Perspective

Looking at Liblogs: The Great Middle

Two years ago, it was plausible (if extremely foolish) for a high-profile librarian to make fun of blogs in general, including blogs from libraries and by library people. A year ago, there were many such blogs, but relatively few with substantial readerships. Now, there are certainly more than a thousand blogs from libraries and by library people. At least three ALA divisions have blogs; that number will grow.

I’m guessing most readers already subscribe to, or know of, the big-name liblogs—those that have been around since the last century, those that come from high-profile people, those that have made names and reputations for themselves.

Last year’s most widely read Cites & Insights essay was almost certainly INVESTIGATING THE BIBLIOBLOGOSPHERE (C&I 5:10, September 2005, http://citesandinsights.info/v5i10b.htm). It’s even the second most widely read essay this year, albeit far behind the favorite (LIBRARY 2.0 AND “LIBRARY 2.0,” with almost 16,000 total downloads as of early August 2006).

That PERSPECTIVE, inspired by Jon Garfunkel’s “Social Media Scorecard,” was an informal investigation of 60 blogs by library people, blogs I perceived as having wide “reach.” I identified 238 initial candidates, measured the “reach” of those blogs, and came up with a set of 60. I ran various quantifiable tests (metrics) on those 60 blogs, reported standout blogs for each metric, and added one or two brief paragraphs discussing each 60 blog. I listed the blogs in descending order by reach—as I measured reach. Most, if not all, of those blogs are among the “big-name liblogs”—ones you’re likely to know about.

Along with a gratifying number of positive responses to the piece, I heard criticism on a variety of grounds—especially regarding the significance of “reach” and the hazards in ranking blogs. It didn’t help matters that some people linking to or discussing the article referred to it as “Walt Crawford’s Top 50 Blogs” or something of the sort—even though I tried to make it clear that this was a Top 50, not the Top 50. That turns out to be a distinction requiring more explanation than it’s worth.

By the time the dust settled, I knew I wanted to do something similar this year—but I wanted to do it differently. In the past few months, thinking about blogs has become more complex, especially as feeds and aggregators have become so easy and popular.

Changing the Name and Scope

I’m not fond of “biblioblogosphere”—and even if the term’s OK, I don’t think it fits this group of blogs. For
one thing, there are loads of “biblio” blogs about books quite apart from the realm of blogs written by library people. For another, I continue to exclude official blogs, those explicitly identified with a library or organization. I’m using liblogs, not because it’s catchy but because it’s short. If you want to think of this essay as “BIBLIOBLOGOSPHERE 2: AVOIDING THE A LIST,” be my guest.

Inviting feedback
I used Walt at Random as a support mechanism for this year’s look. When I decided to do it, I invited direct feedback as follows (excerpted):

“Want to opt out? If you just don’t want your blog involved at all, here’s what you need to do: Send email to citesandinsights@gmail.com or waltcrawford@gmail.com with the subject heading Liblog optout, and give the name of your blog and an email address I can use to verify that it’s you and not someone else. You don’t need to provide a reason…If you opt out, your blog just won’t appear. Period. Email should reach me by July 15, 2006.

“Usage numbers? I’d like to try to correlate Bloglines subscription counts with direct/indirect readership. You can help, if you have access to stats for your weblog…Here’s what you can do to help:

“Find two figures for May 2006: The average sessions per day (or total sessions: I can divide by 31), which is almost always easy to find, and the unique visitors during the month—or “unique IP addresses” if that’s what you have…Email should reach me by July 31, 2006.

“That’s it. I hope not to get any of the first category of email, but will honor whatever I do get (and can verify). I hope to get at least 10-15 of the second category…

“Thanks. Oh, by the way, if you have a liblog—not an official library blog—that you think I’ll overlook because it’s not listed in any of the typical places, you could also send me appropriate email.”

I received four opt-outs. I’m confident none of them were hoaxes. Given the decisions I’d already made about this year’s project, the opt-outs didn’t affect the final list of blogs. I received 15 responses on usage numbers, some offering only one of the two numbers. I discuss those results near the end of this PERSPECTIVE, had to be in English.

I fine-tuned criteria this year. There’s no limit on group size, but I eliminated official blogs of all sorts. There had to be at least one posting during March through May 2006. I require at least one feed that Bloglines can recognize—but I dropped the English-only criterion. I’ve been loose about the “official” criterion (is BlogJunction an official blog?). Dropping the English-language criterion was easier because I also decided not to comment on the voice and primary focus of individual blogs. You can run metrics on a blog without being able to read it.

The biggest change has to do with reach and readership. To the extent that an observer can gauge reach and readership, I wanted to avoid the “A list” in favor of a broader group of liblogs in the Great Middle. What’s the Great Middle? It’s the middle of the power-law curve: Blogs with more than a handful of readers, which garner some attention but aren’t among the most popular in the field. There’s no clear definition of that middle, just as there’s no clear definition of reach or readership. In this case, it’s a little less than half of the liblogs that meet other criteria (and that I could find), omitting roughly the most widely read sixth and least widely read third. “Roughly” is the right word in all cases.

Building the List
If you’ve been following Walt at Random, you can skip most of this section and go on to “Results and Metrics.” For that matter, if you don’t care how I arrived at a sample that I do not claim to be statistically meaningful, complete, or anything other than “a big chunk of the Great Middle,” you can skip this section (although I throw some commentary in along the way).

Initial cut
I started with my existing Bloglines library-related set, which had grown to 240 subscriptions. My guess was that this set included most of the most widely read English-language blogs and a decent sampling of slightly more obscure ones. Bloglines has made it much easier to determine the sum of all feeds: When you click on the “Sub with Bloglines” button on the Firefox bookmarks toolbar, it shows the subscription count for each feed. I recorded the sum of all feeds (except comment-only feeds) for each blog, prepared a first-cut spreadsheet, and removed roughly the top
10% and bottom 10%, leaving 200 blogs with 16 to 689 Bloglines subscriptions.

**Expanding the candidate pool**

I then checked blogs from three sources, only one of them the same as last year’s. I didn’t use LISFeeds because the new user interface has no obvious way to print out a list. I didn’t use the Libdex Library Weblogs list because it seems to be stagnant. I kept the Dmoz/Open Directory subdirectory of LIS Weblogs, although it’s somewhat stagnant as well. The most important new source is the LISWiki Weblogs page, but I also downloaded the PubSub libraries list.

I began with LISWiki blogs not already in my Bloglines list, then went through Open Directory blogs that didn't show up elsewhere, and finally picked up new items from PubSub. I added blogs with 16 to 689 total Bloglines subscriptions. While my intent was to avoid anything without postings during the March-May 2006 period, the subscription process made it easy to pick up extras.

If there’s a broad claim I’m willing to make based on this process, it’s that Bloglines users (among library types) tend to prefer Atom feeds: the Atom count was usually (not always) higher than alternative feeds.

Here’s what I found:

- **LISWiki Weblogs page**, blogs new to me in the Individual and non-English sections: 112 had fewer than 16 subscriptions (a bunch more, including a slew of Persian blogs, had no subscriptions). Seven had more than 689 subscriptions. Sixty-three showed no post later than February 28, or had no feed, or weren’t really blogs. I added 149 new blogs to the candidate pool.

- **DMOZ/Open Directory**, those not looked at in the first two steps: Seven had too few subscriptions. None had too many. Twenty-three were missing in action, had no feed, or were otherwise ineligible. I added four blogs to the pool—but I’d already considered most of these last year.

- **PubSub library list members that hadn’t already been looked at**, plus blogs whose creators sent me information about them: 18 had too few subscribers, none had too many, eight didn’t have feeds or lacked contemporary posts. I added another 15 blogs to the pool.

That left me with 368 candidates—far too many even for this expanded essay. I checked something like 650 liblogs in all, of which 554 are still active, aren’t official or corporate, have an RSS feed, and have at least one subscription.

Five hundred fifty-four—as compared to 231 last year. Even with non-English blogs included that represents a doubling in liblogs—or at least a doubling in visible liblogs. LISWiki makes an enormous difference (and I hope people keep adding liblogs to LISWiki!). I’m not sure how many of those 554 started within the past year. Of the 213 in the final study, 59 (28%) began after June 2005 (the cutoff for last year’s study).

