

# CHECK IT OUT

## WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

On October 15 the interactive Web-based reference service about which we wrote in previous issues of *Check It Out* went live. By clicking on **Reference Now!**, located in the upper right corner of the library's home page, you will be connected to a chat session with a reference librarian. Through **Reference Now!** you will be able to consult with a reference librarian from your home, office, or dormitory room for extended hours seven days a week. Please try it out, and let us know how it works for you. Initially the service will be available as follows:

Monday–Thursday: 10 a.m. to 2 a.m.  
Friday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday: 2 p.m. to midnight

My thanks to all those who participated in the contest to find the official name for our new and exciting live reference service. The winning name, **Reference Now!**, was submitted by Alec McLane, Music Librarian.

Once again this semester there has been a serious outbreak of mold in Olin Library, although by the time you read this newsletter, modifications to the HVAC system that provide humidity control will be near completion. These changes will bring an end to our difficult problem with mold. We are most grateful for your patience.

Robert Adams  
University Librarian



### Olin Library:

#### More Than Just a Quiet Place to Study and Check Books Out

Complete with chandeliers and marble benches, the

lobby of Olin Library is a symbol of sophistication and timelessness. It is a gateway to limitless thoughts written over thousands of years. When walking through this gateway there is a feeling of wonder, but there is also a feeling of loneliness—the loneliness that comes with one's adulthood duties. This loneliness gave birth to the Wesleyan Story Hour.

The English Majors Committee developed The Wesleyan Story Hour for two main reasons. First, as up-and-coming adults, we were not willing to shut down the part of ourselves that is dedicated to silly, goofy, all-there-is-in-this-world-is-this-story-with-cool-pictures-that-they-are-reading-to-me innocence. The story hour is a way to give us a quick break from our serious thoughts. Secondly, we wanted to share our resources with children and make sure that we do not become stuffy adults who forget about how fragile and impressionable children are—who forget how easy it is to captivate the imagination of a child with words and pictures.

When the lobby of Olin Library echoes with a child's laughter, along with the footsteps of students dutifully going to do their own reading, a strange sort of magic takes place. Age is not a barrier—both children and adults are welcome and invited to attend the Wesleyan Story Hour. Come for one story, or come for five. If anything, it will remind you how really exciting stories like *Where the Wild Things Are* and *The Princess and the Pea* are. And they just might make you laugh. The Wesleyan Story Hour will be held in the lobby of Olin Library from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays during the school year.

Sasha Foppiano '02

### Feature Articles

Plagiarism and Turnitin.com

HarpWeek: "Welcome to the Nineteenth Century"

Research Instruction for Philosophy Majors

We now have a campus subscription to a plagiarism detection software program called **Turnitin.com**. It is a service to faculty and students concerned with the growing issue of plagiarism. With all the books, articles, encyclopedias, discussion groups, theses, and papers available electronically, the Internet provides an enormous world of resources for scholars and students to use for their research. The darker side of this situation is that it is now much easier to find and copy someone else's work and to attempt to use it as your own. In addition, there are many online "paper mills" offering papers for sale, or even for trade, on a wide variety of subjects. All of these sources provide text in electronic format, ready for students to copy and paste into their own papers. Considering the vast amount of text available on the Internet, attempting to find possible unattributed sources for a suspect paper is an almost impossible task. Plagiarism has always harmed those students who wish to adhere to the strict standards of academic honesty. The advent of the Internet, however, in addition to the benefit of providing a wealth of resources for scholars, has also made plagiarism both easier to commit and more difficult to detect.

