technologies and capabilities because through them, libraries can find tools to enhance their services.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate, through a descriptive study, the need for North Carolina public libraries, and indeed public libraries in general, to take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies for readers' advisory services. The questions this research attempts to answer are:

- To what extent are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies?
- What types of Web 2.0 technologies are public library websites in North Carolina using?
- To what extent do public library websites in North Carolina provide readers' advisory services online?
- Are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies to provide readers' advisory services online?
- How are the websites advertising these services?

This paper begins with a brief description of readers' advisory services and Web 2.0, followed by a literature review of research relevant to these two topics. Next, there is a methodology section describing the study and a discussion of the findings of the study as they relate to each research question; followed by examples of North Carolina public library websites using Web 2.0 for readers' advisory. The final portion of the paper discusses the importance of this study, addresses limitations of the study and future research, and provides a summary and conclusion.

What is Readers' Advisory service?

Readers' advisory service (RA) is usually characterized as a leisure reading recommendation service, though it is also used for continuing education, and typically takes place in a public library (Saricks, 2005). RA has gone through several evolutions during the last century. While authors on the subject may disagree about the chronological breakdown of its different eras (Saricks, 2005; Dilevko & Magowan, 2007), there is a general consensus about how the nature of RA has evolved. First, the service began in urban public libraries, providing structured reading lists to patrons based on extensive interviews that took place separate from regular library services. Over time, demand increased and the scale of the service expanded concurrently with an increasing focus on adult education. Some libraries had trouble meeting the demand for personalized reading lists and thereafter, the service continued in this manner with varied success. In the latter part of the 20th century, RA took a turn towards leisure reading and tools became available to aid librarians in producing recommendations. Guides for librarians, such as Rosenberg's *Genreflecting: a Guide to Reading Interests in Genre Fiction* (1982), have been very influential on practicing advisors.

With the proliferation of computers and information technology in the late 1980s and early 1990s, RA tools expanded from print resources to electronic resources. One of the most influential resources to first go online was NoveList in 1994. It was conceived and constructed by Smith, Rowhder, and Strickler (*About NoveList*, 2009) as a database of aggregate information from which librarians and users could retrieve titles based on the characteristics they specified. NoveList has since become a publisher of content as well, writing their own articles, and soliciting reviews and recommendation lists from top

reader advisors in the field, as well as still providing access to thousands of titles in genre fiction. There was also an e-mail discussion list started in 1995 called *Fiction-L*, based out of the Morton Grove Public Library in Illinois (Saricks, 2005, p. 19). This discussion list is not limited to fiction or even to adult reading interests, but caters to readers of nonfiction and young readers as well. It also serves as a reference resource for tools and frequently encountered issues. Since these initial forays into online RA, many databases, online services, and websites are now dedicated solely to guiding readers to their next good book (Morton Grove Public Library, 2008). Modern readers' advisory services are the result of a mixture of efforts by librarians and users, and with a variety of print and electronic tools. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that Web 2.0 technology could be a valuable set of tools for librarians to diversify their readers' advisory services.

What is Web 2.0?

Kroski (2008) defines Web 2.0 as “sites using participatory and collaborative technology” (p. xiii). In 2005, O'Reilly Media CEO Tim O'Reilly published an article in which he defined Web 2.0; he laid a framework and outlined core competencies upon which these new business models are built. O'Reilly highlighted seven key components of Web 2.0 sites, which have been reiterated throughout the literature (Aharony, 2009; Kroski, 2008; Needleman, 2007). The features pertinent to this study are the Web 2.0 capabilities specifically employed in library applications. Principles of Web 2.0 applied to libraries are that services, websites, and content should be user-centered, easy to learn, dynamic, distributed across systems rather than hosted on a single machine, and use open standards (Curran, Murray, Norrby, & Christian, 2006).

There are many different types of Web 2.0 applications that libraries use.

Weblogs (blogs) and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) are fairly common and are usually seen together. Also, social tagging, sharing, and social cataloging are becoming popular.

All of these applications allow libraries to quickly and frequently update and add value to their web content. The following literature review discusses the most current research on readers' advisory services and Web 2.0 developments.

Literature Review

Much of the literature on readers' advisory service has been descriptive in nature. Authors typically define it and its general best practices, and attempt to prescribe methods and procedures for the successful implementation of an RA program. This literature review will focus on those articles which tend towards describing specific tools and media for RA. The latest discussion of RA tools deals with the application of Web 2.0.

The literature on Web 2.0 is steadily increasing and empirical research tends to focus on tools and implementation. Here, I will discuss studies which examine the use of these types of technologies in different library settings: academic libraries; school libraries; and, finally, public libraries. The final portion of the literature review will bring RA and Web 2.0 together and present studies which have demonstrated the efficacy of this new technology for this specific aspect of public library service.

This literature review will establish the importance of examining public libraries as peer institutions of each other and of other types of libraries, and the need for discovering in what ways libraries are taking advantage of new knowledge in the library and information science field. The literature will reveal Web 2.0 as a valuable technology public libraries need to effectively serve their communities. Finally, this literature review will provide a framework for the research questions posed in this study.

