

## NLN FEATURE

### The wonderful world of wikis

By MIKE MEINERS

St. Louis POST-DISPATCH

#### WIKI PRAYER

*Please, grant me the serenity to accept  
the pages I cannot edit,  
The courage to edit the pages I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

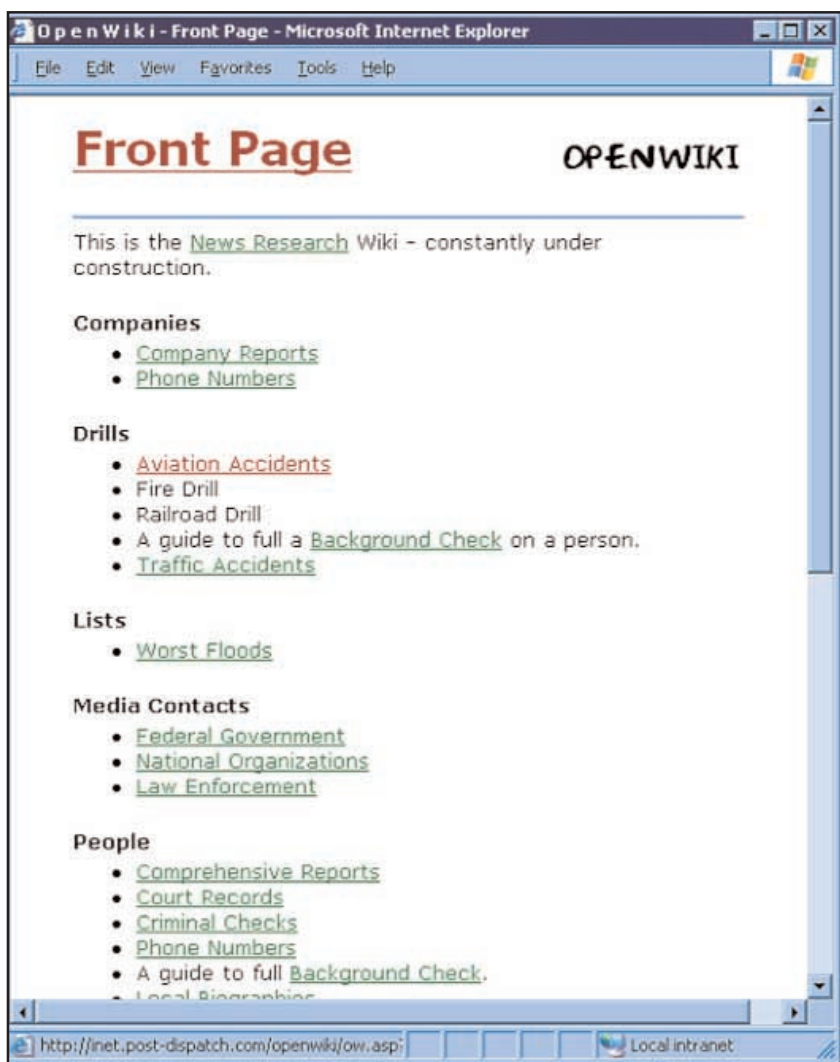
A wiki, simply defined, is a Web site that allows users to add and edit content collectively. The News Research Department at the *Post-Dispatch* started using a wiki last May to help make information more easily available to the researchers—the term “wiki” is derived from the Hawaiian word for quick. We wanted to share more than just a list of links; we needed to be able to ‘communicate’ with each other and share instructions, strategies, and other types of knowledge. A wiki has proven to be a very easy way to accomplish this.

You need software to run a wiki. The software we use is called Openwiki (<http://www.openwiki.com>), and it is one of many available for free on the Web.

Involve your IT folks at the start. Not because the wiki itself is difficult, but getting it to work in your network environment can be. Our IT department had the wiki here running less than 24 hours after it was first mentioned to them.

Once your wiki is installed it is amazingly easy to begin content development. Just double-click on a page and start typing. Wikis are much easier to edit

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Front screen in display mode

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Find out what the NewslibMini is all about and how librarian Anne Holcomb developed this new wiki for news librarians.

