



V O L U M E 2   N U M B E R 1

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::

**FEATURE – Bruce Jensen**

**Keepers of the Long Memory: A Twisted Appreciation**

Bruce Jensen recently completed graduate study at the University of California, Los Angeles in a joint MA program embracing Information Studies and Latin American Studies. He has worked in public libraries in the US and Mexico, and is moderator of the [Spanish in our Libraries](#) (SOL) mailing list and proprietor of the [PLUS](#) (Public Libraries using Spanish) web site. He taught ESL for six years, working with immigrants, college students, and inmates in the US, Japan, and Mexico and has a pocketful of library cards from all those places.

**INTERVIEW – Jim Schepcke**

Jim Schepcke has been Oregon's State Librarian since 1991. He is an ardent champion of Oregon's school and public libraries, as well as an outspoken, articulate advocate for the profession. We asked him to comment on current and future opportunities for librarians.

**PEOPLE**

[Terren Ilana Wein](#) graduated from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is now master of her domain at Career and Placement Services, University of Chicago.

**ASK SUSU**

Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu advises on running a small library.

**TECH TALK**

In this issue, Shirley Kaiser of [Brainstorms and Raves](#) and [SKDesigns](#) reviews the Opera 6 web browser.

**LETTERS**

Say What? If you have something to say, we want to hear it. [Send us](#) your letters and we'll post them here. If you're responding to an article or interview, place the headline in the subject of your email.

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F E A T U R E   A R T I C L E

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::

## **Keepers of the Long Memory: A Twisted Appreciation**

**BRUCE JENSEN**



Bruce Jensen recently completed graduate study at the University of California, Los Angeles in a joint MA program embracing Information Studies and Latin American Studies. He has worked in public libraries in the US and Mexico, and is moderator of the [Spanish in our Libraries](#) (SOL) mailing list and proprietor of the [PLUS](#) (Public Libraries using Spanish) web site. He taught ESL for six years, working with immigrants, college students, and inmates in the US, Japan, and Mexico and has a pocketful of library cards from all those places...

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The most radical idea in America, I've heard [Utah Phillips](#) say, is the *long memory*.

He means that if more of us had sharp recall and held grudges against our leaders, the whole rotten pyramid could come crashing down. Fanciful example: imagine what would happen if all of us suddenly remembered that our shortened 40-hour workweek with extra pay for overtime was not the fruit of corporate kindness, but rather of organized fighting. We moderns can clock out at Miller Time thanks to the hard sacrifices of people whom HR professionals would condemn as "disgruntled:" nervy, balls-to-the-wall battlers who got together and complained hard and loudly. Asking for an eight-hour day got them screamed at, threatened, fired. Some of them, like the ones memorialized at the [Haymarket Memorial](#) in Chicago, died for the idea of Miller Time.

Stickier, more vigilant memories than ours would question why the rest of the world celebrates Labor Day on the May 1 anniversary of the big march that led to our eight-hour shift - while in the very country where that event happened, we don't. The accomplishments of organized labor aren't among the memories our bosses want us to keep, because memories like those would encourage more of us to organize. That's what's radical about the long memory.

*"Now hang on just a minute, Mister Pinko!" I hear you saying, "I love my job and I never watch the clock! I'd gladly stay and keep our library open till the wee hours if they'd let me! Wouldn't matter if they chained me to the reference desk like a sweatshop seamstress!"*

Stay with me a moment. This piece is a tribute to you. This isn't about labor issues; it's about *memory*.

### **An Exceptional, Extraordinary Year Pretty Much Like Any Other**

If the long memory is radical, mine's no threat to homeland security. Maybe you know that uneasy feeling. Of the last twelve months since *NewBreed Librarian* first lit up screens in libraries around the world, I'm hard pressed to remember many other events. A few stand out in my mind, naturally.

My dad died last year. Then my mom, too. I finished library school; it's not clear to me how. Twelve months ago, I was hobbling around with my broken leg and arm encased in braces, trying to get a job - even though I couldn't properly bathe or groom myself (just imagine). But damned if somebody didn't hire me as a librarian. One of those **Internet librarians** you've been hearing about, that whole **NIFOC** crowd, to be sure. But still...