**Turnitin.com** was developed by a group of professors at the University of California, Berkeley, who were concerned with the growing issue of digital plagiarism. The database is relatively easy to use. Simply upload an electronic copy of a paper into the **Turnitin** database, and the software does the rest of the work. A professor may upload papers into the database after students have handed in electronic copies of their research (by e-mail, on a disk, etc.), or the professor may allow students access to the **Turnitin** account themselves to upload their own papers. Rather than checking the whole paper against the

database, the software uses a series of algorithms to create a "digital fingerprint" of the text that can be used to identify matching patterns, even if the text has been substantially altered by paraphrasing or word substitution. The digital fingerprint of the paper is then matched against the contents of approximately 1.5 billion Web pages, paper mill essays, and a growing archive of previously submitted student papers. Within 24 hours, **Turnitin** produces an "originality report" that points out suspect passages and lists links to Web sites or contact information for previously submitted papers from which the content appears to have been taken. **Turnitin** does not, however, allow direct access to student research papers without student or faculty permission.

Another feature **Turnitin** plans to offer soon is the "peer review" option that will allow students in a class to view and to critique anonymously other students' anonymous research papers. This interesting feature will allow for assignments in which students can analyze each other's work and revise their own original submissions based on both faculty and student critiques, thereby involving students in the collaborative scholarly process of professionals in the discipline. The **Turnitin** subscription may be used in two ways. You may request to have a single paper checked against the database, or you may request to have an account set up for a class in order to check all papers submitted in the class. More information about **Turnitin** at Wesleyan University is available at <http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/turnitin/>. If you are interested in using this new software to assist in your efforts against plagiarism, please contact Kendall Hobbs in Olin Library at x3962 or [khobbs@wesleyan.edu](mailto:khobbs@wesleyan.edu).



### HarpWeek: "Welcome to the Nineteenth Century"

The Library has recently acquired *HarpWeek*, the electronic version of *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, the great American newspaper of the latter half of the 19th century. With a powerful search engine, high quality imaging, and excellent indexing, *HarpWeek* supports research in an amazing range of topics.

*Harper's Weekly* was published from 1857 through 1912 by the Harper Brothers, who in 1817 founded the firm that by 1825 had become America's largest publishing house. *Harper's Weekly* is a rich documentary source, profusely illustrated, brimming with advertisements,

literary works, political cartoons, feature articles and fascinating fillers on

nearly every imaginable topic and, of course, the news of the day. From its own time to the present, *Harper's Weekly* has been particularly well known as one of the best contemporary sources for the study of the Civil War.

*HarpWeek* is much more than a digitized version of the original. Before *HarpWeek*, *Harper's Weekly* had never been fully indexed. Now, full text searching of the complete run of the weekly is available. Even more useful, however, are the carefully designed index, an ongoing project now complete through 1887, as well as the many refined searching possibilities. *HarpWeek* can be browsed

chronologically and read, in full-page PDF images, much as the original was read. There is also word or phrase searching, proximity searching, and easy searching of many types of content, including advertisements, biographical sketches and obituaries, cartoons, editorials, fiction, government proclamations, illustrations, news stories, maps, panoramic views, poetry, portraits, publishers' notices, and travel narratives. References to people can be searched by their occupation. Literature can be searched by genre, and synopses are provided.

*HarpWeek* is accessible by clicking on its title in the online catalog or directly at <http://app.harpweek.com/>. Again, **Welcome to the Nineteenth Century!**

# Interviews with Joe Cavanagh and Heather MacFarlane, the Cyber-Librarians You are Likely to Meet Via the Reference Now! Service

## JOE CAVANAGH

### Tell us a bit about yourself

*I am retired from a long career in information management and delivery. My early training was as an engineer, but a work experience drew me to the scientific management of information and I pursued that interest in graduate school.*

*My relaxation is music. I'm a student of the fiddle and the mandolin, which complements my native interest in Celtic music—an interest that finds expression in a regular radio show from the University of Connecticut station, WHUS.*

### What attracted you to this job?

*I have long had an interest in the sociological aspects of telecommuting. Until recently, most remote (telecommuting) tasks involved interaction with databases rather than people. Call center technology, with its ability to "push" Web pages to callers, has changed that. Remote information searching need no longer be an activity undertaken in isolation. The technology allows participants to chat in real time and view Web pages together. It even permits the librarian to bring along, or "escort," the caller to appropriate Web sites as part of the service response.*