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KATHRYN PEASE

### Community, communication and collaboration

In this issue, we are talking about wikis and how communities can use them to communicate, whether that community is a single newsroom or a group of small news libraries facing similar issues.

Those three words can also be used to describe how the library community came together to help those in areas struck by natural disasters this year. From professional aid in getting the paper out and archiving to personal assistance with housing and using people-finding skills to reunite families and pets, the SLA and news library communities collaborated on many endeavors.

Can we plan for disasters? Well, **Joe Adams** of *The Florida Times-Union* thinks so. Some of you may have attended his session at the 2001 SLA conference in San Antonio. Here we are reprinting a list of things news librarians can do to prepare for breaking news.

Our chair, **Denise Jones**, discusses the division's new program planner position, while our regular contributors introduce you to some colleagues and share the latest member news.

Enjoy the issue and the upcoming holidays, everyone.

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## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



BY DENISE JONES

Last issue I explained the changes to SLA's officer and election schedule. The News Division's first future program planner, and chair-elect-elect, is **Justin Scroggs**. Justin will be the program planner for the 2007 conference in Denver. SLA now begins program planning for conferences 18 months out. In January, Justin will attend SLA's Leadership Conference in Houston where planning will begin for the 2007 conference. When Justin and the other 2007 division program planners meet in Baltimore next June, they are expected to have firm ideas of what their programming will be for the Denver conference. As required by SLA, **Jim Hunter** has already submitted his schedule of program sessions for the Baltimore conference. If you have suggestions for programs you would like to see at the 2007 conference, please contact Justin at [jscroggs@newsbank.com](mailto:jscroggs@newsbank.com) or [justin\\_scroggs@hotmail.com](mailto:justin_scroggs@hotmail.com). He would love to hear your ideas.

Justin will also be helping Jim to prepare for the Baltimore conference. Helping Jim will be valuable experience for Justin. This change in planning and elections should make the job of planning conferences a little easier and provide us with even better program topics and speakers. Elections for our division officers and the next program planner (chair-elect-elect) will be held in fall 2006. When Justin moves into the chair-elect position, there will be an elected future program planner to assist him, the next chair-elect-elect.

In this issue be sure to read about **Anne Holcomb** and the wiki she has created for small news libraries and those working solo. Toronto was Anne's first SLA conference, but even at her first conference Anne had ideas on how to help news librarians who operate alone or have only a few on staff. Her "NewslibMini" wiki is a great way to help small libraries connect. I had discussions in Toronto with Anne and others of you on how to best make the News Division relevant and valuable to our membership.

The SLA News Division wants to provide value to its members. To be sure we're doing that, I need to hear from you. Please take a moment to answer the following questions: What do you think is the most valuable benefit of being an SLA News Division member? What should the News Division do to

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***“What do you think is the most valuable benefit of being an SLA News Division member? What should the News Division do to increase the benefits of membership?”***

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increase the benefits of membership? The annual conference is a wonderful opportunity for professional development, but what about those librarians who rarely, or never, are able to attend? What is the best way to connect with them? What can the News

Division provide them to help them professionally and the news organizations they serve? These are all questions I've been thinking about, and I would like to hear your thoughts on them. Please email your thoughts and ideas to [djones@newsobserver.com](mailto:djones@newsobserver.com).





## Are you capitalizing on today's emerging business trends?

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## PEOPLE



By JENNIFER O'NEILL

### Awards & Acknowledgments

**Donna Scheeder**, director of law library services, Law Library of Congress has been elected to the IFLA Governing Board for the 2005-2007 term.

### On the Move

**Elizabeth Allin** has joined the Freedom Forum library staff in Arlington, Virginia. Elizabeth previously worked at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth and is a recent graduate of Catholic University's School of Library and Information Science.

Also joining the Freedom Forum staff is **Chris Burton**. Previously, Chris worked at the CNN tape library in Washington, DC. He is also a recent graduate of Catholic University's School of Library and Information Science.

**Jack Begg** is the new supervisor of research for *The New York Times*.

Jack was the first night-side researcher, joining *The Times* in 1997. Jack brings years of experience from jobs at the Bettmann Archive and the *New York Post*, where he was assistant head librarian. Jack presents a class for reporters, copyeditors and interns called "Getting it Right." The class is a look at how, where and what to evaluate in order to avoid errors. Jack's concerns for accuracy and precision have been a hallmark of his efforts at the paper.