Significant historical events of 2001, let's see...last January the country was cozying up to the notion of having a president who was never really elected. In February an earthquake rattled my hometown and terrified my mom. Her last earthquake, may she rest in peace. The ALA *did* elect its new president - this one, the kind of **president who'd refuse to cross a picket line** and chose to stand outside a fancy hotel with screaming union members while his peers inside sipped Chardonnay. And of course I remember a Tuesday morning in September.

You know: the moment when History, uh, Changed Forever, whatever that means; when America Lost Its Innocence. All of that.

I've come to believe that along with its other gruesome, heartbreaking consequences, 9/11 knocked the country silly, finished off its already damaged memory. The suspicion hatched that very day, while I listened, aghast, to spurious comparisons to Pearl Harbor. It deepened in weeks that followed as I was urged to loathe our evil, unidentifiable foes. And it was confirmed when I heard an expert suggest over the relatively reliable public radio airwaves that now, *as never before*, our country stood united in struggle.

Somehow it all resembled wholesale memory loss. Was this *really* the first time, or the most significant time, the country had faced enemies? I wasn't around during WWII, to take just one example, but I had to suspect that maybe there wasn't a historical first in every conceivable aspect of the aftermath of 9/11. Maybe.

It also crossed my mind, since I've lived in other lands and was closely touched by a disaster whose death toll exceeded that of the WTC attacks, that there have been bloody terrorist attacks, mass deaths of tens of thousands, acts of war, you name it, going on *somewhere* nearly every year now since - well, since as long as anyone can remember. But how long *can* we remember?

### **The Most Vicious of Maladies**

My mom had Alzheimer's, as did her sister and most of her brothers. Unless you've been close to someone who has it, you might not appreciate what a cruel disease it is. Cute little memory lapses, malapropisms, droll bloopers that you can laugh right off? Not on your life. Think in terms of forgetting how and where to move your foot in order to take a step, and of standing frozen on your walker for several minutes till you're trembling furiously and you scream that you just want to die. My mom did that, a lot.

Surely you've noticed those Alzheimer's villages springing up in the suburbs: entire housing complexes, whole neighborhoods, for folks with dementia and failed memories. It's a growth industry, kids, and you and I both know that it scares the shit out of us. Sure, we joke about "senior moments," but there's no disguising the **terror lurking behind that kind of humor**.

And when you have Alzheimer's a lot of the scared-shitless people around you are gently, or maliciously, making fun of your handicap. My mom knew damn well they were but there's not much she

could do because when she tried to spit out a sentence, after a half-dozen words she forgot where it was going.

### **Why You're My Hero**

As our lifespan lengthens, we Westerners grow more insecure than ever about memory.

Senior moments? A 2001 [survey by IKEA](#) revealed that U.S. adults report spending an average of 43 minutes per week searching for their TV's remote control (note that I massaged the data; the figures were seven minutes for women, one hour and twenty aggravating minutes for us fellas).

Note further how phrases like the one that introduced this section slide so trippingly off the terminal and sneak smoothly into your brainpan. I mean, really: How the hell would *I* know for sure about the ebbs and flows of memory insecurity since the dawn of Western civilization? I or anybody else? But what a seductive phrase, huh? Right up there with "*Everything* has changed in America," and "Never before has [*fill in the blank*] as in the days following the September 11 attacks."

Here's what I do know: A creature with a poor memory is a danger to itself and others. At best pathetic, but more likely threatening, unstable, in need of attentive care. Guy Pearce's character in the movie [Memento](#) is a lethal stooge in the hands of anyone crass enough to exploit his memory loss. He tattoos crucial bits of information on his body, for ready reference. Constantly unsure of his purpose and his next move, he sheds clothing, consults his fleshly factfile.

There's nothing the least bit charming or comic about a truly failing memory. Its effects are demeaning, humiliating, horrific. Now, extrapolate. Imagine a society that doesn't care to remember, that doesn't bother to keep its collective memory sharp. That prospect is just as unpleasant. What's more, the scale of vulnerabilities grows.