Readers' Advisory Media and Tools

In the years following Rosenberg's *Genreflecting*, there was a proliferation of publishing similar types of resources for tackling different genres of fiction and nonfiction. The vast majority of these were in print. Since there were so many, it became difficult to know which resources to use for the best result. Therefore, in 2004, the Collection Development and Evaluation Section (CODES) Readers' Advisory Committee of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) published a list of recommended tools for readers' advisory. RUSA is a division of the American Library Association, and so has some degree of authority in determining the best resources for librarians. In this publication, the Committee provides an annotated bibliography of what it believes to be the most salient materials for librarians to collect and consult in the performance of RA service. The report begins with a description of core materials, works deemed essential to the task of RA. It goes on to provide an annotated bibliography for works related to book discussion, characters, specific genres of fiction, and young adult fiction that should also be used for RA and be part of a good RA collection. Finally, there is another bibliography with more specific titles suggested for enhancing the collection in each of the same areas (RUSA, 2004).

While the Committee does mention a few of the larger comprehensive resources as being also available online, such as *Fiction Catalog* from H.W. Wilson publishing and *What Do I Read Next?: A Reader's Guide to Current Genre Fiction* from Gale, the focus of this article is print publications. This is a significant drawback to this list, especially in light of the fact that it was published in 2004 and by this time, online database services like NoveList had been around for 10 years.

Trott's 2005 article "Advising Readers Online" is a review of media and tools for RA service that were newly available on the Web at the time. Trott talks about how RA service to that point had been mostly passive attempts by librarians to categorize and describe reading materials in annotations and reviews. Incorporation of RA into digital reference services has been slow to be realized due to academic libraries being the primary origins of virtual reference, and academic libraries lacking a focus on RA.

Virtual reference tools enable more active methods for RA service. Specifically, Trott mentions e-mail and chat readers' advisory as the primary and most effective methods. He also cites several advantages of hosting RA services online in addition to, or even instead of, in-person. First, the work of generating responses can be distributed as in a consortium, thus spreading the workload to those most knowledgeable and decreasing the response time to the patron. Further, the fact that e-mail is asynchronous removes the pressure of providing an immediate response, as would be necessary in person, and allows librarians to fully consider each request. The fact that live chats are synchronous can be a disadvantage in this regard, but a redeeming quality is its anonymity. Finally, librarians can track statistics much easier online to judge use and popularity of services. These statistics are invaluable, as they can reveal which services should be augmented and which might need to be discontinued (Trott, 2005).

In a 2006 article, Hollands discusses the changing landscape of RA and the need for form-based service rather than face-to-face interviews. Hollands suggests that librarians have neither the time nor in some cases the ability, despite their best efforts, to adequately perform a reference interview for RA. He outlines several of what he calls false assumptions that have contributed to the lack of success in RA services. He

suggests that: readers may not want to come to librarians for help; not all librarians are equipped or trained to help with RA; interviews are insufficient modes of getting information from the patron; time limitations do not allow for high quality service; RA resources are not necessarily easy to use, either for librarians or users; and, interviews are not sufficiently documented or followed up to ensure patron satisfaction. Hollands posits that all of these deficiencies can be alleviated to some degree with form-based readers' advisory. This is a process whereby users will fill out a form with the necessary information needed in order for librarians to provide top quality RA service. Hollands outlines the principle items needed on a form, as well as advises on implementation (2006). Forms can be administered on paper or online. Interestingly, Hollands notes a trend of "two to three online submissions for every paper submission" (2006, p.210). Users at the Williamsburg Regional Library have expressed a deep satisfaction with the form-based RA service there and would recommend it to others (Hollands, 2006).

Web 2.0 in Libraries

The library and information science literature is extensive in the area of virtual reference services, such as chat and email reference. Web 2.0 literature is also extensive. Despite these trends, literature specifically addressing Web 2.0 applications in libraries is relatively new and limited. This new research focuses primarily on the application and use of technologies in particular settings.

Linh (2008) conducted a study of Australasian university libraries to discover how they are using Web 2.0 technologies. The author determined that out of 47 total university libraries in Australia and New Zealand, only 32 indicated the use of Web 2.0

technologies at the time of the study in December 2007. The author then used a content analysis approach to examine the 32 websites. The researcher wanted to determine: what Web 2.0 technologies are in use; what are the purposes of the applications; and what are the features of the applications in use. Linh found that only RSS, blogs, instant messages (IMs), and podcasts were in use. Of these technologies, RSS was by far the most popular, with 64% of the libraries using it (2008, p. 641). Further, Linh found that the primary purposes of RSS and blogs are news and events or new title lists; IMs are primarily used for virtual chat reference services; and podcasts are primarily used for tutorials and how-to videos for library services.

Overall, Linh's research demonstrates that academic libraries in Australia and New Zealand are successfully implementing Web 2.0 technologies. However, there is definitely room for expansion and improvement of those services. Universities often must deal with diverse communities and Web 2.0 is one way to provide multiple access points to a library's services. More research in this area will continue to provide evidence for the efficacy of Web 2.0 in academic library settings.