**Barbara Oliver** is now director of research for *The New York Times*.

Barbara, a researcher herself, has been the deputy for information services overseeing the library and administrative issues for the last year. She has been a researcher at *The Times*, worked on the Stylebook, was research editor at the *St. Petersburg Times* and was director of research for an economic development and relocation consulting firm.

Barbara faces an extremely challenging assignment in making more resources available for a bewildering number of subject areas, enhancing *The Times'* ability to deal

with electronic information and in creating a new path for researchers, including both New York and Washington. It is a world that mixes news sense, resource management, coaching skills and savvy in dealing with growing privacy concerns.

**Amy Canon** has joined the *San Antonio Express-News* as a news archivist.

Amy comes to the *Express-News* from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo where she worked as a library assistant. There, she was involved in the archiving of the Joe Elicson Photograph Collection containing over 12,000 negatives and prints of social and cultural events in the San Antonio area. During the summer of 2004 Amy was an intern with Texas Parks and Wildlife at Casa Navarro State Historic Site. As part of her internship she put together a visitor's guide to the site. Amy received a B.A. in history from Texas Lutheran University in 2003 and is currently enrolled in the public history graduate program at Texas State University.

Those of you who know **John Cronin** knew he wouldn't be able to stay retired. You will be happy to hear he is now the director of the Winthrop Public Library in Massachusetts. He was a trustee of this library for nearly twenty years, until he moved out of Winthrop. Originally he was to be "acting director," but his predecessor resigned. His e-mail address at the library is john.r.cronin@comcast.net.

**Amy Disch** began a new position as a news researcher at *The Columbus Dispatch* in September. She was formerly with the *Wisconsin State Journal* and *The Capital Times* library in Madison, Wisconsin.

She has also been appointed by SLA President Pam Rollo to co-chair the New Visions Task Force. The task force will be looking at the challenges facing those new to our profession and will offer recruitment and retention suggestions for both the profession and the association at large.

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## Kalamazoo reaps benefits of new librarian



By AMY DISCH



Holcomb leads a workshop for newsroom staff on searching the paper's electronic archive.

**T**he *Kalamazoo Gazette* in Kalamazoo, Michigan is the city's daily afternoon newspaper. For many years, the organization had been without a library or librarian, but that situation changed late last year with the hiring of Anne Holcomb, who works as a solo librarian within the *Gazette's* newsroom.

The library's collections include clipping files dating from the late 1940s/early 1950s to the early 1990s, as well as historical print photos encompassing various years and a negative collection from the 1970s to 1980s. An additional portion of the photo collection is stored at an offsite facility. According to Holcomb, while these collections are "extensive, they are not organized, properly preserved or cataloged at this time." "Somewhat organized" is the sizable number of subject files covering both entertainment and local history. Holcomb's attendance at monthly meetings held in Kalamazoo between librarians, archivists and museum professionals that deal with local history have proved to be very helpful. "These folks were instrumental in helping me get a sense of the scope and importance of the paper's historical collections, and their practice of maintaining indexes of the paper, past photos and clipping files of our articles at their institutions has helped me immensely when referring readers and researchers."

text archive" and answering reference requests from both newsroom staff and readers. Afternoons are dedicated "to longer-term projects, like strategic planning for the library, working to compile collections of Web research links or planning curricula for instructional sessions."

This schedule is set aside, though, when a reporter or editor on deadline requires research assistance. Their questions "can be anywhere from a quick fact-check which takes a few minutes, to long-term research and background information for a series of stories, which can go on for weeks or more." Holcomb adds that since her arrival she has seen her "job duties continue to expand and change." This has been demonstrated through additional projects she has undertaken, including working as a news researcher alongside reporters and editors, teaching classes to newsroom staff on how to search the electronic archive and the Internet, "drafting a strategic plan for the future staffing and services of a library department and working with the tech department to design the newsroom's first intranet."