Part of the reason you are so freaking important and, if you'll pardon the buzzword, *heroic*, [Mister and Ms. NewBreed Librarian](#) & all the Support Staff at Sea, is that you care for our memory. You keep it spry, busy, popping with new thoughts, and you work obsessively to make its components readily available - sometimes instantly - to the people who need it, whose lives it enriches. If "enriches" sounds stale, try this: Whose lives it makes tolerable, safer, funnier, more interesting, healthier, calmer, more productive, libidinous, spiritual, smarter, more amusing. Because if you think about it you'll admit that everyone who steps in your door or uses your website lives better than they would have without your efforts.

### **Closet Social Workers - and Closet Mormons?**

It's simplistic to say that Alzheimer's erases memories. There's evidence that the memories still exist but the disease makes them inaccessible.

You know - like when the library's hours are incompatible with the schedules of local working people. Or when its valuable services are [shyly](#) (or slyly) underpromoted, hence unfamiliar. Or when policies and the shape of the collection keep certain people away and perpetuate Charlie Robinson's notorious boast that he wasn't any "[closet social worker](#)," like so many other misguided librarians: "We're middle class people serving the middle class." Which raises a question. What happens when only particular groups enjoy the privilege of having a memory? Look, Alzheimer's is a real monster, but at least it doesn't discriminate.

My dad was lucid to the end. His reliable memory became the one that mattered. He sometimes used it to try and spark flashes of recollection in my mom's mind. But as my dad lay dying, my sister was already busy with a revisionist history of the man's life. Going through his personal effects after his death, she convinced herself that the lifelong agnostic had somehow seen the light in his final days. She shares her faith with anyone who'll listen. Since I heard our dad damning his daughter's preachiness not three days before he died, I'm not among the listeners.

But her impulses aren't unusual. Librarians are well aware of the Mormon church's tremendous genealogical archives, which have their roots in its practice of "baptism of the dead." When sharp-eyed observers noticed that the church had managed to posthumously make Mormons of Freud, Einstein, and Anne Frank and her family, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and several **rabbis jumped all over the LDS** in 1995. Last year careful checking showed that such conversions were **still going on**.

Libraries can protect us from those whose self-interested agendas rest on falsity and rely on hazy memories. Willie Sutton robbed banks because "that's where the money is," (even if **he wrote that he never said that**) and serious researchers, concerned citizens, and hard-working social activists come to your libraries because that's where the facts are.

Libraries are much more than memory banks, of course. They exist because some of us closet social workers - or public service workers, if you like - are in love with the idea of a place whose services help us all to be more awake, more well-informed, more happy, connected, content, and entertained; more capable of solving problems and figuring things out; more human.

Even if the most significant event of the past year is crassly exploited by advertisers and newschannels and dealers in Chinese-made American flags, there are those among your colleagues whose response to the events is faithful to the mission of the librarian, the guardian of memories, the builder and rebuilder of communities. Think of those who **collect and archive the debris**, and of the **NYPL's special programs, resource guides**, and immediate branch openings.

The collections you nurture and maintain, the databases and websites and clipping files you build, the weblogs you author, the knowledge you share when you teach users, your **community-building** efforts - they all deepen and lengthen the memory.

Memory keeps us alive, allows us to thrive. Tending to it is a vital job. The long memory *is* a radical idea, despised by that old Antihero With a Thousand Logos who gets such a big kick out of pushing us around. The long memory is about the only thing we have that can, sometimes, monkeywrench the bastard. So keep an eye on it.

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## F E A T U R E I N T E R V I E W

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::



Jim Scheppke has been Oregon State Librarian since 1991. Prior to that time he worked in statewide library development at both the Oregon State Library and the Texas State Library. He began his career as a public librarian in Lubbock, Texas, and managed the West Texas Library System. Scheppke holds an MLS degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He is a past-President of the Oregon Library Association, and was named Oregon Librarian of the Year by the Oregon Library Association in 1996. In 2001 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Oregon Educational Media Association for his work on behalf of school libraries in Oregon.

