



The CONNector

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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This newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July, November. Your contribution and comments are welcome. The deadline for contributions is the 20th of the month prior to publication. Please send them to Editor, CSL, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford CT 06106-1537 or email [Bonnie Delaney](mailto:Bonnie.Delaney).

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Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
860-757-6500 * Toll-free 866-886-4478

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The State Librarian's Column

Kendall F. Wiggin
Connecticut State Librarian



"Connecticut's cultural, intellectual, and historical heritage is slowly but inexorably disappearing. The citizens of our State face a cultural crisis, the proportions of which are without equal or precedent in modern times." That is the opening paragraph of *Connecticut's Preservation Crisis*, the 1991 final report of the Connecticut Preservation Task Force. The report went on to note that "'Slow fires' are burning out of control throughout the stacks and files of all of Connecticut's libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other repositories where records and artifacts depicting our unique historical development are housed." In the intervening years little funding has been forthcoming to quell the fires. But this may be about to change.

The General Assembly is considering two complementary bills that would provide reliable funding for preservation and conservation efforts statewide. One mission of the Connecticut State Library is "to preserve and make accessible the records of Connecticut's history and heritage." Both pieces of legislation would provide significant new funds for the State Library to carry out this mission. The proposed funding would allow us to not only address the preservation of our current and past records, but our future records as well.

House Bill 5178 would establish a three-dollar filing fee on land transactions. Estimated to raise nearly \$3 million dollars a year, one third of the funds would be retained by town and city clerks to fund needed preservation of local records. The funds could also be used for digitization projects and other efforts to make local records more accessible. The balance of the funds would be placed in a non-lapsing account with 70% being used for statewide grants to fund local records projects and 30% for preservation activities at the State Library. A similar bill passed the Senate last year, but failed in the House.

A recent report to the Commerce Committee cited inadequate funding, a lack of balance in heritage-based allocations and an overall crisis in the state when it comes to preserving our past. The recommendations in the report form the basis for Senate Bill 566, *An Act Enhancing Cultural Heritage*. The Act calls for investing \$6.5 million in revenues from the tax on hotels and motels in the State's cultural heritage institutions to conserve and preserve our state's historic buildings, documents and archives. Several grant-matching programs administered by the State Library would deal specifically with the preservation of materials in our state's libraries, archives, museums and other repositories. Funds are also earmarked for preservation of materials at the State Library. One premise of the bill is that the treasures in our libraries, archives, and museums form the foundation of cultural heritage tourism that our state so greatly benefits from.

I am not going to speculate on the fate of either piece of legislation, but I think we are reaching what Malcolm Gladwell calls the "tipping point." Gladwell, considered one of our most original thinkers, believes that it takes just one person or event to cause a major change.

Meanwhile it will take all of us - librarians, genealogists, archivists, town clerks - to raise the publics' consciousness on this important issue. Sadly, one of the persistent voices in the quest for preservation funding passed away in March. Warren Buchanan was a professional genealogist and a great advocate for funding for preservation of our historical records. With all of your help we can advance the cause of preservation and conservation of our incredible historical record.

Who knows it might be the call that you make that suddenly moves us past the tipping point.

Salient Sites.gov

Nancy Peluso, Library Specialist

The Government Information Services Unit is always interested in and curious about information out on the web. The Nov./Dec. 1999 issue of the *Journal of Government Information* included a list entitled *1999 Notable Documents in Electronic Format*. The following is an annotated list of some databases that await the Internet searcher.