Marketing her library's services has been one of Holcomb's main priorities since her arrival at the *Gazette*. "Since the organization was without a librarian for many years, most staff had no idea what a

An electronic text archive began in 1992 and was followed by a digital photo archive in late 1999/early 2000. The library also has bound editions of the paper beginning with the 1930s and microfilm "which dates to the *Gazette's* founding in the 1830s."

Holcomb works a "regular business day," generally spending the morning "enhancing and tagging stories in the

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BY ANGELICA CORTEZ

**H**eather Gamberg has vast experience working in a newsroom as a reporter, a copy editor, and an entertainment editor. Her next stop: news librarian.

Gamberg received a B.A. in journalism from California State University, Chico. She is currently studying library and information science at San Jose State University.

"One thing I've realized about myself since going to library school—and since leaving journalism behind

for a while—is that I'm an information junkie and I love variety," she said of her interest in becoming a news librarian.

She first discovered the career about five years ago while working at the *Chico Enterprise-Record*. Of



HEATHER GAMBERG

the archives she left behind she said, "The newspaper didn't employ a librarian, but there were signs that a librarian had once worked there."

Through diligent networking,

Gamberg received a practicum position working for the *San Francisco Chronicle* where she is currently working part-time in addition to attending graduate school and working full-time at an environmental remediation firm. On top of that, Gamberg is also active in the San Francisco Bay Region Chapter of SLA, serving as webmaster and co-editor of the bulletin.

Indeed a hardworking person, Gamberg, who will graduate by 2007, is on her way to becoming a news librarian.

## People

*Continued from page 6*

*The Daily Camera* (Boulder, CO), is thrilled to be hosting their first library intern, **Sara Gore**, a library school student at the University of Denver. Sara earned her undergraduate degree at Northwestern University.

**Paul Koehler** has joined the staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* as an archivist. Paul is a recent graduate of Missouri Southern State University.

**Angie Drobic Holan** joined the *St. Petersburg Times* news research staff in August, coming from *The Tampa Tribune*. Angie did her undergraduate work at the University of Texas, and she received her master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. She is currently enrolled in the graduate program in library and information science at the University of South Florida in Tampa.

**Kelly Alice Robinson** is the new assistant librarian at *The Christian Science Monitor* in

Boston. A Simmons School of Library and Information Science graduate, she was previously at CNN in Washington, DC, where her research focused on Congress, government and military topics.

*The Charlotte Observer* has hired **Maria Wygand** as photo librarian and researcher. Maria, a freelance writer who had worked in the library part-time from 1993 to 1999, returned just in time to help install *The Observer's* new SCC archive.

To quote the immortal Jerry Lee Lewis....there's a "Whole lotta shakin' goin' on" in the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel's* Editorial Research Center:

**Gilberto Medina** was named assistant department head/archiving;

**Jeremy Milarsky**, a *Sun-Sentinel* reporter, was promoted to database specialist;

**John Maines** was promoted to assistant department head/research. John was part of the *Sun-Sentinel*

team that received numerous awards for both their FEMA series, "Cashing in On Disaster", and the series, "Marine Mammals: Below the Surface", about the marine mammal industry. I believe he will have to buy a new case in which to keep all of his trophies, such as: First place, Florida Press Club, Francis DeVore Award for Public Service; Associated Press Managing Editors association's 35th annual Award for Public Service for newspapers with a circulation of 100,000 and higher; First place, Society of Professional Journalists' James Batten Award for Public Service; Third place, same category; Second-place, Green Eyeshade Award, Society of Professional Journalists, Investigative Reporting category; Third place, National Headliner Award, News Series category for newspapers with more than 75,000 circulation.

Congratulations, everyone!