Aharony also mentions academic libraries in a 2009 article. In a questionnaire sent to Israeli librarians in public, school, and academic libraries, Aharony investigated the human motivations for or against librarians using Web 2.0. The researcher sent out 200 questionnaires and received 168 responses. Aharony hypothesized that librarians were more likely to use Web 2.0 technologies if they embraced change, if they were challenged rather than threatened, and if they were outgoing and in an environment which was motivating. Also, high computer literacy and proficiency was hypothesized to be more conducive to higher use of Web 2.0 (2009, p.31). The results showed statistically

significant correlations for all of the measures (importance, motivation, capacity, threat, challenge and Web 2.0 use). In the analysis, Aharony states “The more the librarians are motivated, the more they think Web 2.0 is important, and the more they feel capable to handle Web 2.0. The more they use it, the more they perceive Web 2.0 as challenging instead of threatening” (2009, p.32). These results appear applicable across the different types of libraries, but it is clear that no matter the environment, personality traits and attitudes towards technology have a major impact on the adoption of Web 2.0. Aharony's findings provide evidence that using Web 2.0 technology in libraries should not be seen as an obstacle. Rather, new technologies can be the impetus for change.

Rutherford's 2008 article also provides evidence of the growing impact of Web 2.0 in public libraries. Rutherford assessed the experiences of individual librarians using Web 2.0, or as the article refers to it, social software. The study consisted of an e-mail survey of 7 librarians from public libraries in the United States and New Zealand that were actively using Web 2.0. While this is a small sample, the responses were thorough enough to construct a framework for thinking about Web 2.0 in public libraries and the types of questions to ask in future research. The survey asked questions about each librarian's perceptions of social software, its values and impacts, and any opinions about challenges and improvements to overall library service through its use (p. 416). The results of the survey showed that librarians found several benefits to using Web 2.0. Most librarians agreed that Web 2.0 allows them to create a stronger sense of community among their users. In addition, Rutherford found general agreement among the librarians that Web 2.0: promotes communication, interactivity, and sharing; reaches remote users better than traditional library services; empowers users to control their library experience;

and finally, provides valuable metrics through which they can evaluate the quality of service. This last point is particularly important because prior to library services going online in some form, libraries and librarians had a hard time pinpointing areas in which services were lacking, and evaluations were based on subjective impressions of those providing the service, whereas now they have the ability to look at objective data and statistics to make informed decisions.

Web 2.0 Applications for Readers' Advisory

It is useful to examine the benefits of providing a user-centered service like readers' advisory and using technology in a library as in the case of promoting Web 2.0. Research now needs to focus more on the practical applications of both of these and use some of the data being gathered to conduct evaluations. If the studies mentioned above are any indication, it is clear that public libraries should be implementing Web 2.0, and specifically for RA. A key question that emerges from these findings is what are public libraries actually doing? To address this question, the next section examines two libraries that are implementing Web 2.0 for readers' advisory.

At Minneapolis' Hennepin County Library in 2006, librarians wanted a better way to provide RA service to their patrons. While they had online resources available, the web pages were confusing and out-of-date. Staff also had trouble revising content because they could not directly access the pages. Web services took advantage of the possibilities created by Web 2.0 applications to create BookSpace. This new website offered many new capabilities both for library staff and for patrons. BookSpace kept many of the well-used resources like book lists, but enhanced the rest of the site in order

to increase interaction. The site uses blogs to provide alerts and updates on new titles, and commenting to invite patron participation within the library catalog and throughout various other locations. Further, BookSpace allows users of the site to create personalized pages with their customized lists and updates. Hennepin County Library demonstrates a recent successful endeavor to build upon patron and library staff needs using Web 2.0 for RA services (Peterson & McGlinn, 2008).

In the July-September 2007 issue of *Virginia Libraries*, Zellers of the Williamsburg Regional Library reports on the new use of a blog for readers' advisory service. Zellers points out that implementing Web 2.0 tools like blogs require much less work than creating web pages by programming code. Librarians can use reviews and reading lists they have already compiled to create blog entries, and then enhance them by linking them to other relevant information like catalog entries or descriptive tags that link like items together. In this brief article, Zellers emphasizes the importance the Web 2.0 format has for reaching remote users of the library's webpage, whether they are within the library's constituency or far outside of it. Advantages for the library of using blogs for RA include easier, faster updates online and the potential for increased circulation of its materials. Advantages for users of the library include multiple access points and the possibility to interact with library staff.

Wyatt reports in a November 2007 article that the Williamsburg Regional Library has found that Web 2.0 is reinventing annotations, an older, traditional method of providing RA service. Previously, this method consisted of librarians making lists of books they read and making detailed notes about authors, subjects, language, themes, and other topics, which was very time-consuming and labor intensive. In fact, Wyatt relates

that many librarians simply did not have the time to do this and it impacted their ability to provide a quality RA service. Web 2.0 makes this much easier by allowing librarians and users to label books with appropriate terms to describe their various characteristics, by linking catalog records to other pertinent information about a book, and by qualitatively judging a books merit on a subjective scale. In Web 2.0 applications, these manifest in things like tagging, comments, and reviews (p. 32). Further, Wyatt illustrates that using social tools link the library's community back to its members, but also to the larger Internet user community. Indeed, research by Asselin and Doiron (2008) provides evidence that younger generations are now growing up using Web 2.0 and will demand its use in services they attempt to use.