**Draining the pool**

I had to cut more. There are many ways to cut, and I didn’t find “natural breaks.” Using “half taken from the upper middle” as my target, I eliminated the most widely subscribed 90 and least widely subscribed 183 from the original 554, leaving 281 blogs with 19 to 196 Bloglines subscriptions. Note that only 25 of last year’s candidates had more than 196 Bloglines subscriptions. Unquestionably, liblogs across a broad range have become more popular.

I wanted to cut that list a little more, but I needed more than Bloglines. I did the same set of “reach” measures as in 2005, with one minor tweak and one significant addition. Bloglines OPML output translates directly into a spreadsheet that made it easy to search for links: Highlight the URL cell, copy, paste into the “link:” search, and go. As with last year, I checked link: counts in Google and MSN Search—but this time I used Yahoo! instead of AllTheWeb. I then added one figure that I believe is more meaningful than any of these three: the visible result from Yahoo!

What’s the visible result? The number of sites Yahoo! shows you with its “very similar” algorithm active. Anyone who's spent time looking at web search engines knows that any result count greater than 1,000 represents a claim, because the search engines won’t show you more than 1,000 results. In practice, deduped results usually aren’t anywhere near the 1,000-result limit. Yahoo! will show 100 results per page and give an accurate count of results displayed on the last page it shows; it also offers larger link: results than the other two engines. That made it an obvious choice. The deduped number is nice because it reduces the echo-chamber effect of blogrolls, where the presence of a blog on another blog's blogroll may result in hundreds of apparent links, only one of which is significant.
Consider the three raw link: results, noting that I had already removed 90 blogs likely to have very high link: results (and nearly 200 likely to have relatively low link: results):

- **Google:** The highest number was 5,370 (compared to 9,430 last year); several had no link: results at all.
- **MSN:** The highest number was 34,669, compared to 76,675 last year; again, several had no link: results.
- **Yahoo!** Every candidate had at least five Yahoo! links; the high was 179,000 (compared to 449,000 last year).

These numbers don't mean much of anything, particularly given the skew of blogrolls. What can you do with ratios of 2,600:1 (Yahoo!) even after you've eliminated extremes? I'd concluded that last year's Reach numbers weren't very good. Using that same formula yielded a smaller range this year—from a high of 13,497 to a low of 84, a ratio of 161:1, considerably smaller than last year's 7,778:1 but still too broad given that this year's 161:1 omits the liblogs likely to have the highest figures. A slightly modified version of last year's formula, using adjusted deflators, yielded a range of 10,590 to 82, a ratio of 128:1.

The “visible Yahoo!” number had a good feel to it (and an upper limit of 1,000). I calculated a new Reach factor, adding the visible Yahoo! count to twice the Bloglines subscriber total. That yielded a high of 1,387 and a low of 51—a ratio of 27:1.

This time, there were obvious outliers. By dropping nine blogs with new Reach factors above 700 and 21 below 70, I had a ratio of only 10:1 for a candidate pool of 251 blogs.

**Doing the metrics**

There’s some indication that Bloglines subscriptions account for about half of all aggregation. If that’s true, the final candidate pool includes blogs with roughly 40 to 400 readers through feeds—and maybe an equal number of direct readers (only the bloggers would know!). That’s a good “medium-sized” region for library blogs—enough readers to be interesting, but not a mass readership even within librarianship.

The next step was metrics and individual examination. Last year, I did detailed work on 60 blogs; this year, I dealt with more than four times as many. Somehow, it all worked.

In the process of running metrics, I removed 38 blogs for various reasons. Some turned out to be dead (I’d missed them in the first round), with no posts after February 2006. Some were official blogs and a couple had no real relationship to libraries or librarians. A few began in June 2006, making them too new for this study—and a couple had posts before March 2006 and posts after May 2006, but none during that quarter. Two distinctly worthwhile blogs—MaisonBisson.com and rawbrick.net—are set up in such a way that I found it impossible to take any metrics. I reluctantly deleted these two from the pool, but people looking for new blogs in this essay should definitely consider those two as well.

The final pool represented in this article is 213 blogs—almost as many as in Pew’s latest study of bloggers. The modified Reach numbers narrowed during the metrics pass. Although the Bloglines range stayed 19 to 196, the modified Reach ranged from a low of 72 to a high of 688, for a range of 9.56:1. As to the metrics used:

- I dropped a couple of last year's metrics. I'm so discouraged about popularity contests and echo-chamber effects that I didn't even look at BlogPulse or Technorati or similar sites. I also didn't worry about the number of link-based postings or the size of the blogroll.
- I recorded the highest number of comments for any single post (and adjusted one blog's results for a serious spamment problem) I also recorded the post title for that post (if the blog had comments) and for the “first March post,” where “first” depends on how archives are arranged.
- In a second pass, I looked at the number of direct and indirect blogrolls (“indirect blogrolls” being links to other pages or to Bloglines), whether the typeface for blog entries was sans serif or serif and whether text was justified, what program was used for the blog, whether the blog has a Creative Commons license, and unusual color combinations.

Those results are summarized below.

I don’t use Reach at all in these metrics, whether last year’s Reach or the new, more plausible, Reach factor. I also don’t use the Bloglines subscriber count. If you wish to explore those metrics for the 213 blogs in the final group, the spreadsheet is available at http://waltcrawford.name/logs6reach.xls. That’s the last time Reach will be mentioned in this article. Individual blogs are discussed in alphabetic order.
Results and Metrics

What we have here are 213 liblogs from a population of around 550 active liblogs represented in the directories and wikis I looked at. I believe the set is broadly representative of Great Middle liblogs. This is a big bunch of liblogs, almost as many as the total possible candidates a year ago.

It’s also a good bunch of liblogs. Sturgeon’s Law simply does not apply to liblogs in the Great Middle. Sure, a few liblogs are badly written—but not that many. Sure, a few are primarily personal—but “personal” blogs can and do become professional blogs overnight, and I found few that are only personal. (Not that there’s anything wrong with personality or personal blogs; I agree with Steven Cohen that it’s good to see the personality and, as they find appropriate, personal life of a blogger represented alongside other concerns.) A handful of blogs here seem primarily concerned with right-wing political slants on issues—and are a handful color everything with left-wing politics. There’s writing some people might consider offensive, and in at least one case I found that writing revealing, thoughtful, and concerned.

I was deeply offended personally by one (and only one) post within this group of blogs during this March-May period, as the blogger dismissed 27 years of my life and the creative work of several dozen colleagues with a flip sentence or two. That blogger appears to be young; with luck, he’ll grow up. (Of course it was a he.) I found many bloggers with whom I’d disagree on some issues. Not incidentally, I’ll be slow to remove those bloggers from my Bloglines list, because they make me think.

If these liblogs are any indication—how can they not be?—library people who blog are mostly thoughtful, intelligent and caring. Not always, not equally, but on the whole it’s a safe bet. I started out with too many liblogs in Bloglines. I now have almost two hundred more—and, other than the ones I can’t read, it will be difficult to reduce that list. It may be easier to off some of the big names….or not.

The metrics

Here’s the new set as reflected in the final 213:

- **Starting date (from internal evidence):**
  None of this year’s candidates started before 2001, and only two began in 2001. Fourteen began in 2002; 41 in 2003; 51 in 2004; 47 in the first half of 2005; 35 in the second half of 2005; and 23 in the first half of 2006. The median is December 2004—as of the end of June 2006, half the blogs are at least 18 months old, half younger.

- **Frequency of posts, March-May 2006:** The most prolific blog had 371 posts during the three-month period. Several had only one post. The average was 45 posts, but the median was 27.

- **Number of comments, March-May 2006:** 41 of the blogs either don’t allow comments or had none during this period. The highest comment count (excluding spam) is 798. This year’s average is 35 comments, but the median is only 10.

- **Comments per post:** I saw no reason to exclude zero-comment cases. The high this year is 9.63 comments per post. The average is 0.93 comments per post; the median, 0.42.

- **Total length of posts, March-May 2006:** I was unable to determine the total length on 15 of the blogs because of the way they’re archived or stored. Among the 198 where this metric and the next were feasible, the average is 11,412 words. The median is 5,843 words. Consider the standouts: Two blogs nearly tied at 144,809 and 144,504 words each!

- **Average length of posts:** The average post this year (the average of all averages) is 268 words long; the mean, 225. This year’s most essay-oriented blog averages 1,463 words per post. At the other extreme, three bloggers averaged fewer than 51 words per post.

- **Blogrolls:** 111 have blogrolls of some sort (not always with that name) on the home page (52%); another 18 (8%) have indirect blogrolls (usually a link to a Bloglines subscription). 40% do not have blogrolls.