- [Asteroid and Comet Impact Hazards](#)
Earth orbits in a cosmic shooting gallery subject to occasional random hits by comets and asteroids. "A huge cloud of vaporized rock generated at ground zero was driven outward by its own heat and pressure in a colossal fireball..." Walter Alvarez. Could it happen here?
- [Center for Environmental Information and Statistics \(CEIS\)](#)
Single convenient source of information on environmental quality, status and trends, on a federal and state level.
- [Children](#)
State and federal statistics on children including immunizations, access to health care, child poverty, alcohol use, illicit drug use, family reading to young children.
- [Emerging Digital Economy](#)
Report presents economic analysis and case studies concerning the importance of electronic commerce and information technologies to the economy.
- [Hidden Killers 1998: The Global Landmine Crisis](#)
Listing of mine-affected countries, characteristics of civilian victims, long-term affects of landmines.
- [Human Genome Resources](#)
Current research on status of human genome sequencing, genes and disease, and anything else you need to know.
- [Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998](#)
Developed to provide educators, parents and students statistical data on the current nature of crime in schools and about programs that have been instituted to make schools safer.
- [STARDUST Home Page](#)
Stardust is the first U. S. spacecraft that will fly close to a comet and bring cometary material back to earth for analysis. Follow the current position of the spacecraft.
- [State of the Land](#)
Data on land use and change, wetlands, forest lands, water quality and related issues.
- [NOAA Photo Collection](#)
Outstanding collection of over 10,000 digitized images representing the natural world. Do you need photos of a tornado, a sunset, a coral reef? It's there.
- [Privacy Online: A Report to Congress](#)
An assessment of the effectiveness of self-regulation to protect consumer privacy on the Web.

- [Women of Color Health Data Book](#)
A comprehensive study divided into four sections. Factors affecting the health of women of color; Elderly women of color; Health assessment of women of color; and issues related to improving the health of women of color.
- [Lotteries](#)
A report by the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. Discusses the history of lotteries, and debates the question of gaming, advertising, and the effects on state politics.

Read! Learn! Connect!

@ the Library

National Library Week

April 9-15, 2000

More than 150 people gathered in Memorial Hall at the State Library on March 22 for the annual Legislative Potluck Supper. As part of the evening's festivities, fourteen state legislators were recognized for their efforts on behalf of the State Library during the 1999 legislative session. Presented on behalf of the State Library Board by Board Chair Ann M. Clark and State Librarian Kendall Wiggin certificates of appreciation were awarded to:

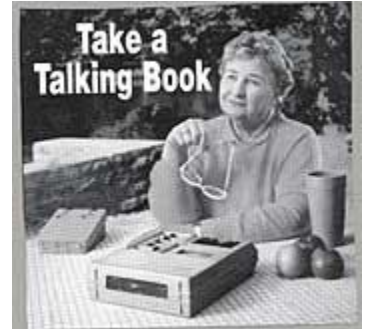
- Rep. Robert R. Simmons, Dist. 43
- Rep. Shawn T. Johnston, Dist. 51
- Rep. Denise W. Merrill, Dist. 54
- Rep. Brian J. Flaherty, Dist. 68
- Rep. Konstantinos (Kosta) Diamantis, Dist. 79
- Rep. Steve Fontana, Dist. 87
- Rep. William R. Dyson, Dist. 94
- Rep. Peter A. Metz, Dist. 101
- Rep. James A. Amann, Dist. 118
- Rep. Alex Knopp, Dist. 137
- Senator Thomas A. Bozek, Dist. 6
- Senator Martin M. Looney, Dist. 11
- Senator Thomas F. (Tim) Upton, Dist. 15
- Senator Joseph J. Crisco Jr., Dist. 17

The Potluck Supper is sponsored each year by the Connecticut Library Association, Association of Connecticut Library Boards, and the Friends of Connecticut Libraries.

Outreach Campaign Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Services

Carol Taylor, Director, LBPH

The open house for patrons of the Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, held Tuesday, April 11, 2000, was the kickoff of an outreach campaign for senior adults in Connecticut. This statewide campaign sponsored by the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is specifically designed to reach senior adults who have recently experienced vision loss and eligible persons who reside in retirement communities, nursing homes, convalescent homes, and other healthcare facilities. Throughout the coming year, this mass-media public education campaign will feature news releases, television and radio public service announcements, distribution of brochures and posters, mailings to libraries, senior programs and healthcare facilities, and program exhibits and presentations.



Anyone interested in helping to promote this campaign, wishing to receive promotional materials or needing a program speaker should email or call [Carol Taylor](mailto:Carol.Taylor@ct.gov), Director, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at 1-800-842-4516.