Clearly, some public libraries are early adopters of new technologies and have had success. As a result, the same institutions appear frequently in the literature. Given the lack of empirical, scholarly research on the topic of RA in public libraries, these institutional reports and anecdotal evidence become vital to the discourse. Further, they provide one of the only means of libraries learning what their peers are doing. In order to strengthen the foundation of the discipline more research needs to be done to discover the needs of readers and challenges to readers' advisors. This paper addresses this need by examining the state of Web 2.0 for RA service in selected North Carolina public libraries.

Research Questions

The goal of this paper is to explore the state of the art of using Web 2.0 for readers' advisory service and contribute to ongoing scholarship in these areas. This research seeks to answer five specific questions about public library websites in North Carolina:

- Research Question 1. To what extent are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies?
- Research Question 2. What types of Web 2.0 technologies are public library websites in North Carolina using?
- Research Question 3. To what extent do public library websites in North Carolina provide readers' advisory services online?
- Research Question 4. Are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies to provide readers' advisory services online?
- Research Question 5. How are the websites advertising these services?

These questions are posited to get an overall picture of the state of Web2.0 and its use for RA services in North Carolina. Data gathered to answer these questions will also give insight to the larger topic of Web 2.0 for RA in public libraries in general.

Method

In order to examine these questions, I employed the method of content analysis. Babbie (2007) says that content analysis is “the study of recorded human communications” (p.320). It is an unobtrusive form of research that involves examining the records and cultural artifacts that people produce rather than the thoughts and observations of humans themselves. This currently includes websites and webpages. Therefore, a content analysis approach was suitable for describing what is happening on the websites of North Carolina's public libraries.

I obtained a list of public libraries with websites from the State Library of North Carolina (2009). After visiting each site to test for stability, I added others that I found and removed those which were duplicates. The total sample of websites examined was 84 (see Appendix A for the list of libraries and websites). Adapting Nguyen's instrument (2008, p. 635) in which questions were gridded with binary yes or no responses, I created a spreadsheet in which to record the answers to these questions for each site:

- Does the site use Web 2.0 technologies in general?
- Does the site offer online Readers' Advisory services?
- Does the site use Web 2.0 technologies in offering online RA services?

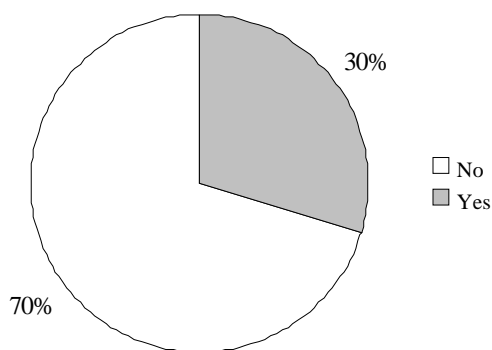
Over a period of three weeks, I then systematically visited each site and recorded a yes or no answer to the above questions for each one. The answers to these questions dictated which sites warranted further investigation. If I could answer yes, I recorded information on what types of technologies are being used most frequently, how the services are advertised on each site, and any other descriptive elements that seemed important.

Findings and Discussion

This section reports the results of the study for each of the five questions in the Research Questions section. It provides for a contextual discussion of the results as they relate to each question.

Research Question 1. To what extent are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies?

The examination revealed that out of 84 North Carolina public library websites, only 25 sites (30%) are using any kind of Web 2.0 technology. This means that a large portion (59 sites or 70%) of North Carolina public library websites are not using any Web



2.0 applications (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Does the site use Web 2.0 technologies in general?

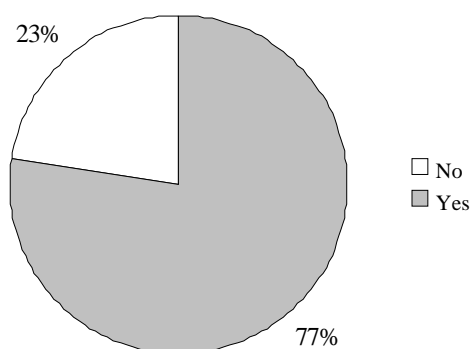
Moreover, 16 of those 59 sites (27%) offer no online readers' advisory services. Many of the sites lacking in these two areas offer little in the way of interactivity in general and are in place simply to convey minimal information, such as location, hours, and contact information.

Research Question 2. What types of Web 2.0 technologies are public library websites in North Carolina using?

Of the 25 library websites using Web 2.0, there are 16 (64%) using RSS feeds for subscriptions to calendar events, new title lists, and other services. Just under half, (11, 44%) are using blogs, either alone or in conjunction with RSS, for news and events announcements. Many of these sites use RSS as a way to offer subscriptions to blog postings, so these occurrences often overlap.