- **Typeface and alignment:** 136 (64%) use sans serif type set left-aligned. Fifty-four (25%) use serif type, left aligned. Twenty-two (10%) use sans serif but with justified type. One blog uses serif text, justified.

- **Color usage:** Most blogs—65%—use black text on white or near-white backgrounds. Forty-seven use colored backgrounds that are light enough not to impair readability very much (although some people may find polka-dot backgrounds unsettling). Fourteen (6.6%) use dark colored backgrounds (six of them black), usually with white type, which may be
trendy but encourages the reader to stick strictly with feeds.

- **Creative Commons:** 49 blogs (23%) have CC logos on the home page yielding some copyright. I didn’t check the actual license in each case, but I believe BY-NC and BY-NC-SA to be most common.

- **Software:** 106 (50%) of the blogs use Blogger, almost all of them freely hosted on Blogspot. WordPress comes in a strong second, with 52 blogs (24%). Six Apart products come in third and fourth: 19 Movable Type (9%) and 12 TypePad (6%). In 26 cases, the software was either a lesser-known product or not identified on the home page.

**Comparisons to 2005**

These comparisons may not make much sense. After all, last year’s investigation looked toward blogs with the broadest readership; this year’s looks at a different slice (with some overlap).

- Three of last year’s blogs are older than any of this year’s. Almost half of last year’s blogs began in 2003; this year’s group skews younger.
- Last year’s blogs typically had a lot more posts than this year’s. I believe that represents changing trends in blog authorship as much as it does the different slice of liblogs.
- A higher percentage of this year’s blogs allows comments—and five of this year’s blogs have more comments than the highest of last year’s. On the other hand, the average and median number of comments are both lower this year.
- The most conversational blogs this year are much more conversational than last year’s peak—and the average comments per post is a little higher.
- The average total length of posts during one quarter is a little lower this year. On the other hand, four of this year’s blogs are longer in total than last year’s longest; two are more than twice as long.
- On average, posts are a little longer this year than last and the median is significantly higher.

**Category Standouts**

To keep these tables to reasonable lengths, I’ve defined “standout” more strictly than in 2005. None of these measures means anything about a blog’s quality or significance, but they do represent significant deviations from the norm.

**Starting date**

These blogs were at least three years old when the study began.

- **2001:** March, Random Access Mazar; October, The Rabid Librarian’s Ravings in the Wind.
- **2002:** January, EngLib; March, Wigblog; April, Biblog - Bibliothek og IT, diglet; May, Helenes hengekøye; July, Lady Crumpet’s Armoire; August, The Aardvark Speaks, etc., Internetsøgning; October, blogdriverswaltz.com, Confessions of a Science Librarian, indie rock librarian; November, Retrofitted Librarian; December, DrWeb’s Domain.
- **2003:** January, At Home He’s a Tourist, Book Kitten, Sites and Soundbytes, That Rabbit Girl; February, Archivalia, Chronicles of Bean, internetbrus.com, Max Power Blogs, The Misadventures of Super Librarian, Pattern Recognition; March, STLQ, Tangognat; April, Bibliotekarens bibliotek, Creative Librarian, infosophy: The Playful Antiquarian, Socio-technological Rendering of Information, UK Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Blog; May, Library Monk, Mermaid, Ref Grunt; June: DIY Librarian, Librarian, Library Autonomous Zone, Mentat, nichole’s auxiliary storage, The Ten Thousand Year Blog.

**Frequency of posts, March-May 2006**

These blogs have more than twice as many posts as the average for all 213 blogs (and more than three times as many as the median).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Posts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Fuse #8 Production</td>
<td>371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slaw</td>
<td>323</td>
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<td>medinfo weblog</td>
<td>240</td>
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<td>The Rabid Librarian’s Ravings in the Wind</td>
<td>236</td>
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<td>Travelin’ Librarian</td>
<td>235</td>
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<td>Out of the Jungle</td>
<td>225</td>
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<td>Mermaid</td>
<td>195</td>
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<td>Archivalia</td>
<td>178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids Lit</td>
<td>170</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrWeb’s Domain</td>
<td>163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sites and Soundbytes</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Mistress’s Place</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text &amp; Blog</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>affordance.info</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Boy</td>
<td>121</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digitization 101</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Blog</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Overlord</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gypsy Librarian</td>
<td>107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Boomer Librarian</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Wandering Eyre</td>
<td>98</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUseful Info</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional-Lurker: Comments by an academic in cyberspace</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total comments, March-May 2006

These blogs have at least twice as many comments as average (noting that the average includes blogs with no comments), or seven times the median.

A Fuse #8 Production
The Zenformation Professional
Mermaid
Slaw
Ruminations
...the thoughts are broken...
TangognaT
The Misadventures of Super_Librarian
The Aardvark Speaks
Chez Shoes
A Wandering Eyre
Tinfoil + Raccoon
The Vampire Librarian
Text & Blog
Tales from the “Liberry”
indie rock librarian
Larocque and Roll
Wouter over het Web!
See Also
affordance.info
Travelin’ Librarian
The Illustrated Librarian
Library TechBytes
Lady Crumpet’s Armoire
ISHUSH
Libraries in the NHS
T. Scott

Conversational intensity, March-May 2006

These blogs have the most comments per post, at least twice the overall average (and almost five times the overall median).

The Zenformation Professional
The Gay Librarian
The Vampire Librarian
InfoTangle
Library Bitch
The Green Kangaroo
digitize everything
Quedam cuisuudam
The Misadventures of Super_Librarian
Ruminations
indie rock librarian
The Illustrated Librarian
The Aardvark Speaks
Larocque and Roll
Tinfoil + Raccoon

Most comments on a single post

The average for this new measure was 5; the median, 4. These blogs had a post with at least twice as many comments as the most-commented post on the “average blog.”

See Also
Total length of posts, March-May 2006

So many blogs have a lot of content that this table is restricted to those with at least 150% of the average total length (not much less than three times the median—and roughly the length of this issue of Cites & Insights).

A Fuse #8 Production 144,809
Out of the Jungle 144,504
Slaw 82,968
The Gypsy Librarian 62,188
...the thoughts are broken... 58,510
Mermaid 53,786
OUseful Info 43,288
Baby Boomer Librarian 40,343
The Rabid Librarian’s Ravings in the Wind 39,431
The Zenformation Professional 39,331
Professional-Lurker: Comments by an academic in cyberspace 34,998
Archivalia 34,954
Tales from the “Liberry” 34,383
Ruminations 34,200
Digitization 101 32,138
UK Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Blog 32,081
Travelin’ Librarian 31,498
rックlibrarian 27,502
Library Boy 25,741
Wouter over het Web! 24,662
ISHUSH 24,493
Pegasus Librarian 24,063
Information Overlord 23,631
affordance.info 21,636
A Library Writer’s Blog 20,994
Kids Lit 20,578
Library TechBytes 19,660
e-klumme 19,251
mapz: a gis librarian 19,007
Family Man Librarian 18,209
T. Scott 18,009
See Also 17,888
medinfo weblog 17,756
Game On: Games in Libraries 17,325

Average length of posts

Last year, I called all those whose posts average longer than the average for all blogs in the study “essays,” and the cutoff was 255 words per post. This year, the average is higher at 268.5 words—and 86 blogs exceed that average. These blogs averaged at least 1.5 times the average of all average lengths.

InfoTangle 1,463
The Gay Librarian 847
...the thoughts are broken... 705
Biblioblahther 681
Vagabondages 657
Out of the Jungle 642

Finally, there are the terse bloggers: Those with average post length less than one-quarter of the overall average:

Libraries in the NHS 25
Crime in the Library 29
Bibliotekaren’s bibliotek 44
Stephen Gallant Review 55
Fiddling Librarian 3.0 56
:: CultureLibre.ca :: 59
Bibliotekarie 61
Sites and Soundbytes 64

Brief Comments on Individual Blogs

Blogs appear in alphabetic order—which I called “silly” last year (when I listed them in “Reach order”). The more I look at “reach” figures, the more I feel that no such calculation has all that much meaning, particularly within the Great Middle. Note that the ratio between the highest and lowest “Reach” in this group is less than 10:1—whereas the ratio between the top and bottom of the top 20 in last year’s study was 23:1. As noted earlier, you can do your own “reach” analyses using the spreadsheet at http://waltcrawford.name/logs6reach.xls.