He is an ardent champion of Oregon's school and public libraries, as well as an outspoken, articulate advocate for the profession. We asked him to comment on current and future opportunities for librarians.

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**NewBreed Librarian: Recently you made a statement that younger librarians with master's degrees "can look forward to advancing very rapidly into well-paying positions." Where are these jobs likely to be? In libraries? Or elsewhere?**

**Jim Scheppke:** I don't think it's any secret that there are some well-paying jobs for new librarians in the information industry. But I would encourage new librarians to think longer term. How far can you advance in those jobs? In libraries you may have to sacrifice a little bit at the entry-level, but long term, I think the future is excellent if you are willing and able to step up and be a leader.

There is a huge baby boom generation of librarians that is just on the verge of retirement. A recent *Library Journal* survey reported that 40 percent of library directors plan to retire in 9 years or less. Another statistic that I've seen recently is that 58 percent of professional librarians will turn 65 between 2005 and 2019. What this all means for younger librarians at the start of their career is that if you have the right stuff, you can advance very rapidly in your career.

This is really unprecedented in our lifetimes. When I was coming up in the profession, advancement was really hard because incumbents just stayed put. That's not going to be true in the next decade or two.

**NBL: What about non-MLS library workers and librarians who are already in the profession? Do you see opportunities for improved salaries?**

**JS:** I wish I could be optimistic about this, but it's hard in the middle of a recession, when all I hear about is how strapped government is for revenue. After the "Roaring 90's" we may just have to suffer through a decade that is more like the 30's. That means that even if we want to improve compensation in libraries, it may be very difficult to do.

The fact of the matter is that compensation improves significantly as you advance in your career. Library leaders have achieved pay equity with other leaders in the public sector. This wasn't always true. It wasn't uncommon even 20 years ago for library leaders, as part of a "women's profession," to make less. Thankfully those days are behind us, but the bottom line is, if you want to be assured of good compensation, you need to advance in your career.

My advice to anyone who is not happy with their compensation is to take charge of their own destiny. If you don't have an Master's degree, get one. With all the brand new distance learning programs out there, geography is not nearly the insurmountable problem it once was. If you have an MLIS but feel stuck in a low-pay, dead end position, take control and do something to change the situation. Leadership is the key. You need to become a leader to do well at almost anything. The good news is that our profession has growing opportunities for leadership. You just need to position yourself to grab those opportunities.

**NBL: What do you see as opportunities for the profession in the coming decade?**

**JS:** Younger librarians have a huge advantage over us old-timers because most of you really understand technology and where it can take us. The knowledge and understanding that most 40+ librarians have is really pretty thin. Take advantage of that to make yourself the person that everyone turns to for solutions and direction when it comes to library technology. From what I see out there, libraries have only begun to exploit the potential of the Web to revolutionize library services. You need to lead the revolution.

**NBL: Anything else you'd like to add?**

**JS:** Some of my colleagues are predicting a crisis developing where there are simply not enough librarians and not enough library leaders to fill all the vacancies that we are going to see. I'm more optimistic. I don't see a crisis looming.

One thing that has changed is that we are realizing that librarians don't have to do everything important in a library. My entry-level job was as the business manager in a medium-sized public library. I just happened to have some retail business background, along with my new MLS degree. Today, that library would probably hire a business professional. I think we are learning the value of having other types of professionals in our workforce, and we are also learning to maximize the skills and talents of library paraprofessionals and support staff. I think this is a good thing. It has been too common in the past for librarians to be assigned responsibilities that were really not professional-level work.

So in the future we may not need as many librarians, and that might be one way that we will avoid a crisis. We can also avoid a crisis by taking maximum advantage of all the new distance education opportunities so that support staff can advance into librarianship, and libraries need to help their staff to do this.

Whether we avert a leadership crisis is another matter. Again, I am optimistic. But it's really up to the new generation of librarians to begin to step up. Get some leadership training if you need it. There's lots of it out there. Then become a leader, in your library or in your state library association. Volunteer to be a project manager, or to chair a staff committee, or to serve on a committee of your state library association. State library associations are wonderful incubators for leadership, and usually it is not hard to get involved. Find some leaders to mentor you and to support you and provide references as you seek advancement. Don't be shy about asking someone to be a mentor for you. Most of us are flattered to be asked, and more than happy to help.