Research Question 3. To what extent do public libraries in North Carolina provide readers' advisory services online?

While many of the libraries' websites examined have not yet adopted Web 2.0 technologies for varied use, a majority of them do offer readers' advisory services online. A majority of these websites (65 out of 84, or 77%) are offering RA online in some way



(see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Does the site offer online Readers' Advisory services?

The most prevalent form is in book lists, such as links to best seller lists and awards lists. Many sites also have subscriptions to services: 22 sites subscribe to NoveList, 8 subscribe

to NextReads newsletters which is a service of NoveList, 8 subscribe to Online Book Clubs, and 5 subscribe to BookNews. There are several sites with lists and recommendations from library staff, either instead of or in conjunction with these subscriptions.

Research Question 4. Are public library websites in North Carolina using Web 2.0 technologies to provide readers' advisory services online?

Only seven library websites are using Web 2.0 technologies as additional tools to provide RA services online. While these seven sites demonstrate an enthusiasm for embracing and implementing innovations by offering robust and varied RA services, it is clear that other North Carolina public libraries are going to be slower to adopt them. This trend is well-established for emerging technologies – early adopters will test the functionality and limitations of new tools, then if the tools are deemed useful or valuable more people and organizations will begin to implement them. The peer institutions of these 7 libraries might benefit in the future from following their examples on using Web 2.0. Reasons for not adopting the tools are not clear and are outside the scope of these findings. However, as the literature suggests, they will greatly enhance services the libraries already offer, and even allow libraries to offer new services.

Research Question 5. How are the websites advertising these services?

Most of the websites tend to feature their RA services in highly visible places on the site. Roughly 35 of them (54%) advertise RA services via links or buttons on their homepages. Another 21 sites offer additional links through their catalog search pages or individual catalog records. There are 21 sites that have at least one page dedicated to readers and these are typically well-advertised on and linked from the homepages. There

appears to be a strong, positive correlation between the robustness of a site's advertising and the level of RA service provided online. In other words, those sites that have dedicated pages and make them very visible from the homepage seem to offer a wider variety of services. More research is needed to articulate the nature of this relationship.

Within the state of North Carolina, public libraries need to make more of an effort to have substantive online presences. Moreover, they need to be offering readers' advisory services online in order to reach more than just the community members who walk into the physical locations. As the literature suggests, Web 2.0 can provide simple tools to facilitate the transition to providing widely accessible, high quality service.

Examples of Web 2.0 for Readers' Advisory in North Carolina Public Libraries

One of the sites offering the most robust and vigorous efforts at Web 2.0 for readers' advisory services is that of Greensboro Libraries. Located about 80 miles northwest of the capital city of Raleigh in the piedmont region of North Carolina, Greensboro is in Guilford County, which is home to about 456,000 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). From the library's homepage, click on the link for "Books and Reading" and you will see links to NoveList, Booklover's Blog, Book Lists, and Websites for Readers (see Appendix B, Image 1). There is also a link to a page on **delicious**, a social bookmarking site, for items specifically related to readers' advisory (see Appendix B, Image 2). Lists and links are typical of the passive approach to readers' advisory. In contrast, you can see on the Booklover's Blog that entries are tagged with labels and that visitors to the blog can comment on the posts (see Appendix B, Image 3). In the act of writing one post, librarians can provide information about a book title, describe it with

several labels, which are also links to other similar items, and invite audience participation. This is by far a more interactive, holistic approach to RA service.

Another site employing these methods is Wake County Public Libraries (WCPL). Home to the capital city of Raleigh and about 794,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007), Wake County has a public library system with 19 branches. Part of their mission is “to promote the love of reading” and two priorities toward meeting that goal are “recreational reading” and “bridging the technology gap” (Wake County Government, 2009). WCPL has clearly made concerted efforts to meet these priorities and goals. If you look at the WCPL homepage, there is a large button for “Reading” (see Appendix B, Image 4). This button links to a page full of RA resources; it offers the expected lists and links and advertises subscriptions to NoveList and BookNews. Additionally, however, it offers Web 2.0 tools such as blogs for book clubs and podcasts for book talks. Avid readers will also be pleased to see a button advertising “Custom Book Lists,” whereby one can fill out a profile and a librarian from WCPL will create a list of titles based on those criteria (see Appendix B, Image 5). Beyond that, if users conduct a catalog search for a resource and click on an item to see its record, there will be a list of titles on the sidebar similar to that resource. Tags are pulled into the catalog from the social cataloging website LibraryThing (see Appendix B, Image 6).

These two sites and the few others currently using Web 2.0 for readers' advisory are setting important examples for their peer institutions. It is useful for others to look at these sites as examples of what to do and what works well for the type and quality of service libraries want to offer. Libraries should continue to encourage reading, literacy, and life-long learning through their programs and services. Incorporating various

technologies and expanding services to the Web can reach a wider audience.