Gift to Archives: Local letters from the 1930's

Mark Jones, State Archivist

Recently Elena Burr Tuthill donated to the State Archives a collection of letters dating from 1932 to 1936 between her and Ella Fairchild Burr, her mother, Louis St. Clair Burr, her father, and Robert and Myron Burr, her brothers. She was attending William and Mary College in Virginia. Both parties of the correspondence exchanged letters weekly.

Ella Fairchild Burr to her daughter, Elena, from Tulsa: [In June 1936, Ella Burr attended the National Convention of the WCTU as the President of the Connecticut organization.]

"I have just got back from Amelia Earhart's meeting. After she talked she said questions might be asked. Toward the end a man arose and asked, 'Who gets her husband's breakfast while she was off on flights.' She hesitated a bit for it did seem like a slam and then said Mr. Putnam was a very good cook, and then added after the thousands of years that women had sat around home waiting for men she thought it not too hard for them to do a little waiting. You have heard her and know how clever she is."



Ella Burr

Picture from the Connecticut State Library Archives

The Season of Summer Reading Planning

Linda Williams, Children's Services Librarian

We are well into the season where public libraries are hard at work on their plans for summer reading programs (SRPs). Long a major library service for children (Caroline Hewins mentioned in the 1/00 issue of The CONNector, was one of the *first* to bring SRPs to libraries in the early 1900s), the significance of their contribution to reading and summer retention of skills is now getting some recognition.

The value of library SRPs to children has been shown by studies on children's summer reading. We now know that participation in SRPs can result in increased vocabulary (where non-participating counterparts show a decrease) and increased comprehension (where non-participating counterparts show a decrease). This is easily understood when it is considered that anything one does well requires practice. Library SRPs work on the motivational aspect of reading by giving different forms of positive reinforcement for children *practicing* their reading. Schools play a large role in promoting library SRPs to children. In at least one Connecticut town, following a summer where the library program was not promoted, reading scores did not increase the way the school expected. The following spring, that school was the *first* to invite library staff in to promote the library SRP.

While some states design statewide SRPs that libraries can adapt to their particular needs, Connecticut libraries generally choose one of two methods for SRP planning. Regional groups work together to produce regional programs, or individual libraries design programs that fit their particular communities. The State Library role has been to provide planning materials such as LSTA funded statewide SRPs (Willimantic Library Service Center) and supplemental theme materials (Middletown and Willimantic Library Service Centers).

Children's library professionals know the importance of the role of SRPs and hope for further future support through research.

"Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among the stones."

Charlotte Bronte, **Jane Eyre**

In Memoriam

On March 13, the State Library and Connecticut genealogical research community learned that Warren Buchanan passed away. Most who knew about his medical problems were thankful that the pain that he endured was over, but we went through our tasks knowing that we had lost a friend. On the surface, he could appear to be a supremely, unshakable skeptic and outraged member of the public. Often he stated that he could not believe that the State of Connecticut did not spend more money to preserve and make available its treasures of historical records and genealogical resources. He had the strength of conviction to stare incredulously and ask "Why not?!"

Warren channeled his energies into legislative action. He was one of the most indefatigable lobbyists on behalf of the State Library. Concerned about the condition of historical records at the State Library and in town halls, he conducted research on programs in other states supporting the preservation of archival records by creating a fund from recording fees on land recordings. He sincerely believed that Connecticut should have such a program and simply could not believe that a State as rich as Connecticut would not enact enabling legislation. Yes, his pride was hurt. Years ago, he was instrumental in