Blog titles have been normalized for English-language initial articles and for leading punctuation that would influence sorting. For those comparing these comments to last year’s INVESTIGATING THE BIB-
LioBlogosphere, note that I’ve omitted measures of reach, Technorati, or Blogpulse ranking and comments about “voice.” When categories are mentioned, I only include the top two. (If there’s a category or tag list doesn’t include counts, or a tag cloud, I don’t mention categories.) On the other hand, I’ve added the title of the post with the most comments during the March-May 2006 period (if the blog supports comments) and the first blog title in the blog’s March 2006 archive. Start dates are for the current version of a blog as indicated by its archives.

Blogs in other languages
This year’s study was not limited to English-language blogs. I’d like to thank volunteers for translating the tagline, post titles, and in some cases the name of non-English blogs: Marlène Delhaye, Peter Hanning, Dorothea Salo, Ronald van Dieen, Angel, Esben Fjord, Guenter Waibel, Thomas Brevik, Luke Rosenberger, and Oliver, the proprietor of medinfo. Translations appear in [square brackets] following the original.

Babelfish and Intertran web translation software yielded results that were somewhere between poor and useless. I believe there are three reasons:

- Blogs tend to be informal, and informal language is harder to translate.
- Blogs tend to be idiomatic, and I suspect idiomatic usages are much harder to translate.
- Liblogs tend to be full of library and internet jargon, which doesn’t help matters.

Those suggestions aren’t condemnations. My writing is about as idiomatic and informal as you can get.

Metrics in the brief notes
Note the difference between mean (“average”) and median. The mean represents the sum of all figures for a population divided by the size of that population, and it can be skewed by outlying cases. The median is the point at which half of the population is higher and half is lower. For most of these metrics, the median is a more meaningful center point than the mean. A blog with 28 posts has higher posting frequency than most of the blogs in the study, although it has fewer posts than “average” (the mean).

I’m noticing metrics at four levels (with two additional levels for terse blogs):

- **Frequent posts, Comments, Conversational, Long overall, Long posts**: Blogs that fall between the median and the mean.
- **More posts, More comments, More conversational, Longer overall, Longer posts**: Blogs that fall within the lower half of the distance between the mean and the top 25 blogs for a metric—for example, a blog with “more posts” has between 45 and 69 posts.
- **Many posts, Many comments, Very conversational, Very long overall, Essays** (very long posts): Blogs that fall within the upper half of the numeric range just stated. A blog with “many posts” has between 70 and 93 posts during March-May 2006. Generally, fewer blogs are in the “Many” category than the “More” category.
- For the top 25 in any given metric (including ties), “Highest” or “Most” or “Longest,” I give the actual rank.
- I use “Terse” for posts averaging 76 to 100 words, “Terser” for fewer than 76 words.

“Partial metrics” indicates blogs where I couldn’t readily calculate total length of posts.

An Excel workbook including all 213 blogs (with URL as of early July 2006), start date (in an artificial “ymm” notation, where April 2006 is “604”), post count, comments, and comments per post, with a second spreadsheet including the 198 blogs that have length measures—showing count, length, and length per post—is available at http://waltcrawford.name/liblogs2006.xls.

Blogs with no metrics
Surprisingly, only 11% of the blogs lack out-of-the-ordinary metrics. If there was such a thing as a median blog on all metrics, it would still be a healthy blog. Take one real example: eleven posts, an average of 114 words each, no comments—a blogger who has something to say roughly once a week, says it briefly, and moves on. Sounds good to me.

A

The Aardvark Speaks

Metrics: More posts (48), 10th most comments (146), 14th most conversational (3.04 comments per post), long overall (7,785 words).

Ab’s Blog
Tagline: “links, information, and some analysis about library tech stuff by abigail bordeaux.” Author: Abigail

affordance.info

Metrics: 15th most posts (122), 21st most comments (98), conversational (0.8), 25th longest overall (21,636 words).

aleah marie

Metrics: Comments (14), very conversational (2.0), long posts (229 words per post).

Annoyed Librarian

Metrics: Frequent posts (33), comments (34), more conversational (1.03), longer overall (12,335), essays (374 words per post).

Archivalia

Metrics: 9th most posts (178), more comments (40), 13th longest overall (34,954 words).

ASC Online

Assemble Me

Metrics: 20th most conversational (2.5 comments per post), terse posts (93 words per post)—but in a light posting period.

At Home He’s a Tourist
Tagline: “He fills his head with culture/He gives himself an ulcer.” Author: Carlos. Established January 2003. First May post (no March or April) and most comments (2): “Consumed in April,” mini-reviews of movies seen.

Metrics: Only one post, so the longer post length (303 words per post) may not be meaningful.

B

Baby Boomer Librarian

Metrics: 21st most posts (21st), comments (26), 9th longest overall (40,343 words), essays (390 words per post). Most posts are items from other sources, repeated in their entirety.

Biblioblather

Metrics: More conversational (1.29), 5th longest essays (681 words per post).

Bibliotekarens bibliotek
Norwegian; blog name translates to “The librarians’ library.” Translated tagline: [Thoughts and musings about most things, but especially about Library2.0.] Author: Thomas. Established April 2003. First March topic: “Bånn er lenger unna enn jeg trodde” [The bottom is further away than I thought]. Comments not allowed.

Metrics: Light posting period (3 posts). 3rd tersest posts (44 words per post).

bibliotekarie
“Dags att lägga av.”

Metrics: Only one post, so the terseness (7th, 61 words) may not be relevant.

**Biblioteksinköp**


Metrics: Frequent posts (35), comments (18), conversational (0.51), terse posts (98 words per post).

**Biblioteksrelaterat**


Metrics: Frequent posts (32), comments (24), conversational (0.75), terse posts (90).

**Biblog – Bibliotek og IT**

Danish. Authors: Susanne Kierkegaard, Tora Trier Hansen, Erik Hoy. Established April 2002. First March title: “En pris til Biblog..” [A prize for Biblog…] Most comments (7): “I disse kanontider....” [In this time of canons…]

Metrics: Many posts (85), more comments (48 comments), conversational (0.56), terse posts (89).

**bitter librarian**


Metrics: 21st most conversational (2.5), longer posts (306 words per post) in light posting period.

**Blisspix**

Tagline: “This is the website of Fiona Bradley, a librarian from Sydney. This site contains articles, essays, and information about projects that I’m working on.” Author: Fiona Bradley. Established December 2004. First March post: “Sustainable Travel.” Most comments (4): “Following Parliamentary news.” Categories: General, Conferences.

Metrics: Comments (24), more conversational (1.26 comments per post), long posts (245).

**Blog about Libraries**


Metrics: Conversational (0.64).

**Blog on the Side**


Metrics: More posts (46), longer overall (14,574) and longer posts (317 words per post).

**blog.skagirlie.net**


Metrics: Conversational (0.56 comments per post), terse posts (94 words per post).

**blogdriverswaltz.com**


Metrics: More posts (60), very long overall (15,758 words), long posts (263).

**bloggrik**

[Blog rich] Swedish. Tagline: “Tips och trix om informationssökning, applikationer, social software, blog-
gar och andra roligheter.” [Tips and trips about information seeking, applications, social software, blogs and other fun stuff.] Author: Henrik Åkerfelt. Established May 2004. Only post during period (2 comments): “Google Calendar.”

Metrics: Very conversational (2.0), but may be meaningless for single post.

**BlogJunction**

Partial metrics: More posts (53).

**Book Kitten**

Metrics: Comments (11), conversational (0.65 comments per post).

**‘Brary Web Diva**

**Canuck Librarian**

Metrics: Long overall (6,463 words).

**The Centered Librarian**

Metrics: More posts (56), long overall (7,048).

**Chez Shoes**

Metrics: More posts (53), 11th most comments (131) and 23rd most conversational (2.47), long (10,191 words).

**Chronicles of Bean**
Tagline: “This blog comprises completely uneditorialized, random thoughts that cross my mind or my inbox, pet peeves (such as the misuse of “comprise”) and sometimes photos of my beautiful child or of whatever else my camera happened to capture. People still generally manage to take me seriously.” Author: Cindi. Established February 2003. First March post: “OpenURL blog is missing…!” Most comments (1): “Tonight’s news.” Categories: Library stuff, U2 stuff.

Metrics: Long posts (234 words per post).