Importance of the Study

Readers' advisory services and Web 2.0 are important to study for several reasons. First, it is useful to study public libraries and their services because they are vital sources of information and entertainment. They are also part of the infrastructure and backbone that make communities function. Public libraries also function as meeting and gathering places, which foster a sense of community. Next, we need to study readers' advisory because of the increasingly important role it is playing in service to community members. Finally, Web 2.0 is important to study because it has various implications for the future of how people use the Internet. It has been demonstrated to facilitate a more interactive, rather than passive, readers' advisory service. Further research would provide even more evidence to support its adoption.

Limitations of this Study and Possibilities for Future Research

There are several limitations to this study that would benefit from further research. First, for convenience, this study was limited to the state of North Carolina. Future research could broaden the scope of the study to include more states, or even all of the United States, to get a better picture of what is really being done with Web 2.0 for RA. Next, a significant limitation to this study was the selection of websites examined. The list from the State Library of North Carolina may not be comprehensive. Further, websites and their content vary widely across institutions and are usually dynamic, making them difficult to study with reliability. It is important to note that the conclusions drawn from this content analysis are limited to what can be inferred from only viewing

the websites and may not be generalizable to larger communities. Additionally, while a content analysis approach is appropriate for simple yes or no questions, to answer more difficult questions like why, a more qualitative or subjective approach will be necessary. Other studies could focus on talking to library staff performing RA in public libraries to gain insight into their perspectives by asking questions about what they are doing, what they would like to do, and what they think of what their peers are doing. Future studies could also draw comparisons between a library's goal or mission statement and how technology can aid in achieving it. Finally, this study focuses on the use of a specific set of web-based tools for one aspect of library service. It would be useful to study users of readers' advisory and other library services to learn more about their needs and goals as readers, as well as whether or not people find the technology useful in meeting those needs and goals.

Summary and Conclusion

This research shows that a few public libraries in North Carolina are beginning to adopt Web 2.0 tools for providing readers' advisory service. While these efforts are a good start, more needs to be done to promote these tools and services. More libraries need to focus on creating an online presence and offering readers' advisory services online. Web 2.0 tools can make the process of creating websites less cumbersome for library staff and provide ease of use for library patrons.

The library and information science literature is rich with studies dealing with the use of technology in academic and school libraries, which more recently includes Web 2.0. Yet, there is an increasing need for empirical and scholarly research regarding public libraries. Research is what is needed to provide evidence and make solid cases for how a library should function. This study attempts to contribute to the growing body of literature on readers' advisory, public libraries, and Web 2.0.

The field of library and information science has become increasingly user-centered over the past decade. With this shift have come new perspectives and new responsibilities for those practicing in the profession. We are charged with the care of others in their pursuit of information and so we must continue to take up the challenge of striking the balance among people, processes, and tools.

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Appendices

Appendix A

List of libraries and websites

1. Alamance County Public Libraries - <http://www.alamancelibraries.org/>
2. Albemarle Regional Library - <http://www.arlnc.org/>
3. Alexander County Library - <http://www.alexanderlibrary.org/>
4. Appalachian Regional Library - <http://www.arlibrary.org>
5. Avery-Mitchell-Yancey Regional Library - <http://www.amyregionallibrary.org/>
6. Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Regional Library - <http://tlc.library.net/BHM/>
7. Bladen County Public Library - <http://www.youseemore.com/bladen/>
8. Bogue Banks Public Library - <http://carteret.cpclib.org/bb/bb.htm>
9. Brunswick County Libraries - <http://library.brunasco.net/>
10. Buncombe County Public Libraries - <http://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/Library/>
11. Burke County Public Library - <http://www.bcpls.org>
12. Cabarrus County Public Library - <http://www.cabarruscounty.us/library/>
13. Caldwell County Public Library - <http://www.ccpl.us/>
14. Carteret County Public Library - <http://carteret.cpclib.org/>
15. Catawba County Library System - <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/library/>
16. Chapel Hill Public Library - <http://www.chapelhillpubliclibrary.org/>
17. Chatham County Libraries - <http://www.chathamnc.org/Index.aspx?page=126>
18. Cleveland County Library - <http://www.ccml.org>
19. Columbus County Public Library - http://www.columbusco.org/dotnetnuke_2/library/LibraryHome/tabid/404/Default.aspx
20. Corolla Library - <http://www.earlibrary.org/corolla/index.html>
21. Craven-Pamlico-Carteret Regional Library System - <http://newbern.cpclib.org/nbccpl/cprl.html>
22. Cumberland County Public Library & Information Center - <http://www.cumberland.lib.nc.us>
23. Currituck Library - <http://www.earlibrary.org/currituck/index.html>
24. Davidson County Public Library - <http://www.co.davidson.nc.us/community/PublicLibraryCatalog.aspx>
25. Davie County Public Library - <http://www.library.daviecounty.org/>
26. Duplin County Library - <http://www.youseemore.com/Duplin/>
27. Durham County Library - <http://www.durhamcountylibrary.org>
28. East Albemarle Regional Library System - <http://www.youseemore.com/earl/>
29. Edgecombe County Memorial Library - <http://www.edgecombelibrary.org>
30. Farmville Public Library - http://www.farmville-nc.com/departments_library.htm
31. Fontana Regional Library - <http://www.fontanalib.org>
32. Forsyth County Public Library - <http://www.forsyth.cc/library/>
33. Franklin County Library - <http://fcnclibrary.wordpress.com/>
34. Gaston-Lincoln Regional Library System - <http://www.glrllib.nc.us>
35. Granville County Library System - <http://www.granville.lib.nc.us>