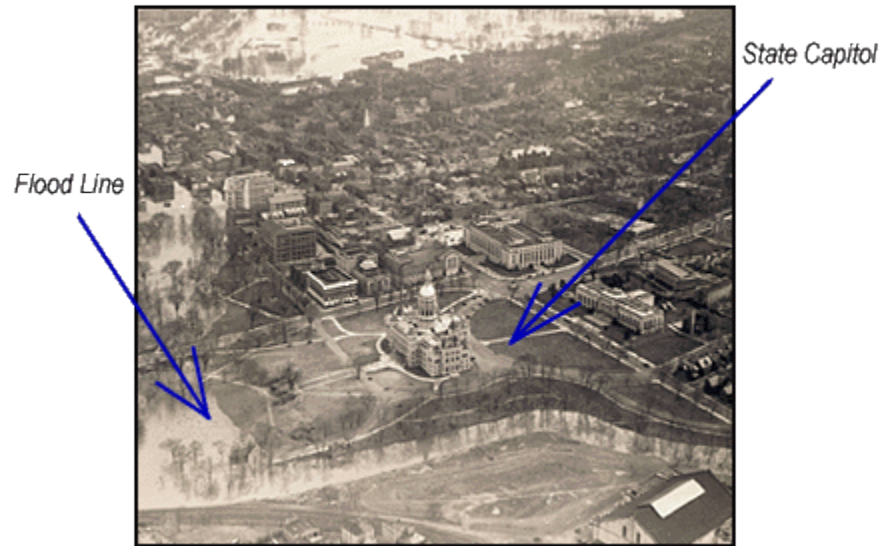


Goodbye to
Warren Buchanan
1929-2000

persuading a State Senator to introduce a bill setting up such a fund. To him, the outcome of this legislative initiative was crucial for researchers of Connecticut family and local history. This is the third session in which a version of the original bill is under consideration. Warren Buchanan did not waste his efforts. The General Assembly has not yet approved the legislation, but many observers agree that it has its best chance of passage.

Regrettably Warren will not be around to witness the decision of the legislature or to celebrate if the bill passes. However, those who knew him will not soon forget this kind man who loved Connecticut and believed that its libraries and historical repositories were the best in the nation. He was a friend, indeed!

Hartford Flood, March 1936



Picture from the Connecticut State Library Archives

Ella Fairchild Burr to Daughter, Elena, describing flood in her March 25 letter, 1936

[In March 1936, Ella Fairchild Burr was President of the Connecticut Women's Temperance Union which had an office at 36 Pearl St. Her husband, Louis St. Clair Burr, also had a real estate office at that address, and the couple ran another business, the Cleveland Legal Blank Service from there. The Burrs lived in Manchester at the time. During the Flood of 1936, they could not return to their house and used the office on Pearl St. as temporary quarters.]

Dear Elena:

This letter may be as long reaching you as the other for mail conditions must be very bad. No trains had gone beyond Hartford either north or east for a week. We hope this afternoon we are going to get across the [Bulkeley] bridge...

Even this morning we had to walk up the stairs and the only light in Father's office [at 36 Pearl St.] is a barn lantern. It is certainly lucky that I had this office for a refuge. They say a main is broken on Pearl Street and that is why this building and those around it even down to the [Hartford] Times building [on Prospect St.] are without light and power. It is astounding what it does to everyone, even those who have suffered no injury or direct loss. I told one of the girls in the bank this morning that I felt like a ghost moving around among ghosts. However, it will soon be over, but people must never stop talking about it in this generation.

However, I don't think there is any cause for regret not to be in it for it certainly was depressing. No street lights, although I did not see that phase of it, but yesterday morning we could only get as far as the Hartford Hospital because we could not pass the line of militia [Connecticut National Guard]. They were posted on every avenue inot [sic.] the city to keep the traffic out of the distressed area. You know how beautiful the new [SNET]

telephone building is facing the [Bushnell] park. That had water all over the first floor. Hotel Bond first floor will have to be done over and what it has done to Myron's church in the Meadows we don't know, but all the beautiful interior must be ruined. The Central Baptist [Church on Main St.] had to close because the basement was flooded and put out the fires. There will certainly be work enough to be done if anyone has money to pay for it.

Our lights have just come on and do we feel happy. I went up to Morgan Street corner this Noon and saw cars passing over the [Bulkeley] bridge so we think we shall soon be home.