# Who says we can't plan for disasters? How news librarians can make a difference in covering breaking news

BY JOE ADAMS

THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

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(ORIGINALLY PRESENTED AT THE 2001 SLA CONFERENCE)

- ☛ Note the constants in all breaking news situations and determine which ones lend to advance planning.
- ☛ Know the roles and needs of news staffers during breaking news and determine how to help.
- ☛ Interview reporters and editors before news breaks on what would aid them most in breaking situations; also ask them what your staff did well during the last story and what you could do to assist more in the future.
- ☛ Identify the breaking news most common for your market and develop resources for them.
- ☛ Develop call lists of fire, police, disaster and other key emergency personnel (include home phone numbers where applicable).
- ☛ Create intranet links to related info, statistics, stories from elsewhere and archives.
- ☛ Create a basics list for backgrounding people and businesses.
- ☛ Create links to valuable online public records.
- ☛ Send messages to staff when new public records, stories or other data are added to the intranet.
- ☛ Training: Educate about resources, how to use them and how they fit when news breaks.
- ☛ Attend news meetings; look for ways to assist editors, reporters, photographers, artists and online staff.
- ☛ Think like an editor: Know the strengths of your staff and how to best use them.
- ☛ After it's all over: Evaluate what did and didn't work and adjust accordingly before next time.

## Kalamazoo reaps benefits of new librarian

*Continued from page 7*

librarian could do or how our job duties have changed over the years." She regularly attends the editors' weekly planning meetings, providing "updates on my activities and progress and pointing out where research can be used to enhance upcoming stories." The instructional sessions she has provided for staff have proved to be particularly effective. "Once they saw how much I could teach them in an hour-long Web research session, they were much more interested in having me contribute my skills to upcoming projects." A future goal is to extend these marketing efforts to other departments outside of the newsroom.

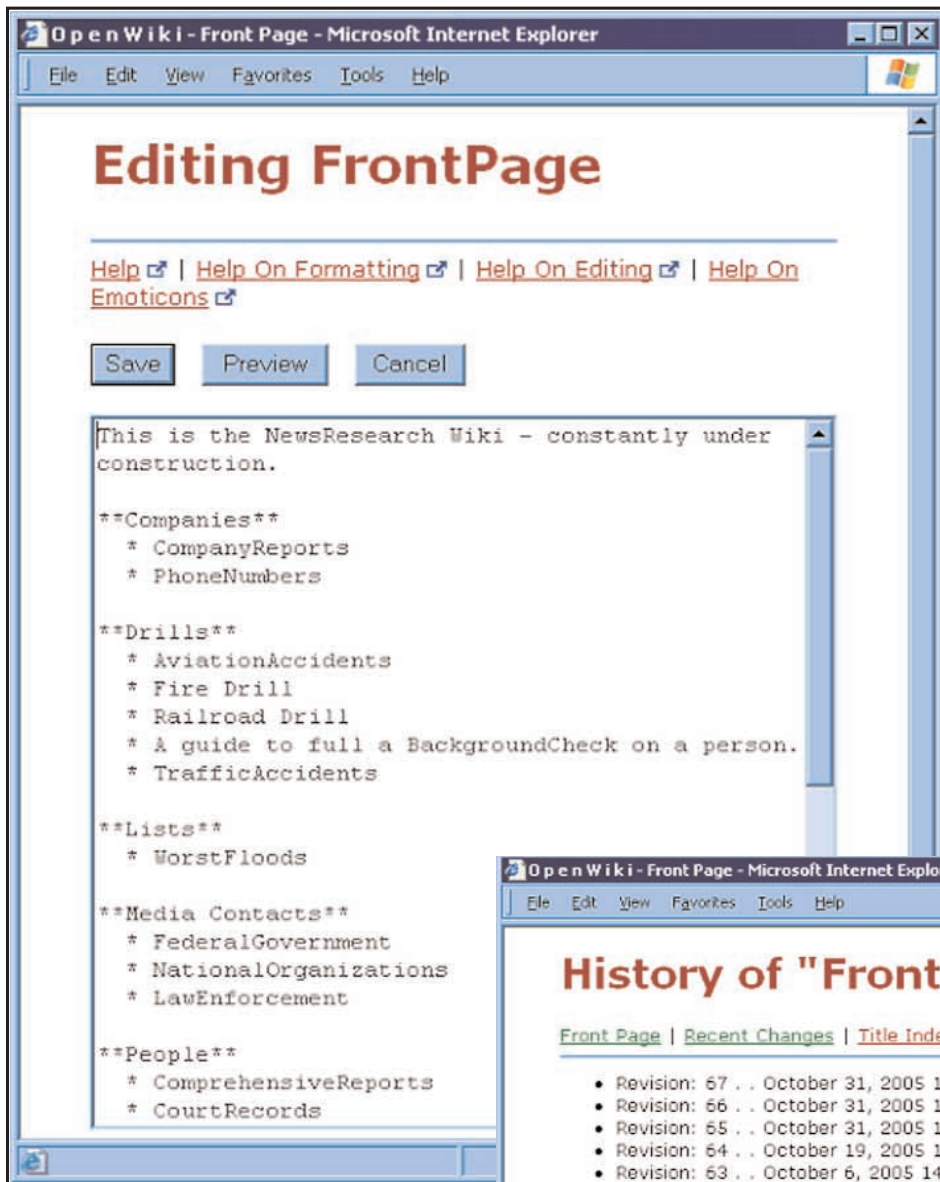
"Pure coincidence" led Holcomb to become a news librarian. "It wasn't something I had heard about extensively in graduate school, but the job's archival aspects intrigued me given that I had specialized in archives and records management as a student." Working in the newsroom's library requires an "eye for detail" and the recognition that a job cannot be done halfway. Holcomb says, "It's important for library staff to be 'ambassadors' between newsroom staff and information technology changes, which are often frustrating