36. Guilford County - Greensboro Public Library - <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/Library/>
37. Halifax County Library - <http://www.halifaxnc.com/library.cfm>
38. Harnett County Public Library - <http://www.harnett.org/library/>
39. Haywood County Public Library - <http://www.haywoodlibrary.org/>
40. Henderson County Public Library - <http://www.henderson.lib.nc.us>
41. Hickory Public Library - <http://www.hickorygov.com/library>
42. High Point Public Library - <http://www.highpointpubliclibrary.com/>
43. Hyconeechee Regional Library - <http://www.co.orange.nc.us/library/hyconeechee/>
44. Iredell County Public Library - <http://www.iredell.lib.nc.us/>
45. Johnston - Public Library of Johnston County & Smithfield - <http://www.pljcs.org/>
46. Kings Mountain - Jacob S. Mauney Memorial Library - <http://www.mauneylibrary.org/>
47. Lee County Library - <http://www.leecountync.gov/departments/library/main-library.html>
48. Madison County Public Library - <http://madisoncountylibrary.org/>
49. McDowell County Public Library - <http://www.mcdowellpubliclibrary.org/>
50. Mecklenburg - Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County - <http://www.plcmc.org/>
51. Mooresville Public Library - <http://www.ci.mooresville.nc.us/library/>
52. Nantahala Regional Library - <http://www.youseemore.com/nantahala/>
53. Nash/Edgecombe County - Braswell Memorial Library - <http://www.braswell-library.org>
54. Nashville - Harold D. Cooley Library - <http://www.townofnashville.com/library.html>
55. Neuse Regional Library - <http://www.neuselibrary.org>
56. New Bern-Craven Public Library - <http://newbern.cpclub.org/index.htm>
57. New Hanover County Public Library - <http://www.nhcgov.com/AgnAndDpt/LIBR/Pages/DeptInfo.aspx>
58. Northwestern Regional Library - <http://www.nwrl.org>
59. Onslow County Public Library - <http://www.co.onslow.nc.us/library/>
60. Pamlico County Public Library - <http://newbern.cpclub.org/pamlico/>
61. Pender County Public Library - <http://www.youseemore.com/PenderPL/>
62. Pettigrew Regional Library - <http://www.pettigrewlibraries.org/>
63. Pitt County - Sheppard Memorial Library - <http://www.sheppardlibrary.org>
64. Polk County Public Library - <http://publib.polknc.org>
65. Randolph County Public Library - <http://www.randolphlibrary.org>
66. Roanoke Rapids Public Library - <http://www.youseemore.com/RoanokeRapids/>
67. Robeson County Public Library - <http://www.robesoncountylibrary.com>
68. Rockingham County Public Library - <http://www.rcpl.org>
69. Rowan Public Library - <http://www.rowanpubliclibrary.org/>
70. Rutherford County Library - <http://www.rutherfordcountync.gov/dept/library/Main.php>
71. Sampson-Clinton Public Library System - <http://www.sampsonnc.com/publibsystem.asp>

72. Sandhill Regional Library System - <http://www.srls.info/>
73. Scotland County Memorial Library - <http://www.scotlandcolibrary.com/>
74. Southern Pines Public Library - <http://www.sppl.net/Library/>
75. Stanly County Public Library - <http://www.stanlycountylibrary.org/index.html>
76. Transylvania County Library - <http://www.transylvania.lib.nc.us>
77. Union County Public Library - <http://www.union.lib.nc.us>
78. Vance County - H. Leslie Perry Memorial Library - <http://www.perrylibrary.org/>
79. Wake County Public Libraries - <http://www.wakegov.com/county/libraries/>
80. Warren County Memorial Library - <http://www.wcplnc.org/>
81. Washington - George H. & Laura E. Brown Library -
<http://www.ci.washington.nc.us/library.aspx?rId=582>
82. Wayne County Public Library - <http://www.wcpl.org>
83. Western Carteret Public Library - <http://carteret.cpclib.org/wc/wc.htm>
84. Wilson County Public Library - <http://wilsoncountypubliclibrary.sirsi.net>

Appendix B Library web pages

Greensboro Libraries
Official City of Greensboro Web Site

Residents : Businesses : Visitors : City Government : Departments : Online Payments

Search Actual results: 0 Departments : Library : Books and Reading

Up To Library

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Novelist
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Here are our favorite sites for book lovers on the web.