I hope you are well and happy.....Your loving, "Mama"

William Webb: The Life and Times of an African American Soldier from Connecticut in the American Civil War

Richard Roberts, Unit head, History & Genealogy

"I'm Free! After so many years of being bound in chains, now truthfully, I am free! Free from slavery! Freedom! Sounds nice, doesn't it?" With that opening, Kevin Johnson, a member of the State Library's History and Genealogy Unit, begins a monologue depicting the story of William Webb, a private in the 29th (Colored) Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. As a tribute to the more than 1,700 African Americans who served from Connecticut during the Civil War, Johnson spent much of February, Black History Month, performing at libraries, schools, historical societies, church groups, and other non-profit organizations across the state.

Based on research by members of the History and Genealogy staffing using original vital records, court records, military records and other materials in the State Library's History and Genealogy Unit and the State Archives, William Webb's story begins with his boyhood in Connecticut. It includes some early brushes with the law, which lead to imprisonment at Wethersfield State Prison, and his eventual enlistment in 29th Regiment on December 22, 1863. Johnson goes on to trace the history of the Regiment through Annapolis, Maryland; Hilton Head and Beaufort, South Carolina; and Bermuda Hundred, Virginia through its muster out in Hartford in November, 1865. "The officers," says Johnson, "reported back that the men of the 29th and other Colored Troops fought with great coolness and bravery. Freedom! Sounds good, doesn't it?"

While the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, depicted in the movie *Glory*, is probably the best known, the "Colored Troops" comprised over 160 cavalry, artillery, infantry, and engineer units from 25 states and territories, including the District of Columbia. In total, there were approximately 200,000 African American soldiers and 100 officers who served, including both free Black men and ex-slaves. Although some states had formed African American units earlier, the enlistment of African American soldiers was officially authorized by an act of Congress in July 1862. In May 1863 the War Department established the Bureau of Colored Troops. The 29th Regiment, along with the 8th and 45th Regiments, United States Colored Infantry, constituted the Second Brigade, Third Colored Division, Tenth Corps.

Check out the information on [Civil War](#) and [African American](#) resources available online at the State Library, or contact the History and Genealogy Unit, 860-757-6580.



Kevin Johnson in a reenactment of a Civil War battle
Wickham Park,
Manchester, Connecticut

The tax which will be paid for education is not more than the thousand part of what will be paid if we leave the people in ignorance.

Thomas Jefferson

"Connecticut for the Union"

Joanne Turschman, Library Specialist

During April 2000, The Museum of Connecticut History will open its exhibit on Connecticut's involvement in the Civil War. Titled "*Connecticut for the Union*", there will be a vast array of materials on display, drawn from both public and private collections. Interest in this subject is already piqued by Connecticut Public Television's airing in March of their special, *New England in the Civil War*.

Our museum administrator, Dean E. Nelson assisted CPTV as a special consultant on this project. An authority on the U.S. Civil War, Dean participated in the Civil War Centennial. He collects, studies and makes his own uniforms, accouterments and shoes, shoots with the North-South Skirmish Association, tours sites, transcribes soldiers' letters and has written on winter camp architecture, and the Union army shirt of standard size and make. *Hardtack and Coffee; or the Haversack's Delights*, in the summer 1999 issue of *Military Collector & Historian* (Vol. 51 no. 2) is Dean's most recently published work.

"*Connecticut for the Union*" has been an ambitious project for the museum staff, and promises to be an exciting and educational activity for New England residents.



In replica uniform and equipments of a Connecticut infantry private, Dean Nelson poses in a statuary niche at the Connecticut State Library.

Employee Recognition Awards for Years of State Service

Presented on March 15, 2000 in Memorial Hall, Museum of Connecticut History.