**Clam Chowder**
Tagline: “This blog has absolutely nothing to do with Clam Chowder. I still have no idea why I chose that title.” Author: Chris DeWeese. Established October 2005. First March post: “Sad News.” Most comments (and best possible excuse for light posting in May and beyond, with 7 comments): “Hello World—Meet Tess” (picture of his newborn daughter).

Metrics: More conversational (1.00)

**cogsci librarian**

Metrics: More posts (53), comments (14 comments), long overall (9,093 words).

**Confessions of a Science Librarian**
Tagline: “This weblog (by John Dupuis) features links and pointers to information of interest to academic science librarians. Since science librarians do many of the same things as other academic librarians, most postings will probably apply to any librarian in an academic setting. Oh yeah, I’m also a science fiction fan, so some of that stuff will appear here, too.” Author: John Dupuis. Established October 2002. First March title: “Supporting exploratory search.” Most comments (4): “A personal/professional note.”
Connecting Librarian
Tagline: “Thoughts and discoveries of an Australian librarian working in a public library. Journey with me as I mull over how I can be connecting new ideas and technologies with better service to our patrons.” Author: Michelle McLean. Established July 2005. First March title: “Public Library Surveys.” Most comments (4): “Australian blogs.” Metrics: More conversational (1.17 comments per post), essays (446 words per post).

Connie Crosby

Conservator
Metrics: More posts (49), long overall (7,261).

Convivial Librarian
Metrics: More conversational (1.0).

cool librarian
Metrics: More conversational (1), longer posts (323 words per post).

The Creative Librarian
Tagline: “The Creative Librarian is a hub for matters important to librarians/information scientists of today.” Author: Laura Blalock. First March title: “manybooks.net.” Comments not supported. Categories: Library Links, Copyright.

Crime in the Library
Metrics: Frequent posts (28), 2nd tersest posts (29 words per post).

Culture Shock and the blondelibrarian
Metrics: Tied for 20th longest essays (519 words per post).

CultureLibre.ca
Metrics: Frequent posts (30), 6th tersest (59 words per post).

D-E

Data Obsessed
Metrics: Comments (20 comments), conversational (0.77).

David’s Random Stuff
Tagline: “A blog of random stuff generally, but not always, related to libraries, librarianship and technology.” Author: David Free. Established September 2004. First March title: “Sending The Library To Distance Learners.” Most comments (2): “And Then There Were Three.”
Metrics: Long overall (6,499 wprds) with longer posts (271 words).

Depraved Librarian
Tagline: “A carnival of news and information about culture, law, music, technology and research, from a

Metrics: More posts, (56), comments (13 comments), longer overall (12,472 words).

**DigitalKoans**

Metrics: Frequent posts (37), longer overall (12,080) with longer posts (326 words per post).

**Digitization 101**
Tagline: “This blog is the creation of Hurst Associates, Ltd. (http://www.HurstAssociates.com) and is THE PLACE for staying up-to-date on issues, topics, and lessons learned surrounding the creation, management, marketing and preservation of digital assets. (A few other topics are covered when the mood hits!)” Author: Jill Hurst-Wahl. Established August 2004. First March title: “Larry Lessig at RIT: video online.” Most comments (6): “Instant messaging (IM).”

Metrics: 16th most posts (117), 15th longest overall (32,138 words), longer posts (275 words per post).

**digitizationblog**

Metrics: Terse (80 words per post).

**digitize everything**

Metrics: Comments (15), 7th most conversational (5), essays (380)—but in a light posting period.

**diglet**

Metrics: Frequent posts (33).

**Disruptive Library Technology Jester**

Metrics: Comments (19 comments), conversational (0.7 comments per post), long overall (8,724) with longer posts (323 words per post).

**DIYlibrarian**

**DrWeb’s Domain**

Partial metrics: 10th most posts (163).

**e-klumme**

Metrics: Many posts (91), comments (34), very long (19,251 words).

**Electric Forest**
Tagline: “thoughts about books, digital libraries, and stuff related to expressing and keeping track of our thoughts...” Group blog. Established April 2005. First May title (none March-April 2006): “If libraries are so important, why are they so underfunded?” No comments.

Metrics: 17th longest essays (535 words per post), but in a light posting period.
EngLib
Partial metrics: Many posts (81 posts).

etc.
Metrics: Many comments (51 comments), tied for 16th most conversational (2.55 comments per post).

explodedlibrary.info
Tagline: “if libraries, culture, law, politics are just content, exploded onto the internet.” Author: Morgan Wilson. Established October 2005. First March title and most comments (8): “rant: neurotic pedantic librarians.”
Metrics: Comments (19), very conversational (1.73), essays (360 words per post).

Family Man Librarian
Metrics: More posts (57), more comments (48), conversational (0.84), very long overall (18,209 words) with longer posts (319 words per post).

Feltänkt?
Metrics: Comments (18), more conversational (1.38 comments per post).

Fiddling Librarian 3.0
Metrics: Frequent posts (30), comments (15), conversational (0.5), 5th tersest (56 words per post).

Filipino Librarian
Tagline: “For those interested in knowing more about the Philippines, Filipiniana, Philippine libraries and Filipino librarians.” Author: Vonjobi. First March title: “PhD – Information Studies.”
Partial metrics: Many posts (84).

foxylibrarian.com
Metrics: Frequent posts (36), many comments (66 comments), very conversational (1.83 comments per post), very long overall (15,759), essays (438 words per post).

The FRBR Blog
Metrics: More posts (56), comments (20), long overall (10,694 words).

Frequently Answered Questions
Tagline: “Questions answered by the Distance Education Librarian at Buley Library, Southern Connecticut State University. This is an experiment in distance education library communications.” Author: Rebecca Hedreen. Established August 2004. First March title: “HigherEdBlogCon.” No comments.
Metrics: Longer posts (299 words per post).

from your science librarian’s desk
Tagline: “as a communicator from the library to the college’s science community.” Author: Dongmei Cao. Established January 2006. First March post: “Beilstein Journal of Organic Chemistry is included in PubMed Central.” Most comments (2): “hack Google Maps to find your library’s (or any location’s) latitude and longitude.”
Metrics: Long overall (6,415 words) with long posts (257).

A Fuse #8 Production
Tagline: “Children’s literature is not for the weak. It is a ruthless cutthroat business with lots of gnashes of the teeth. Children’s librarianship, in contrast, is a sweet sweet ride. I post anything and everything children’s literature related while also including a review

Metrics: Most posts (371), most comments (798), very conversational (2.15 comments per post), longest overall (144,809 words), essays (390 words per post).

G-H
game on: games in libraries
Tagline: “Welcome to Game On: Games in Libraries! Game On strives to keep librarians up to date on gaming with convenient one-stop shopping for all your gaming news and information. Contributors welcome! This is a supplement to the Google LibGaming listserv, a forum for discussion of gaming in libraries.” Group blog. Established July 2005. First March title: “Video Game news, March 30, 2006.” Most comments (2): “Not Library 2.0.”

Metrics: Many posts (92), comments (17 comments), very long overall (17,325 words).

The Gay Librarian

Metrics: Comments (17), 2nd most conversational (8.5 comments per post; 2nd longest essays (847 words per post)—but only two posts during quarter.

The Green Kangaroo

Metrics: Comments (26), 6th most conversational (5.2), 7th longest essays (636 words per post).

The Gypsy Librarian
Tagline: “My first blog. I am hoping to use this as a tool to reflect and learn more about being a librarian and educator. I will likely feature items about librarianship as well as things I read in my other areas of academic interest or of interest as a reader. However, the stuff usually “not talked about in polite company, namely politics and religion” and a few other items of a more miscellaneous nature go to my other blog. You want those, go visit The Itinerant Librarian.” Author: Angel. First March post: “Campus Events for Women’s Month: A Roundup.” Most comments (5): “They are geeky and they are nerdy…”

Metrics: 19th most posts (107), many comments (62), conversational (0.58), 4th longest overall (62,188 words), 13th longest essays (tied, 581 words per post).

Helenes hengekøye

Heretical Librarian
Tagline: “Periodic musings on politics, the War on Terror, and other topics, from a moderate conservative in a profession dominated by the left.” Author: David Durant. Established June 2004. First March title and most comments (7): “Grand Reopening: Coming Soon.”

Metrics: Frequent posts (40), comments (23), conversational (0.58), long overall (9,074) with long posts (227 words per post).

Hidden Peanuts

Metrics: Comments (18), very conversational (1.64 comments per post), longer posts (330).

homoLudens III

I

i love libraries
Tagline: “I am doing this to learn a new technology, explore trends in the field, communicate in a new and exciting way.” Author: Leah Larson. Established February 2006. First March title (and most comments, 1): “Wiki world.”

