

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR ALL INDIANA LIBRARIES AT WEBJUNCTION

by Wendy Knapp

You may have heard about WebJunction, you may have even heard their taglines. But what is WebJunction? And what does it have to do with Indiana libraries?

WebJunction is an online community that began as a grant project for OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). Awarded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this three-year grant enabled OCLC to create a portal for online resources for libraries. WebJunction offers online content to libraries such as courses in everything from basic computer skills to advanced Web design and from using the Internet to library management skills. Additionally, in the *All Aboard* discussion groups, library staff can go online to communicate and share ideas with other libraries around the world.

WebJunction also partners with several other companies to provide high-tech library services. For instance, WebJunction partnered with NPower in providing libraries with free access to TechAtlas technology planning tools. Another partnership, with TechSoup, offers libraries discounts on computing tools, including hardware and software. In addition, WebJunction administers grant projects for state

libraries and is designed to equip library staff with tools to help serve their communities. The Indiana State Library has participated in two WebJunction projects, Rural Library Sustainability and Spanish Language Outreach.

In 2006, seven Rural Library Sustainability workshops were held statewide throughout the summer. These workshops targeted directors of libraries that serve a population of less than 25,000 people. Funded with a grant from the Gates Foundation, WebJunction partnered with state libraries to take this program to public libraries around the country. These day-long workshops gave directors the opportunity to network with one another, share ideas about what has worked and has not worked for them, define common needs, and develop action plans to invigorate the work they are already doing in advocacy, library collaboration, funding, outreach, staff and patron training, upgrades and maintenance, and technology.

The State Library also participated in the Spanish Language Outreach program, another grant program funded by the Gates Foundation. This spring, the State Library offered day-long workshops that provided participants with proven techniques to bridge the cultural divide and market their libraries' services to the local Spanish-speaking community. Participants also received a "Survival Spanish for Library Staff" CD to take back to their libraries.

All Indiana librarians are eligible to participate in WebJunction's online community. Registering for a WebJunction account is both free and easy. To learn more about WebJunction programs and services visit www.webjunction.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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