or confusing." This means having the ability "to embrace change and to see traditional library services and new information technologies as two sides of the same coin."

Holcomb foresees "massive changes for my library in the next ten years." Her goals include securing additional space, organization of the collections and "growing my staff until the library is an influential and essential department at the newspaper." In addition, she wants "to increase our professional presence and to represent the *Gazette* to the community when we meet with other librarians, archivists and information professionals in southwest Michigan, as well as throughout the nation and the world. I feel that I have been offered a unique opportunity because the paper is a small enough organization that I can enact major changes in our information use, while at the same time test out the education I received in library school." She adds, "Although I didn't plan on becoming a news librarian, it's definitely the right place for me."

## The wonderful world of wikis

*Continued from page 1*



Front screen in edit mode

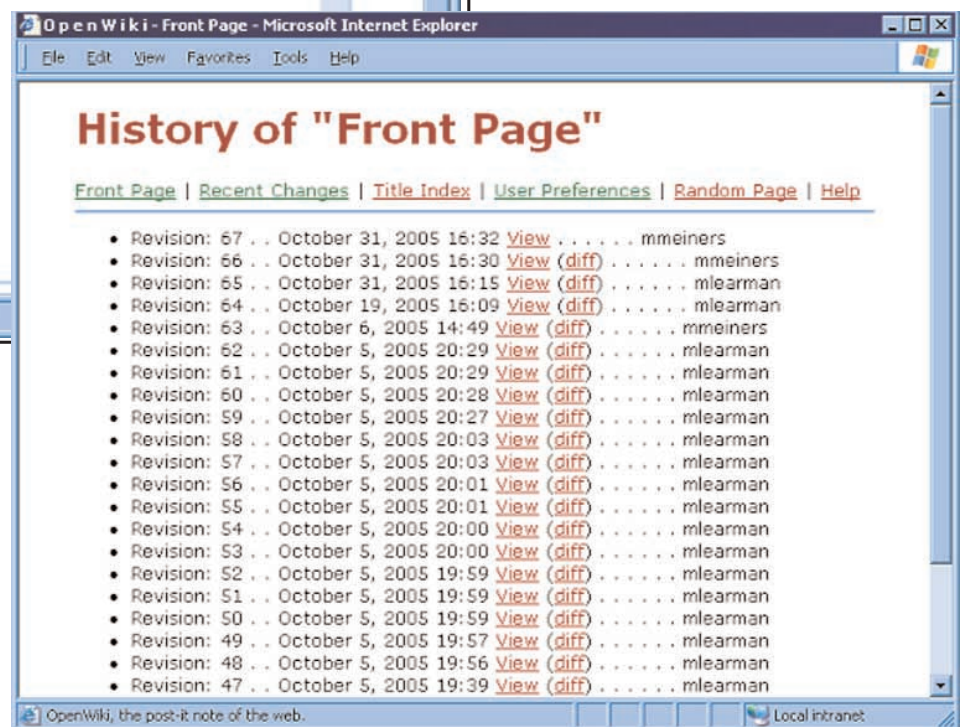
than html. In Openwiki, you can create a new page and link to it by connecting 2 or more upper-case words. For example FirstPage would create the page "First Page" and link to it from that instance. To link to a page, just type in the name. To link to a Web page just enclose the URL for it in brackets and give it a name: [Link.to.THIS.com THIS]