I would love to be a 20-something librarian again with all the opportunities that are out there. You can't appreciate how much better it is than when I was beginning my career in the 1970's. These really can be the best of times for librarians, but it's up to you to make it happen.

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## P E O P L E

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::



Terren Ilana Wein graduated from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in August 2001 and is now the library manager at Career and Placement Services, University of Chicago. And because that doesn't keep her busy enough, she sings in two choirs, belongs to two reading groups, and is enslaved by her two cats (which doesn't leave her with much time to pay attention to her [web site](#) and [blog](#)).

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Last August, I did three momentous things: I graduated from my MLS program, I moved out of the town I'd called home since 1996, and I worked as the Teaching Assistant for my program's core class, "Libraries, Information, and Society." This was the first LIS class I'd taken, before I even enrolled as a degree seeker. Graduating on this note gave my experience in library school a certain roundness. The opportunity to revisit the same issues (and even some of the same readings) that had been my introduction to the intellectual and emotional world of librarianship gave my passage into the world of professional library work a depth and meaning beyond the need to get a root canal.

I entered my MLS program because I was tired of adjuncting, measly paychecks, and grading papers. But I graduated my MLS program because I came to understand that our profession is important. We make a difference. What we do matters. I don't love every minute of my job. But I love being a librarian.

My current position at the University of Chicago is my first professional library job and, I'll be honest, I did real good. My official title is "Library Manager." I make all my own decisions about everything. My business card is beautiful, embossed, classy; I bought a shiny ALA business-card holder for it. I don't have to give up my vamp lipstick. So, I do everything, from budgeting to bibliography. I have a wonderful graduate assistant who keeps me from becoming buried in small pieces of paper. But... I'm the only librarian (it's a career center, and my coworkers are mostly counselors). It's hard to leave the bosom of a tight professional/learning environment where one can have impassioned debates about database interfaces. I miss sitting in my friend Joan's kitchen talking about reader-recommendation systems. I miss really, really knowing the ins and outs of the OPAC.

We're not automated, so every card has to be typed, every book's card stamped by hand. My typical day includes mundane tasks like putting the newspapers on the rack, wading through reams of email, tattletaping new books. On the other hand, my typical day includes analyzing our website in order to redesign it, struggling to come up with ideas to improve information organization and access, helping students understand the research process and their options, talking to other librarians around the country via the several listservs I'm subscribed to.

I have to say, I think being a librarian is cool. I took this job because of the opportunity to have my finger in a bunch of different pies - to get to work with a variety of different issues in library and

information science. Nothing that I took in graduate school is inapplicable here, and, in fact, I could've taken twice the class load and still be using all that information. And from here, I can go anywhere.

I am the Master of my Domain. And it rocks!

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A S K S U S U

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::

Susu, our sometimes irreverent advice columnist, answers your questions about work, school, the job hunt, and librarianship in general. In this issue, Susu advises on running a small library.

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**Dear Susu,** I work at a company that sells educational materials. We do most of our business thru our catalog. Business is great, in fact we are moving to a bigger building in April. Our company has a library. After applying for the position, I was selected to be the librarian. We are rather informal. There is no formal cataloging in place. People just sign things out from a clipboard. I have done a lot to turn the library around. I post displays, research composers and display information from that. I put up bulletin board displays, etc. My question is this; What can I study to learn more about the actual skills needed to be more scientific about the library? I feel like I have to get a masters in library science to just learn some basics! I have completed some college. It sounds like I would have to spend a lot of time and money just to learn how to run a simple little company library, but I would like to learn some necessary things. Are there any courses you could recommend? Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

**Dear Company Librarian,** It sounds like you're doing pretty well running your library on instinct and by trial & error. I could point you toward the [Council on Library/Media Technicians](#), which maintains a list of library technician programs (some of which have a distance education option) but I don't think it's necessary in your case.