10 Years

Richard Gagne
Ursula Hunt
Janis Lefkowitz
Nilda Martinez
John Siswick
Carol Taylor

15 Years

Mary Engels
Cheryl Fox
Nancy Lieffort
Howard Miller
Matthew Pelletier

20 Years

Elizabeth Anargiro
Teresa Consoli
Kathleen DeMeo
Nancy Peluso
Pat Walker

25 Years

Denise Jernigan

30 Years

Nancy Blount
Leon Shatkin
Joseph Starkowski

Connecticut Public Libraries - New, Expanded or Renovated

Chaplin Public Library

Mary Louise Jensen, Building Consultant

On January 15, 2000, the Chaplin Public Library was dedicated. Mary Louise Jensen, Building Consultant at the Connecticut State Library, was one of the speakers at the dedication ceremonies. Chaplin is a small rural town with a population of 2,048 located in Windham County, 6 miles northeast of Willimantic.

The new library shares a converted vacant elementary school with the Chaplin Senior Center. The library's portion of the building is 6,405 square feet. The total cost of the library portion of the project was \$650,000, partially funded with a \$200,000 State Public Library Construction Grant and a \$100,000 LSCA Title II Construction Grant.



Photo by Steve Lakatos

As you enter the library, your attention is drawn to four carved wood support columns through which you view the paladin window at the other end of the library. The wood paneled circulation desk matches the columns creating a unified architectural feature. This desk allows the staff excellent visual control of the public areas. From the entrance you can also see all of the collections - reference, nonprint, and circulation desk to your right, children's to your left, and adult book stacks straight ahead. To create an open library space with natural light, some of the modifications that Kenneth Boroson, the architect, did were to remove the classroom walls and replace the windows, lighting, ceiling, and carpeting. Near the entrance there are restrooms and a meeting room that seats fifty. (The community center also has an additional meeting

room).

The move from the old library, built in 1911, on top of a hill with no parking, no meeting room, no staff working space, and no running water to a modern well-designed building with parking allows Chaplin to provide much improved library service.

Connecticut Award for Excellence in Public Library Architecture

The Connecticut Library Association, the Connecticut State Library and the Connecticut Chapter of the American Institute of Architects are pleased to announce a joint awards program for the design of public libraries in Connecticut.

To encourage excellence in the architectural design and functional planning of Connecticut public library buildings, we are offering a certificate and cash award for a public library building project in Connecticut designed by an architect practicing and licensed in Connecticut. The project may be for a new building, an addition, renovation or conversion to library use. An award will be made in October 2000.

Entries will be in the form of photographs, plans, drawings and evaluation of functional objectives achieved. The jury will consist of two librarians and two architects from out of state. An entry form with \$30 must be returned by May 1, 2000. Upon receipt of the entry form a full application packet will be mailed to you. Final applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on June 16, 2000.

[More information and an entry form](#) are available online or contact [Mary Louise Jensen](#) at 1-800-253-7412.

Organizing State Government Web Resources The Cooperative Online Resource Catalog Pilot Project

Julie Schwartz and Stephen Slovasky, Information Services Unit Heads

"The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."

F. Scott Fitzgerald

If we accept Fitzgerald's premise, then every Internet user must necessarily be a candidate for the Genius Award. For how often has one's search of a commercial Web engine led to not one, nor even two, but a myriad of opposing ideas, enough to disable the functionality of this or any planet's highest intelligence? The situation is familiar: you have identified your information need, and you know that the information you want is out there somewhere, but it can take hours to discover it. Even then, the information's reliability is frequently suspicious. It happens to you, and it happens to those of us at the State Library whose business it is to provide State Government information that is straightforwardly organized and coherently accessible.

Libraries have been exercising their traditional roles as evaluators, selectors, and organizers of information on the Web since its inception. Since January of 1999, they have been assisted by a new set of tools developed by OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). Instead of searching through hundreds or thousands of hits retrieved by a search engine, or even dozens of hits evaluated by a commercial directory service such as Yahoo, we can now search a database of Web sites evaluated and selected by Web specialists in over 200 libraries throughout

the world. Moreover, these sites have been cataloged as well, and are retrievable using the same specific searches as in a library catalog: author, title, subject, keyword, and other fields.