At the *Post-Dispatch* we use the wiki as a

reference to help researchers on deadline. We keep 'tip sheets' for ourselves on such things as researching individuals, aircraft accidents, and court records. We keep data such as contact information, chronologies and prominent bios. The wiki makes it easy for us to link related information throughout the 'site' taking you directly from the page on backgrounding individuals to the criminal records page.

Our wiki is still a work in progress but it is fast becoming the preferred method of storing and sharing information. As the screen shots will show we have not done very much to polish the look and feel of the wiki yet, but it is customizable. Currently the wiki is only used by the researchers, but we intend to expand its use to the whole newsroom.

*Continued on page 12*



Page for tracking revisions

# NewslibMini

By ANNE HOLCOMB  
KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

## Why a Wiki?

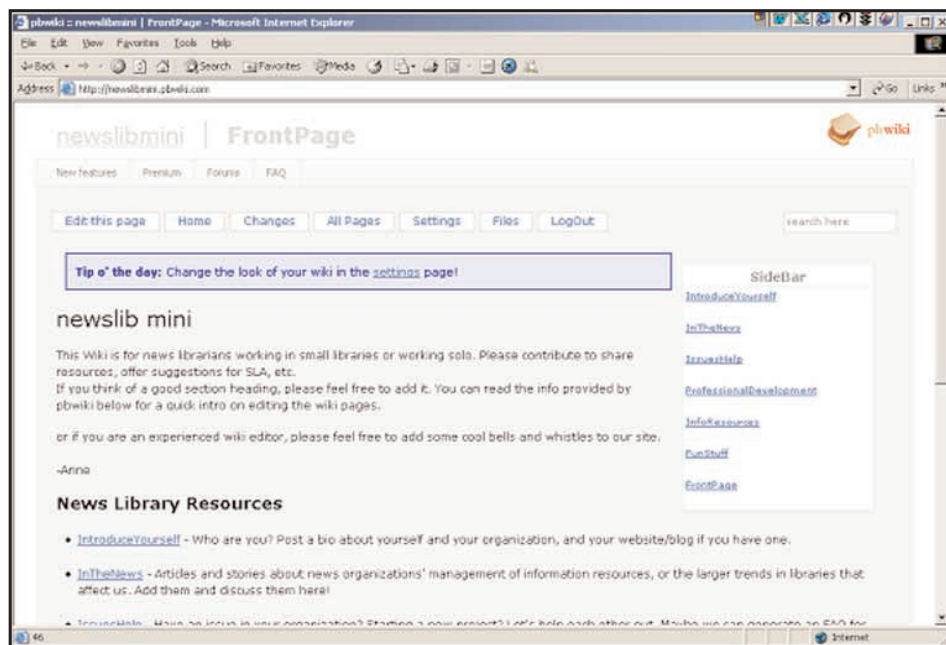
After attending the SLA conference in Toronto this past spring, I felt the need to network more with other librarians who were working on a solo basis, at a small organization, or with limited resources, so we could share ideas about working with our more-limited means—and very limited time! At first I thought about creating a mailing list based on the great example of NewsLib, but it seemed like this would just be duplicating the same idea. I've always been interested in the collaborative aspects of wikis, so I decided this might be a better option.