Running a library is mostly common sense. You look at what your library users need, and you find the best way to give it to them. That doesn't mean that an MLS is unnecessary - academic and public libraries hire librarians for very good reasons. But a company library such as yours is not bound by government and community expectations or accreditation criteria. You can choose to do whatever works best. Donald Sager's [Small Libraries: Organization and Operation](#) can provide you with an outline of the various issues you may want to consider.

Fundamental to administering any library is knowing what you have, and knowing where to find it. Libraries have developed various systems for keeping track of the inventory, but it's not necessary for your library to join [OCLC](#) to build a library catalog or for you to invest hundreds - if not thousands - of dollars in an MLS or Library Technicians' Associate degree to develop a system that will work for your library.

Bookstores employ a very simple model of organization for their "collections" - placing books on the shelves by category or subject, and arranging them alphabetically by author within those subject areas. Libraries do something similar, except that we go one step beyond bookstores and provide both descriptive (call number, author, title, publisher, notes, etc.) and subject cataloging. That is, we put a label on the book with a unique call number on it so that (in theory) it always goes back on the shelf in the same place, and we also assign additional subject headings, usually based on a pre-determined but

flexible vocabulary, to the book to aid in retrieval. So while a book can only physically live in one subject area, intellectually it can belong to several.

Bookstores and libraries also keep an inventory (libraries call it a catalog or shelf list) of what they have. The only difference between them is that over time libraries have developed a highly codified system of cataloging. If you're interested in learning more about this, I'd suggest that you pick up a copy of Lois Mai Chan's **Cataloging and Classification: an Introduction**, one of the textbooks of choice in introductory cataloging classes.

You don't need to agonize over whether cm (centimeter), mm (millimeter), and km (kilometer) should be followed by a period or not. The basic information is the most important - title, author, publisher, date, subject, and call number will let you and your users find what you need. This information is usually provided by the CIP (cataloging-in-publication) data on the reverse of the title page (a standard in small and large press books since the 1970s). If you have the time, include the table of contents and a brief abstract (summary), even a scan of the cover, as this sort of rich cataloging is not only hugely appreciated but it aids in retrieving the item.

Any database software will enable you to create an automated catalog. Your company may already have software available, or you may have to purchase it. If you have to purchase it, I'd recommend looking at bibliographic software such as **ProCite** or **EndNote**, which both have pre-defined templates for various types of publications and allow you to maintain lists of terms you use more than once (such as authors' names or subjects).

A more sophisticated, home-grown system using database management software such as Access or Filemaker can help you keep track of materials when they leave the library. Depending on the size of your collection and the level of circulation, however, a paper system might work just as well.

Whether you decide to invest in more education or continue to figure things out on your own, as long as you keep your library users foremost in your mind, you'll do just fine.

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Shirley Kaiser stays busy as a Web site designer and developer for her business, [SKDesigns](#), writes a daily weblog/column, [Brainstorms and Raves](#), and is on the Steering Committee for the [Web Standards Project](#). Another **passion** is the piano, and she has an M.A. in piano performance and a CD of her own music on the way. Her two children and her cocker spaniel try to keep an eye on her at home and sometimes succeed. In this issue, Shirley reviews the Opera 6 web browser.

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The [Opera](#) browser, created by the Norway-based Opera Software ASA, is now in its 6th version for Windows and version 5 for Macs. A quick peek at Opera's site instantly reveals that Opera is also available for Linux/Solaris, OS/2, QNX, Symbian and a multitude of languages.



Opera's latest versions are now clearly strong competition for [Internet Explorer](#) and [Netscape](#). While it claims to be "the fastest browser on earth," that's only one aspect of this impressive, easy to use and feature-packed browser that's a small 3.2MB download (10.7MB if you also need to download Java). Their free version has an inconsequential ad, or you can pay the \$39 for no ads. If you use the free version of the [Eudora](#) e-mail program, you're already used to having an ad within the interface.