Cooperative Online Resource Catalog (CORC) at the State Library

The Connecticut State Library is responsible, under the Connecticut General Statutes, for providing our citizens with access to state government information. The Library has been collecting and cataloging the printed reports of Connecticut government for almost 150 years; now a new set of tools is required for describing and retrieving Web publications. Any records created to describe Web publications must be transferable to our online catalog.

OCLC's CORC is a collaborative venture of 240 international libraries that are retrieving and describing outstanding Internet resources. By applying traditional library skills using new electronic means, these libraries are collectively improving access to and retrievability of Internet resources in ways not feasible with commercial search engines. In the first step a collection development librarian selects quality resources in his/her subject specialization. Then OCLC CORC software is used to "harvest" these selected Web sites, generating key metadata descriptors from information contained in the electronic document. Another librarian reviews and edits these automatically assigned descriptors. Last, a cataloger adds subject headings, authorizes name headings, and performs further bibliographic editing. OCLC has also developed software to streamline the creation of Pathfinders. Without knowing HTML, a librarian can quickly create annotated guides that describe both Web resources and items physically held by the library.

Most CORC resources are described using the Dublin Core metadata set. Dublin Core is a 15-element set of data descriptors, "MARC Lite." One of the key benefits to using CORC is that records created in Dublin Core can be expanded to MARC records and transferred to the library's online catalog. Because many of the elements can be assigned automatically by OCLC's software, it streamlines creation of descriptive records for Web resources. There is, for example, a Descriptor field used in the traditional role of an annotation. This Descriptor element can greatly enhance the chances of a Web site being retrieved.

CORC Implementation at the Connecticut State Library

The Connecticut State Library CORC team has recently completed a pilot project creating Dublin Core records for about 250 Web resources, primarily those produced by Connecticut State agencies. From these and other CORC-created records, seven Pathfinders on public policy topics (campaign finance reform, school readiness, asthma in children, etc.) were created.

These Pathfinders feature:

- Embedded subject searches of our online catalog.
- The presentation of Web documents and links to catalog records in the same interface.
- Hard-to-find statistical data on a topic in one place, whether federal or state, Web or hardcopy.

By using OCLC's CORC service, the cataloged Web publications are accessible in a database that contains only materials selected by libraries and which has all the specific searching capabilities of the library catalog. This enhances its usefulness far beyond that of a search engine. The door is also left open to the possibility of exporting these records into our online catalog. For the immediate future, CORC and the Dublin Core metadata set will not supplant the MARC-based OCLC WorldCat database; far faster and more reliable Internet connections in our libraries must come first. In the meantime, OCLC plans to implement a "production" version of CORC in July, 2000, thus providing libraries with a window looking out upon the descriptive cataloging environment of the future. [Find out more about CORC and to look at the results of our pilot project.](#)

Special thanks to the State Library CORC Team: Cheryl Fox, Indexer; Al Palko and Denise Jernigan, Resource Selectors; Lynne Newell, Director, Division of Information Services; and Chris Hickey, Webmaster
Editor's note: Occasionally, due to the importance of a CSL project, we will publish special reports

Internet Privacy Protection for Children

Joanne Turschman, Library Specialist

On October 20, 1999, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued the final rule implementing the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA)*. The rule, [16 CFR Part 312](#), was enacted following an FTC survey of 212 commercial Web sites for children. The survey found that 89 percent of those sites collected personal information from children, only 24 percent posted privacy policies, and only 1 percent required parental consent to the collection or disclosure of children's information.

The new rule applies to commercial Web sites and online services that collect information from children under 13. It requires them to post a detailed privacy notice, explaining how such information is used, and whether the information is disclosed to third parties. The site cannot condition a child's participation in an activity based on the amount of information the child discloses. The notice must state that a parent can review and have deleted the child's personal information, and refuse to permit further collection or use of the information.

Moreover, sites will have to obtain "verifiable parental consent" before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children. Web sites can adopt a "sliding scale" which will allow them to vary their consent methods based on the intended use of the information. The rule includes exceptions to the requirement. For example, no consent is required to respond to a one time request from a child for "homework help." The rule will become effective on April 21, 2000, allowing time for operators to comply with the requirements.