### Do you actually like to work those late night, weekend hours?

*I can't say yet if I like to work late hours, but I'm a night owl by nature. I'm also accustomed to being up and about in the wee hours for my radio work. In any case, knowing that my connection with this experimental service has a definite end point probably alters my attitude. Conceivably, Wesleyan and Connecticut College could, in the future, retain their present walk-in hours of reference service, yet provide after-hours live service from an academic library that is open in, say, London or Amsterdam.*

### What did you do to prepare yourself?

*Because the project is a collaborative study involving both Wesleyan University and Connecticut College I have made an effort to get to know both the reference librarians and the reference resources at each institution. It is helpful to know something of the environment in which patrons of the service reside as well as the library resources and services available to them. There may well be occasions when it will be desirable, or even necessary, to refer patrons to local library staff available during regular hours. Having some familiarity with available services and knowledgeable staff enhances my readiness and ability to help remote patrons.*

### Do you think you will have problems answering questions for both Wesleyan and Connecticut College students?

*I don't think so. Reference librarians are accustomed to dealing with wide-ranging demands for help. As I am beginning to learn, there are differences in the range of online resources available to support services for and at each campus. Those differences were determined by choices made at each library according to their perceived needs and their budgets. There is often more than one source for specific information, so it is likely that differentiation will appear to be a matter of degree.*

### Do you think many students will take advantage of it?

*It is hard to say how popular remote live help might become. Use of the service will be driven by the perceived benefits. Being able to stay in one's dorm room and still get help from a librarian in real time has to be a significant benefit. It will also have to build a reputation for reliability—that is to say availability and promptness—if it is to become a natural choice. But the "anonymity" of remote service might be a plus for some people. More likely the service will be used mainly by those who already use library services and who are comfortable enough with technology to ask for help remotely.*

### How do you envision this "Live Help" can help library users?

*As I mentioned earlier, a principal benefit of live help will be out-of-hours service. Students in need of help at those times will now have the ability to chat directly with a reference librarian in real time.*

*The project will offer general reference service in all disciplines. Sometimes, if an information need is highly specialized or complex, a question will be referred to a subject specialist in regular hours. In those cases the student won't have to explain his need all over again. The specialist will have in hand a transcript of the original interaction developed with the live help librarian.*

*A transcript e-mailed to that student enables students to verify what information was exchanged between the student and the librarian and to confirm or even re-visit online resources believed to be responsive to the student's needs.*

## HEATHER MACFARLANE

### Tell us a bit about yourself

*Well, I went to UConn where I majored in English and minored in history. I went directly to graduate school following college and graduated in August with a master's in library science. I hope to pursue another master's in history after a few years away from the rigors of school.*

### What attracted you to this job?

*I was intrigued by the prospect of learning more about the new technology involved in the live reference service. Since I have worked in a public library and a high school library, I wanted to try something new and challenging. I also knew of Wesleyan's reputation and felt I could learn as well as contribute to the academic community.*

### Do you actually like to work those late night, weekend hours?

*I actually don't mind the late night hours, but I admit I am not too keen about weekend hours. But as long as the schedule is somewhat consistent so that I can make plans, I can adjust. I have a horrible time waking up in the morning—I am truly not awake (even if I appear to be walking and talking) until noon. It just hurts to move.*

### What did you do to prepare yourself?

*This job requires more of a psychological than a physical reconditioning. It is odd not to work with one's peers—I know I will miss the interaction with my coworkers as the semester progresses. It is also difficult to see family and friends, since everyone else works nine to five.*

### Do you think you will have problems answering questions for both Wesleyan and Connecticut College students?

*Not really. I feel comfortable with the collection at Connecticut College and know I can ask for help if I can't answer a particular question.*