Metrics: Conversational (0.5), longer posts (341 words per post).

The Illustrated Librarian
Tagline: “Tattoos and librarians DO mix!” Established November 2003. Substantial use of pictures (including tattoos). First March title and most comments (12): “Things might be looking up…”
The Imaginary Journal of Poetic Economics
Tagline: “Imagine a world where anyone can instantly access all of the world's scholarly knowledge—as profound a change as the invention of the printing press. Technically, this is within reach. All that is needed is a little imagination, to reconsider the economics of scholarly communications from a poetic viewpoint.”
Metrics: Long overall (8,237), 21st longest essays (515 words per post).

The In Season Christian Librarian
Tagline: “To provide information about resources and news by and for Christian Librarians, primarily those in Christian academic institutions. Other areas of Christian librarianship will be addressed on occasion.” Author: Linda Jones. Established October 2003. First March title: “Substitutions permitted.” No comments.
Metrics: Frequent posts (28).

indie rock librarian
Metrics: Frequent posts (32), 16th most comments (108), 10th most conversational (tied, 3.38 comments per post).

The Industrial Librarian
Metrics: Frequent posts (41), comments (34), conversational (0.83), long overall (9,786) with long posts (239 words per post).

Info Ediface
Tagline: “In 1624, Sir Henry Wotton, citing the Roman architect Vitruvius, maintained that fine architecture exhibited ‘Commoditie, Firmenes, and Delight.’ Information professionals must heed Vitruvius; build solutions that are useful, lasting and elegant.” Author: Michael Sensiba. Established June 2004. First March title: “Oh the shame, and a new toy.” Comments not enabled.
Metrics: Terser (74 words), but only one post during period.

info NeoGnostic
Tagline: “iNG is a blog for ‘new’ thoughts about information science - including librarianship, knowledge management, information architecture, content management, collection management - with an emphasis on electronic resources. Also about professional issues, often with a slant towards (perhaps that should be ‘tilt at’) CILIP and the profession.” Author: Chris Armstrong. Established February 2005. First March title: “New for Information Literacy.” Most comments (2): “Are search engines time-agnostic?”
Metrics: Frequent posts (40 posts), very long overall (15,403 words), essays (385 words per post).

InfoCommuner's Info Harbor
Tagline: “Like a mail boat from the days of yore, the InfoCommuner comes into harbor with questions and ideas about libraries, community information, and the related stuff that impacts us all.” Author: Tim Rogers. Established November 2004. First March title and most comments (1): “What I love about where I work…or Our Strategic Plan.”
Metrics: Longer posts (273 words per post).

Infogestores
Metrics: Conversational (0.67).

InfoMatters

Information Literacy Weblog
Tagline: “We bring you news and reports about information literacy around the world.” Authors: Sheila Webber, Stuart Boon. Established September 2005.
Lots of pictures. First March post: “IL talks online.” Most comments (2): “New IL website launched at LILLAC.”

Metrics: Many posts (87), longer overall (13,502 words).

**Information Overlord**


Metrics: 18th most posts (112), 23rd longest overall (23,631 words)

**InfoShare**


Metrics: Terse (82 words per post)

**Infosophy: Socio-Technological Rendering of Information**

Tagline: “Information structures and information technologies do not develop in isolation. Similarly, the social structures in our society do not develop free from technological influence. The information technology and the social structures in our human society inform and shape each other.” Author: Mentor Cana. Established April 2003. Only post during period: “What if they gagged Gutenberg? Big telecom is trying to throttle free access to democratic Internet.” No comments. Categories: Open Content and Open Communication, Information & Knowledge.

Metrics: Longer posts (314), but only one post.

**InfoTangle**


Metrics: Comments (19), 4th most conversational (6.33 comments per post), longest essays (1,463 words per post, essentially formal articles in blog form).

**Inquiring Librarian**


Metrics: Comments (19), very conversational (1.58), essays (392 words per post).

**internetBrus.com**


Partial metrics: Frequent posts (40), comments (28), conversational (0.7 comments per post).

**Internetsøgning**


Metrics: More posts (50), longer overall (13,591 words), longer posts (272 words per post).

**ISHUSH**


Metrics: Many posts (83), 25th most comments (tied, 72), conversational (0.87), 21st longest overall (24,493 words), longer posts (295 words per post).

**J-K**

**Joyce Valenza’s NeverEnding Search**


Metrics: Frequent posts (28), more comments (42), very conversational (1.5 comments per post), long overall (8,738) with longer posts (312).
**Kenton Good**  
Tagline: “Random Thoughts on the web and politics.”  
Established December 2005. First April title (no March posts) and most comments (1): “It’s The End of the World As We Know It.”

**Kids Lit**  
Metrics: 9th most posts (170), comments (13), very long overall (20,578 words).

**Lady Crumpet’s Armoire**  
Metrics: Frequent posts (37), many comments (75 comments), very conversational (2.03 comments per post), long overall (5,860 words).

**Larocque and Roll**  
Tagline: “I self-medicate with raspberries and Bailey’s.”  
Metrics: Frequent posts (36), 17th most comments (107), 14th most conversational (2.97), longer overall (12,344) with longer posts (343 words per post).

**Librarian**  
Metrics: Terser (69), but only two posts during quarter.

**Librarian 1.5**  
Metrics: Comments (28), 16th most conversational (tied, 2.55), longer posts (347).

**Librarian 2**  
Metrics: Frequent posts (30).

**A Librarian at the Kitchen Table**  
Tagline: “A Librarian at the Kitchen Table’ continues the earlier blog ‘A Librarian at Every Table.’ Librarians build community by working as advocates for social justice and human rights.” Author: Kathleen de la Peña McCook. Established November 2004. First March title: “Cesar Chavez Day-March 31-‘Sí se puede.’” Comments not allowed.  
Metrics: Frequent posts (33), long overall (6,647 words).

**Lethal Librarian**  
Metrics: Conversational (0.8).

**libdev**  
Metrics: Terser (69), but only two posts during quarter.
**Librarian in Tie-Dye**
Tagline: “Ruminations on librarianship (public), music (focus on the Grateful Dead), pet peeves (curmudgeonly commentary), and religion (Unitarian Universalist).” Author: David Dodd. Established July 2005. First March title: “Just read / Now Reading.” No comments.

**Librarian Way**

**LibrarianActivist.org**

**Librarian’s Rant**
Metrics: Conversational (0.59).

**Librarians with class**

**Libraries Build Communities**
Metrics: Comments (15), conversational (0.88).

**Libraries in the NHS**
Tagline: “Ben Toth’s notebook on libraries, informatics and electronic patient records 2.0.” Established March 2006. First March title: “Reaching nurses with RSS.” Most comments (12): “The National Library for health is honoured to be part of live.com.”
Metrics: Many posts (84), 25th most comments (tied, 72), conversational (0.86), tersest blog (25 words per post).

**Library Autonomous Zone**

**Library Bitch**
Metrics: Many comments (54), 5th most conversational (6.0), essays (408 words per post).

**Library Boy**
Metrics: 15th most posts (121), 19th longest overall (25,741 words).

**The Library Despot 2.0.1**
Metrics: More posts (45 posts), long overall (9,471 words).

**Library Geek Woes**
Metrics: More conversational (1.2 comments per post), 14th longest essays (565 words per post).

**Library Mistress’s Place**
German (with some English). Tagline: “I plan to post stuff about books, libraries, librarians, reference books & databases, reading & writing - especially Science Fiction, Fantasy & Utopias - that I come across in work hours & leisure time (mostly in German & English, sometimes also in other languages).” Author: Monika Bargmann. Established July 2003. First March title: “Für das eher derbe wienerische ‘schleich di’…” [For the rather harsh Viennese saying ‘get lost’…] No comments.
Metrics: 12th most posts (147), longer overall (14,762 words), terse (100 words per post).

**Library Monk**
Partial metrics: Comments (13), conversational (0.93 comments per post).

**Library TechBytes**
Metrics: Many posts (81), 23rd most comments (78), more conversational (0.96), very long overall (19,660 words), long posts (243 words per post).