## The Goals of NewslibMini

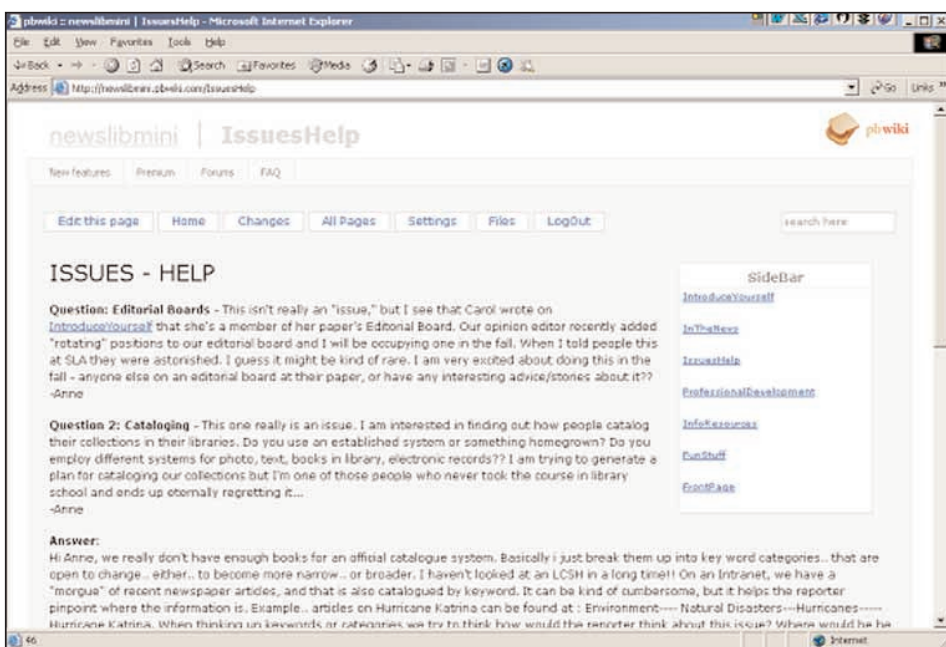
The goal of this wiki is to create a knowledge base of ideas and resources, gathered together in one spot, for news librarians working with limited resources to consult. I hope that NewslibMini will become a significant part of the orientation for a new member of the News Division, and that they can learn something from current members' experiences.

## Wiki Tour

Currently, NewslibMini has six sections: Introduce Yourself (describe your background and job), In The News (good articles and discussion about libraries, media & technology in the news), Issues/Help (current management dilemmas we're facing, and advice from colleagues), Professional Development (information and discussion about professional associations, CE, and conferences), Info Resources (useful Web sites/blogs/information), and Fun Stuff (humorous resources).



NewslibMini home page



NewslibMini issues and help page

## Make Your Mark

The best part of a wiki is that any user can edit the pages. Would you like to see another category on the site? Add it! You'll find information on editing pages at the

bottom of the wiki's front page, or just click on the "edit this page" button at the top of the page.

To log in to NewslibMini, go to

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## The wonderful world of wikis

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Court records page

## NewslibMini

*Continued from page 11*

<http://newslibmini.pbwiki.com>. It's open to all news librarians, but those who are working solo are especially encouraged to post. To log in, enter your name and the password "librarians." The password is the same for all users.

### Making Time

Of course, we all have limited time and resources in our busy days. How can we keep up with changes on the wiki? If you have an RSS reader, you can keep track of changes to NewslibMini without having to log in! Simply add this URL to your feed reader: <http://user:librarians@newslibmini.pbwiki.com/rss.php>. Problems? Check the pbWiki FAQ at <http://pbwiki.com/faq.php>.

### The Next Step

Wikis are all about sharing. Did you know that users can also post documents and pictures to the wiki site? I'm hoping that we can build up the wiki by adding things we've created for work for others to use as an example: forms, planning materials, training scripts, etc. Definitely post any pictures of your library/newsroom/workspace and/or add links to your Flickr site or blog—whatever you think might interest and help your fellow NewslibMini users!

### Great things about wikis:

- ❖ Free.
- ❖ Easy to learn.
- ❖ Easy to create pages.
- ❖ Easy to link pages.
- ❖ Easy to edit.
- ❖ Keeps track of every page you have created.
- ❖ Keeps track of revisions and makes it very easy to check changes.
- ❖ Keeps track of the pages you visit.
- ❖ Full-text searching.
- ❖ Shows breadcrumb trails.

### Examples of things we keep on our wiki:

- ❖ Civil and criminal court links and information.
- ❖ Tip sheet for a thorough background check on an individual.
- ❖ Tip sheet for a thorough background check on a company.
- ❖ Guide to property records.
- ❖ Contacts.