### Do you think many students will take advantage of it?

*I hope so! [See next answer.]*

### How do you envision this "Live Help" can help library users?

*I think this service provides an opportunity for the Wesleyan and Connecticut College communities to experience the future of library services. However, I can't see interactive chat sessions replacing regular reference services. I still consider it a supplement to the students' other library experiences.*

## Research Instruction for Philosophy Majors

Last year in these pages, we reported on some library research sessions aimed at philosophy majors. In three sessions with librarian Kendall Hobbs, students in Sanford Shieh's Phil 200 (Philosophical Methods) class examined reference sources for philosophy, learned techniques for finding books at Wesleyan and elsewhere (including online), and were introduced to resources such as *The Philosopher's Index* for finding journal articles. The students then worked on some assignments designed both to teach them about the subject of the course and to give them practice using library and Internet research sources for philosophy. For example, they looked up a topic from the class in several different philosophy reference sources and compared the various sources. From this assignment, students learned that reference sources provide very useful introductions to, or summaries of, topics, but are written by different scholars who approach the topics from different perspectives and must be evaluated accordingly. Students then compiled a brief bibliography of sources related to the class readings, comparing different indexes for their usefulness for the topics. They also wrote annotated bibliographies evaluating the sources used in their final papers.

Professor Shieh reports that the sessions were well-received by the students, and he has again added the sessions to this year's class. The purpose for adding the sessions is to teach philosophy students how to be independent, self-directed researchers in their field. This will be particularly useful for philosophy majors who write an honors thesis their senior year, but it will also be helpful for students in many upper level philosophy classes. Professor Shieh notes that students tend to have little trouble finding a few useful books on a topic and perhaps using the bibliographies in those books to find a few more sources. However, most students typically have difficulty doing systematic research on a topic, particularly the kind of research expected for upper level courses and senior theses—for example, how to quickly find explanations of terms and ideas in philosophy (a useful skill for a subject in which specific definitions and meanings of terminology are often crucial for understanding a philosophical system), as well as how to perform a thorough search of the professional literature. Also, from the professors' perspective, it is nice to be able to rely on students' abilities to teach themselves background information when they run across new topics in a

class, allowing the professor and students to focus on the main course topics during regular class time.

When librarians meet with classes, it is usually during a regular class period. Since Professor Shieh wanted three sessions in order to provide a more thoroughly systematic coverage about conducting research in philosophy, he scheduled the sessions outside of regular class time so as not to lose time for regular class activities. Though the students were not thrilled to have three extra "labs" in addition to the regular class sessions, they did report that they felt the sessions were worthwhile and that what they learned in the sessions would be useful not just in Phil 200 but also in other philosophy classes. One student who was a teaching assistant in another class said that she used some of the research tools and techniques she learned in the sessions to assist other students in her role as a TA.

Phil 200 is one example of how librarians are attempting to make a more concerted effort to assist faculty in teaching their majors how to navigate the professional literature of a discipline and how to become independent, self-directed learners. If you are interested in exploring ways to incorporate instruction and practice in using discipline-specific research sources and techniques, please contact the library liaison for your department (see <http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/fac/liais.htm> for the list of liaisons) or Kendall Hobbs, Instruction Librarian, at x3962, or [khobbs@wesleyan.edu](mailto:khobbs@wesleyan.edu).

### WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



Olin Memorial Library: (860) 685-2660  
Reference and Research: (860) 685-3873  
Circulation Office: (860) 685-3877  
Reserve Office: (860) 685-3852  
Interlibrary Loan Office: (860) 685-3876  
Library Office: (860) 685-3844  
Acquisition Office: (860) 685-3834  
Cataloging Office: (860) 685-3476  
Serials Office: (860) 685-3888  
Art Library: (860) 685-3327  
Psychology Library: (860) 685-2770  
Science Library: (860) 685-2860  
Scores and Recordings: (860) 685-3898  
Special Collections and Archives: (860) 685-3864  
World Music Archives: (860) 685-3826