**Library Technology in Texas**
Metrics: More posts (50), terse (96).

**Library Voice**
Metrics: Long overall (6,177), longer posts (281).

**A Library Writer’s Blog**
Tagline: “Have writer’s block? Hopefully this resource will help librarians identify publishing and presentation opportunities in library & information science, as well as other related fields…” Author: Corey Seeman. Established February 2004. First March title: “CFP: Children’s Literature Sessions at Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Fall 2006 Meeting.” No comments.
Metrics: Many posts (74 posts), 25th longest overall (20,994 words), longer posts (284).

**libraryassessment.info**

**The Library Diva**
Metrics: Frequent posts (30), more comments (39), more conversational (1.30), longer overall (12,591), essays (420 words per post).

**<libraryland>**
Metrics: Longer posts (323).

**Libraryola**
Metrics: Many posts (81), very long overall (15,969).

**The Life of Books**
Tagline: “This blog is dedicated to exploring the idea that ‘books are dead.’ I believe that they are alive and well…” Author: Richard Leiter. Established December 2004. First April title (no March posts) and most comments (1): “What’s the trouble with eBooks?”
Metrics: Essays (427 words), but only one post during quarter.

**lis.dom**
Metrics: Frequent posts (28), comments (33), more conversational (1.18), long overall (8,602), longer posts (307 words per post).

**Loomware – Crafting New Libraries**

Metrics: Frequent posts (41).

**Loriene’s Blog**


Metrics: Long overall (11,315 words), 16th longest essays (539 words per post).

**Love the Liberry**


Metrics: Comments (18), conversational (0.78), terse (78 words per post).

**mapz: a gis librarian**


Metrics: More posts (50), comments (21), very long overall (19,007), essays (380 words per post).

**Marlene’s corner**


Partial metrics: More posts (48 posts), comments (31), conversational (0.65 comments per post).

**Max Power Blogs**


Metrics: Comments (24), more conversational (1.14).

**medinfo weblog**


Metrics: 3rd most posts (240), comments (42), very long overall (17,756), terser posts (74).

**medlibrarian.net**


**Mentat**

Tagline: “sorting through the onslaught of information and misinformation to find what is important and real.” Author: Lori Bowen Ayre. Established June 2003. First March title: “Is there hope for democrats – I see a light!” No comments.

Metrics: Longer posts (289 words per post).

**Mermaid**


Metrics: 7th most posts (195), 3rd most comments (422), very conversational (2.16), 6th longest overall (53,786 words), longer posts (276 words per post).

**The Misadventures of Super_Librarian**


Metrics: More posts (48), 8th most comments (166), 9th most conversational (3.46), very long overall (16,138 words), longer posts (336 words per post).

**NewlyMintedLibrarian**

Tagline: “Opinionated dame, Minnesota librarian.” Author: Mary Beth Sancomb-Moran. Established De-
nichole’s auxiliary storage
Tagline: “50% librariana, 100% superfluous.” Established June 2003. Quite a few pictures. First March title: “Last of it?” Most comments (3): “Eat that rabbit.”
Metrics: Comments (15), conversational (0.88), terse (87 words per post).

One Big Library
Metrics: Frequent posts, (36), comments (31 comments), conversational (0.86), long overall (10,314 words), longer posts (287).

OPL Plus
Metrics: Many posts (92), comments (15), very long overall (16,948).

OUseful Info
Metrics: 22nd most posts (96), comments (17), 7th longest overall (43,288 words), 25th longest essays (451 words per post).

Out of the Jungle
Metrics: 6th most posts (225), comments (16), 2nd longest overall (144,504 words), 6th longest essays (642 words per post).

Pattern Recognition
Partial metrics: More posts (51), many comments (57), more conversational (1.12).

Pegasus Librarian
Metrics: Many posts (85), more comments (38), conversational (0.45), 22nd longest overall (24,063 words), longer posts (283 words per post).

PiscesLibrariana
Tagline: “A social and richly annotated experiment in keeping track of my professional development as a librarian (in the form of a weblog)...or Resume 2.0.” Author: Tim Hickey. Established May 2006. First May title: “The blogging learning curve.” Most comments (4): “Escape from the walled garden (Library 2.0-style).”
Metrics: Long overall (7,588 words), longer posts (345 words per post)

The Playful Antiquarian
Tagline: “"She is too fond of books and it has turned her brain." --Louisa May Alcott.” Established April 2003. First April title (none in March): “Spectral Literacy: The Child in the Margin, Apr. 28 (AAS).” No comments.

PomeRantz
Partial metrics: Conversational (0.53)

Professional-Lurker

Metrics: 23rd most posts (95), comments (25), 11th longest overall (34,998 words), essays (368 words per post).

**Quædam cuiusdam**

Metrics: Comments (23), 8th most conversational (3.83 comments per post), 15th longest essays (549 words per post).

**Queequeg’s Content Saloon**
Tagline: “Content = Happy (adj), substance (n), satisfy (v) Saloon = bar (n), and what’s not good about that? plus I can’t resist the goofy proximity to salon. Finally, why name a blog about libraries and the Web after a character from Moby-Dick? Well, lots of reasons….” Author: Erica Reynolds. Established November 2004. First March title: “PLA…a blur…onto Triconference.” Most comments (7): “And speaking of David King…”

Metrics: Comments (29), more conversational (1.21), long overall (7,178 words), longer posts (299 words per post).

**quiddle**

Metrics: Comments (31), more conversational (1.15 comments per post), long overall (5,825 words).

**R**

**The Rabid Librarian’s Ravings in the Wind**

Metrics: 4th most posts (236), comments (24), 9th longest overall (39,431 words).

**Random Access Mazar**

Metrics: Many comments (56), tied for 16th most conversational (2.55 comments per post), long overall (8,026 words), essays (365 words per post).

**Real Public Librarian**

Metrics: Comments (20), 21st most conversational (2.5), 22nd longest essays (469 words per post).

**Ref Grunt**
Tagline: “Some days I love working the reference desk, some days I hate it, and it’s often the same day.” Author: Peter Sprenkle. Established May 2003. First March title: “Crooks have no taste in manga.” Comments not supported.

**The Reflective Librarian**

Metrics: More posts (62), very long overall (15,098 words), long posts (244 words per post).

**Retrofitted Librarian**

Metrics: Terser posts (74 words per post).

**RFID in Libraries**

**ricklibrarian**
The Rock & Roll Librarian

Metrics: Frequent posts (44), comments (25), conversational (0.57), long overall (7,266 words).

Ruminations

Metrics: Many posts (76), 5th most comments (257), tied for 10th most conversational (3.38 comments per post), 14th longest overall (34,200 words), essayist (450 words per post).

russet vixen

Metrics: More conversational (1.33).

S
School Librarian in Action

Metrics: Frequent posts (28), comments (33), more conversational (1.18 comments per post), longer overall (12,801 words), 24th longest essays (457 words per post).

SD Librarian
Tagline: “News and commentary about tools and articles for library and information professionals, mostly on Web 2.0 (RSS, blogs, etc.).” Author: Teri Vogel. (Note: “SD” in this case stands for University of California, San Diego—not South Dakota.) First March title: “EDP Sciences: RSS Feeds.” Most comments (2): “EBSCOhost: RSS Feeds (and why they could be much better).”

Metrics: More conversational (1.0), longer posts (321 words per post) but in light posting period.

Second Life Library 2.0

Metrics: Frequent posts (38), more comments (36), more conversational (0.95), long overall (10,706), longer posts (282 words per post).

See Also…

Metrics: Frequent posts (42), 19th most comments (99), 24th most conversational (2.36 comments per post), very long overall (17,888 words), essays (426 words per post).

“Self-plagiarism is style”

Partial metrics: Comments (31), very conversational (1.82 comments per post).

shimenawa

Metrics: 23rd longest essays (460 words per post).

Sites and Soundbytes

Metrics: 11th most posts (161), long (10,277 words), 8th tersest (64 words per post).

Slaw
Tagline: “Slaw is a co-operative weblog about Canadian legal research and IT, etc.” Group blog. Established July 2005. First March title: “This Week’s Links:
060331.” Most comments (14): “Writely Purchased by Google.”

Metrics: 2nd most posts (323), 4th most comments (410), more conversational (1.27), 3rd longest overall (82,968 words), long posts (257 words per post).

**Stephen Gallant Review**

Metrics: Frequent posts (39), 4th tersest (55 words per post).

**STLQ**

Metrics: More posts (58), very long (16,106 words), longer posts (278 words per post).

**T**

**T. Scott**

Metrics: Frequent posts (31), many comments (70), tied for 25th most conversational (2.26 comments per post), very long overall (18,009 words), tied for 12th longest essays (581 words per post).