In my own library visits and in learning from colleagues what libraries around the U.S., Canada, Europe, and the rest of the world are currently using, many use Internet Explorer and some still have Netscape 4 browsers in use, too (with a sprinkling of everything in any version, too, of course). The difference in viewer experience between Netscape 4 and Opera can be quite dramatic, and Opera also continues to be found more stable than both Internet Explorer 5 and 6 and Netscape 4 and 6.

### **Accessibility**

Opera prides itself in its attention to accessibility, claiming to have developed the most flexible and powerful Web browser available. It has a full, easy-to-use keyboard navigation, a customizable interface, voice and sound enhancements, and other customizations to help make the Web accessible to all user groups, regardless of abilities and disabilities.

### **Other Helpful Features**

Among its many features, Opera also provides an e-mail client and newsgroup availability, drag-and-drop bookmarking, multi-lingual support (now with Unicode support), mouse navigation, incorporates ICQ instant messaging, WAP surfing, and offers an advanced presentation tool, [OperaShow](#).

Because Opera is such a small program, it uses very little memory. It's not at all taxing to have multiple open windows, something that would drain many computers using Internet Explorer or Netscape, and a feature I've come to rely on using Opera.

Speaking of windows, I've also become quite accustomed to its feature of saving multiple open windows to resume when I start Opera again. I've elected to allow a popup window to ask me if I want to open Opera with no open windows, my selected "Home" page, previously open windows, or saved windows. I have my saved windows set for reading the morning news from various sites, and the rest of the day I generally select other alternatives. Saving multiple windows like this is a unique feature to Opera and one that has quickly become a necessity for me.

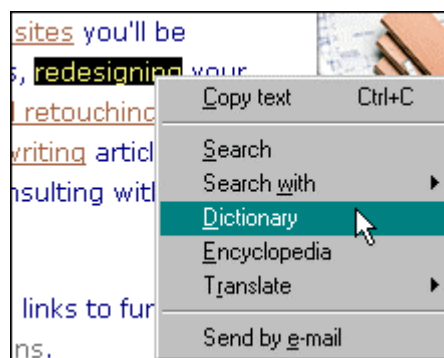
## New Features

### Personal Toolbar

The most visually obvious improvement with this new version is its contemporary interface that includes new features. Having used Opera since version 3, I'm especially happy to see that there's now a personal toolbar that also includes drag-and-drop capabilities, features that I've relied on heavily in Internet Explorer and Netscape and missed in previous Opera versions.

### Hotclick

A handy tool is the Hotclick feature to highlight a word on a Web page and have a pop-up window appear, from which you can click on the dictionary and get its definition, run a search, check an encyclopedia, quickly get a translation in a variety of languages, convert currency (when you highlight numbers), and more, as shown in the screenshot here.



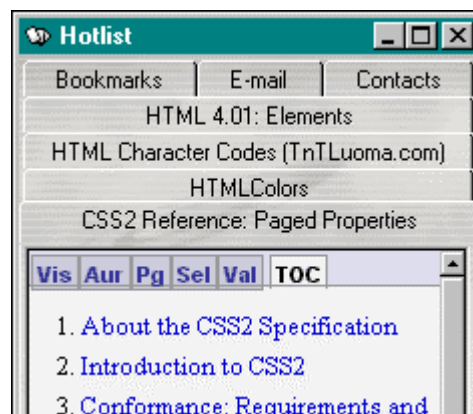
### Search Features

Another major convenience for Opera users is its search feature. You can choose among a wide range of searches - from Google and AllTheWeb to Amazon.com, mp3.com - search for domain names and stock quotes, search for something within a page, and more, all from the interface's drop-down menu in the new Personal bar. Once again, you can also highlight a word or phrase on the page and use the Hotclick feature.

### Panels

Panels are a handy, helpful feature with Opera that began with Windows version 5.12. The latest news headlines, maps, weather, and more can be added to the user's Hotlist panels. The "get panels" link from the Hotlist goes directly to the [MyOpera Community](#) section to find many custom panels. It's also possible to create your own.

Netscape 6 [Sidebar Tabs](#) can also be added to Opera's Hotlist Panels, which I recently learned via [Opera's discussion list](#). As shown in the screenshot, I've added two Netscape 6 Sidebar Tabs (the [CSS2 Reference](#) and the [HTML 4.01 Reference](#)) and two Opera Hotlist Panels (the [HTML Colors](#) and [HTML Character Codes](#)).