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See more bookmarks in Popular or Recent.

gplrad Type a tag Bookmarks 57 Sorted by Most Recent

24 FEB 09 OSCAR.com - 81st Annual Academy Awards SAVE
2009 Oscar Winners oscars 3

18 FEB 09 OSCAR.com - 81st Annual Academy Awards - Nominees SAVE
The Oscars - Sunday, Feb., 22nd, 2009, 5/PT 8/ET on ABC. Find 2009 Academy Award Nominees here. oscars

09 FEB 09 GoTriadScene.com SAVE
Upcoming Poetry and literature events in the Triad-The Bryan Series presents Anna Quinlin -Guilford College April 14, 2009 author events

Barnes & Noble Booksellers SAVE
Upcoming events and authors at Friendly Center's Barnes & Noble Booksellers. book events

Graphic Novel Reporter SAVE
BookReporter.com has created a site for comic lovers. Find out about the best graphic novels and their creators. The books into movies feature shows you what comic characters will be coming to a theatre near you in the future. graphic novels 34

MGPL Webrary@ - Web Sites for Book Lovers SAVE
There's something here for every Book Lover! book lovers 98

February is Library Lovers' Month SAVE
February 2009 Library supporters create a celebration of their very own in honor of libraries. Library Lovers' Month is a month-long celebration of school, public, and private libraries of all types. This is a time for everyone, especially library support groups, to recognize the value of libraries and to work to assure that the Nation's libraries will continue to serve. libraries 61

It's Official! 'Pride and Prejudice' is the Most Romantic Book of All Time SAVE
It's Official! 'Pride and Prejudice' is the Most Romantic Book of All Time LONDON, February 10 (PRNewswire) -- Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' is the most romantic book of all time, according to the people who should know - the Romantic Novelists' Association, the UK's only professional writers' association specialising in romantic fiction. In a Valentine's Day survey, the 700-strong association polled its members to find out what they considered to be the most romantic

Tags
Top 10 Tags
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romantic 2
graphic 1
mystery 1

Tag Bundles
summer reading lists 1
Unbundled Tags 18
All Tags 19

Image 2. Greensboro Public Library Readers' Advisory Desk Bookmarks

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Fiction
Memoir
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The Boy Who Loved Words by Roni Schotter
Posted on March 13, 2009 by jonah meyer
*And just in time for upcoming National Poetry Month, in April

For young readers (and/or parents, teachers, caregivers) who hone a passionate predilection for spy, savory and scrumptious tales, which with real gusto (and giggles galore) celebrate the often-tantalizing (if not tintinnabulating) pulsing rhapsody of the harmoniously luscious poetry of WORDS, then have I got a stirring and swirling, exultant children's picture book for you.

Mellifluous!

This story of young Selig – a word collector in both the literal and metaphorical sense – is chockablock with words, oh delicious words. Celebrating the sounds, the tastes, the thoughts, and the feel of new words with which our young poet-hero comes into contact throughout this fascinating, full-of-cheer and life-embracing gem of a book, *The Boy Who Loved Words* is truly a celebration of the transformative power inherent in words ... a festival-exercise saluting not only their intrinsic beauty – especially when strung together such as through the craft of poem-making – but also the mysterious ability in which words can, often unexpectedly, bring people together, "lucky people [who] have discovered and delighted in them."

Yes, the book is a bit 'overdone,' perchance teetering on that which one might

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OSCAR.com - 81st Annual Academy Awards - Nominees
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MGPL Webrary@ - Web Sites for Book Lovers
February is Library Lovers' Month
It's Official! 'Pride and Prejudice' is the Most Romantic Book of All Time
Romantic Novelists' Association - Romantic

Image 3. Greensboro Libraries' Book Lover's Blog.



Image 4. Wake County Public Libraries homepage.



Image 5. Wake County Public Libraries Reading page.

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[La Boda /](#) by Sparks, Nicholas.

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[Before I die /](#) by Downham, Jenny.

[Three weeks with my brother \[sound recording\] : a memoir /](#) by Sparks, Nicholas.

[Suzanne's diary for Nicholas : a novel /](#) by Patterson, James, 1947-

[Welcome to Fred : a novel /](#) by Whittington, Brad.

[Boy meets girl /](#) by Cabot, Meg.

[Where are the children? /](#) by Clark, Mary Higgins.

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Other editions and translations

[A walk to remember \(LARGE PRINT\) : a novel /](#) by Sparks, Nicholas. (ISBN 037540872X)

MARC Display

Eva H. Petty Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/30/2009	Add Copy to MyList
Eva H. Petty Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Item being held		Add Copy to MyList
Cameron Village Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked in		Add Copy to MyList
Cameron Village Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	04/07/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/30/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Items for deletion		Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	04/03/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	04/02/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/14/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/30/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/25/2009	Add Copy to MyList
North Regional Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/01/2009	Add Copy to MyList
Cay Public Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/31/2009	Add Copy to MyList
Cay Public Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked in		Add Copy to MyList
Cay Public Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	04/02/2009	Add Copy to MyList
Cay Public Library	Adult Fiction	SPARKS	Checked out	03/04/2009	Add Copy to MyList

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Image 6. Wake County Public Libraries Catalog.