**Tales from the “Liberry”**

Metrics: More posts (56), 15th most comments (117), very conversational (2.09), 13th longest overall (34,383), 10th longest essays (614 words per post).

**TangognaT**

Metrics: Many posts (81), 7th most comments (183), tied for 25th most conversational (2.26 comments per post), very long overall (15,670 words).

**Teknikaliteter**

**The Ten Thousand Year Blog**

Metrics: Many posts (78), comments (15), longer overall (12,369 words).

**Terry’s Worklog**

Metrics: More posts (45), long overall (10,573 words), long posts (235 words per post).

**Texadata**

Metrics: Essays (390 words per post).

**Text & Blog**
**Metrics:** 13th most posts (145), 14th most comments (119), conversational (0.82), very long overall (16,430 words).

**That Rabbit Girl**

Metrics: Comments (13), conversational (0.68).

**Theoretical Librarian**

Metrics: 18th longest essay (529 words), but only one post.

**Thinking about the Future**
Tagline: “Personal perspectives on information science, the evolving Internet, delivery of public services online, Web 2.0, Library 2.0, communities, folksonomies and more. With an emphasis upon convergence between some or all of the above, and a UK slant.” Author: Paul Miller. Established September 2005. First March title: “A blog-free afternoon.” Most comments (2): “Easy embedding of RSS feeds in blogs.”

**...the thoughts are broken...**

Metrics: Many posts (83), 6th most comments (200), 23rd most conversational (2.41), 5th longest overall (58,510), 3rd longest essays (705).

**Thoughts from a Library Administrator**

Metrics: More posts (45), more comments (42), conversational (0.93), longer overall (14,130), longer posts (314 words per post).

**Tinfoil + Raccoon**

Metrics: More posts (46), 12th most comments (125), 15th most conversational (2.72), very long overall (15,452), longer posts (336 words per post).

**Tiny Little Librarian**

Partial metrics: Many comments (52), very conversational (2.0 comments per post).

**Tom Keays**

Metrics: Long overall (8,723 words), longer posts (336 words per post).

**Tom Roper’s Weblog**

Metrics: Many posts (70), comments (19), long overall (6,654), terse posts (95 words per post).

**Travelin’ Librarian**

Metrics: 5th most posts (235), 21st most comments (97), 17th longest overall (31,498 words).

**Travels with the State Librarian**

Metrics: Conversational (0.6 comments per post).
UK Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Blog
Metrics: 17th most posts (113), 16th longest overall (32,081 words), longer posts (284 words per post).

ulo.tricho.us
Metrics: Comments (12), more conversational (1.5 comments per post), tied for 19th longest essays (519 words per post).

User Education Resources for Librarians
Tagline: “Topics and issues that will be posted here: user education, distance education support, e-learning support, librarianship, information access.” Author: Terese Hartman. Established November 2003. First March topic sentence (no titles): “I just learned about a digital media service that works through your library…” Comments not enabled.
Metrics: Terse (94 words per post).

Vagabondages
Metrics: More comments (36), more conversational (1.44 comments per post), very long overall (16,430), 5th longest essays (657 words per post).

The Vampire Librarian
Metrics: 13th most comments (124), 3rd most conversational (7.29 comments per post), longer posts (306 words per post).

Vancouver Law Librarian Blog
Tagline: “Points of interest to the West Coast Law Librarian. Highlighted sources on KM, Web Development, and Law Library Management. … And hey, if it’s got a Vancouver perspective, that’ll work too. :-).” Author: Steve Matthews. Established November 2004. Quite a few images. First March title: “RSS Subject Collections – FeedRinse can help!” No comments.

A Wandering Eyre
Metrics: 21st most posts (98), 11th most comments (128), more conversational (1.31), longer overall (14,122 words).

Wireless Libraries
Cites & Insights August 2006

What About Last Year’s Blogs?

Most of them are doing just fine. commons-blog disappeared. infomusings became infomuse.net and shut down. scitech library question now always seems to be known as STLQ. dave’s blog is now David Lee King. Thirteen appear in this year’s look.

That’s two gone out of 60: A great record for blogs, but not surprising for blogs with broad reach.

Direct Reporting: Null Results

I received 15 responses; 12 of them provided the unique visitor count for May. 14 provided the average visits per day during May. I thought there might be some vague correlation between Bloglines subscriptions and average visitors per day, or possibly some other correlation.

If I was desperately looking for Evidence and willing to run an extensive set of statistical tests, throwing out “anomalous cases” (that is, tampering with the results to make them look better), I might be able to suggest something—e.g., “about 2 to 4 visitors per day per Bloglines subscription.” But only if you toss out five cases with much higher ratios and four cases with much lower ratios—there’s a “good fit” for all of one-third of the instances. Every correlation I tried, including ones that take into account power laws, suffered a similar fate.

Fifteen is, to be sure, too small a sample. The fifteen blogs include three with very high Bloglines counts and three others that exceed this study’s limits; the other nine appear within this essay. Could I find correlations with a hundred examples? Perhaps, perhaps not.

Here’s what I can say: A blog with 108 Bloglines subscribers may average 3,900 visits per day; another with nine times as many subscriptions might have just over half as many visits per day. Most folks get lots more unique visitors during a month than their daily visit average—only one of the 12 reporting unique visitors had fewer than 2,000 such visitors in May 2006, and three had more than 10,000 each.

To sum up: You really can’t tell how many people read a blog or how many different people occasionally drop by based on any external evidence that I can think of. It’s a mystery.

Conclusions

My conclusions, such as they are, appear scattered throughout this long essay.
The major conclusion: As liblogs proliferate, they offer many more voices worth listening to. If you can't find twenty or thirty blogs on this list that intrigue you enough to subscribe to, you either have a lot of feeds already or have narrow interests within the library field.

Given the broader scope of this year's look, I can predict that some blogs will disappear or change (actually, one has already been declared closed and two or three changed names since this study began—I even helped suggest the name in one case: ...the thoughts are broken... is now Off the Mark).

I've heard enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that blog readership has grown quite a bit. That may reflect ease of use via aggregators (with people subscribing who've never heard of "RSS"); it may also reflect the quality of library-related blogs.

I cited the title of the post with the most comments for each blog that has any comments. What conclusions can be drawn from those titles? Other than the obvious—new jobs, marriage, graduation from library school, homebuying and other major life events draw lots of comments—I'll leave that exercise to others.

Bibs & Blather

Just August

When I abandoned the “design and typography” special August issue, I said the next issue would be August/September. Then I finished LOOKING AT LIBLOGS and realized it requires an issue all to itself. And I looked at the thick folders with material for other essays, and thought about the “changes” essay that I should do covering the site change for C&I.

Given all that, and given that this issue comes out in the first half of August, I’m changing plans again. For a while, I’m going to do the unthinkable: Bring issues out during the cover month. How long will “a while” last? Certainly through September, possibly for the rest of the Fall.

Next time, I hope, a slightly more typical issue.

OCLC and C&I

While the move to citesandinsights.info (a LISHost site) deserves its own essay, changes in C&I because of my new employer may not require much discussion.

As of this writing, I’m still not sure what I’ll be doing within OCLC in the long run. Fortunately, I don’t think that matters for Cites & Insights—except to the extent that I’m working full time rather than 75% time, which leaves a whole lot less spare time for reading, writing and relaxing.

Working for OCLC will affect what I write about to some extent. I’m unlikely to do detailed examinations of OCLC-produced documents; there’s just no way that doesn’t come off as self-serving. (RLG DigiNews wasn’t produced by RLG, so there was no conflict of interest.) I’m probably not going to do either snarky or laudatory commentaries on OCLC systems and services—but I haven’t really been doing that anyway, since in that case working for RLG already created a presumed conflict of interest.

Otherwise? Not so much, as far as I can tell. There’s more than enough to write about. OCLC no more wants to control what I write than RLG did, which is to say not at all.

Worthwhile?

Fact: My plan for “lots of summer time spent reading, relaxing, going on short trips, organizing music, and all that” hasn’t worked out that well. The return to full-time work is partly to blame (various factors eliminated those mini-vacations), but there’s another factor. To wit, LOOKING AT LIBLOGS.

The project took a lot longer than I expected. I probably spent as much time on this essay as on two regular issues of C&I. So here’s my question:

Was it worth it? Do you find this valuable? Let me know: waltcrawford@gmail.com

Masthead

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