## Single and Multiple Document Interface

The user can choose between single or multiple document interface (SDI/MDI). Why does that matter? One of the benefits is not having multiple icons in your taskbar. If you have 6 windows open in one Opera screen and 4 in another screen, you'll just have two icons in your taskbar. I also find it handy for grouping windows while I'm working, researching, or browsing the Web.

## W3C and Standards Support

Brett Tabke ranks Opera 6 above Netscape 6 and Internet Explorer 6 for CSS2 support in his review at Search Engine World, [Face Off - A browser Feature Chart: Who has their ducks in a row?](#) This is not surprising since the CTO of Opera is the author of CSS, Håkon Wium Lie.

Opera also provides **more support of JavaScript 1.4** than previous versions, although it still falls behind the other top two browsers, and it is **still disappointing to Web developers** for not having more DOM 1 support yet either. Opera's [specs](#) also provide helpful information about how much they support.

What does this mean for the user? Most sites will be viewed with CSS2 support and be fully functional, but occasionally navigation, shopping cart features, or other extra features may not work (usually due to only partial support of JavaScript 1.4 and DOM1). Often changing the browser identification to MSIE 5.0 will alleviate support issues at a site (Preferences > Connections > Browser identification). For my own daily, continual use there are very few sites that I have any problems using with Opera.

## Final Thoughts

While there are many user friendly features, I like Opera the most for its stability, W3C support, and fast loading small program size. It's not perfect, and no browser is, certainly, but it's also a tool that I can use without even thinking about it because it works so well. It doesn't crash, it loads quickly, it supports most everything available with newer browsers, and hums along smoothly and effortlessly all day long. That's more than I've experienced with any other browser on my system, so naturally I've become quite a fan of Opera.



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L E T T E R S

::: FEBRUARY 2002 :::

12 MAR 02 :: **"Your Common Sense Approach to Corporate Librarianship is Optimistic"**

Dear Susu,

Congratulations on your mothership's inclusion on 'Top Librarian Personalities On The Web'!

I'd like to respond to the **advice** you sent in February to 'Company Librarian' aka 'CL'. Your common-sense approach to corporate librarianship is optimistic.

I agree with your focus on customer service - that CL needs to keep his or her customers' needs in mind. However needs assessment is a professional skill that librarians are taught and trained to practice. CL doesn't have a clue as to what questions to ask his or her patrons, what services are possible or how to assess the current collection and level of service. The best CL can do is to be responsive, rather than proactive, which any corporate librarian will tell you sounds the death knell for his or her job. My point is that librarianship is a profession, and while the practice of hiring secretaries to run libraries occurs, it ought to be discouraged by librarians. People hired to manage libraries ought to be professionals, or training in that direction.

Organizing materials in small company libraries is not managing that library. By merely describing tasks, you diminish the professional services that all librarians provide. Task-completion indicates to the management who hired CL that if he or she can put the books in order, voila - a librarian!

Finally I will add that while corporate librarians may not need the MLS for "government and community expectations or accreditation criteria", they'd better have one in order to provide efficient and professional service to the parent organization. Otherwise, they're a waste of the company's money, whether they're hired at secretaries' wages or not.

Should CL need a mentor / sponsor and he or she is interested in librarianship, feel free to pass along my name.

Thanks for listening, Susu, and I hope your creators, Juanita and Colleen, are doing very well.

Best,

Cory S. Pike

Salt Lake City, UT

**Susu responds:** Dear Cory, Juanita and Colleen both say hello - it's been a while. I have to admit that writing this column was not easy - neither of my "benefactors" has experience actually running a corporate library, and both wish they'd known you were in the biz. My intent was not to belittle or devalue the MLS or the library profession, but to offer some ideas to CL on what to do next. You are



absolutely right ... a professional librarian is the best thing, but in CL's case, the need was immediate and an MLS is not within her reach in the near future. I will pass along your offer to mentor her - that's a great idea.

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