

Syracuse University's R. David Lankes named as First "OITP Fellow"

ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) has named Syracuse University's R. David Lankes as its first OITP Fellow through December 2008. With this position, Lankes will lead a collaborative research project with OITP on the evolving landscape of information technology and its implications for the education of the next generation of library and information science (LIS) professionals.

Lankes' primary work will be to enhance the office's outreach to the scholarly and educational library and information science communities. While he will be working with the office on a wide range of issues, his primary focus will be on further developing the concept of participatory librarianship first set out in the OITP technology brief *Participatory Networks: The Library as Conversation* (www.ala.org/oitp).

"Libraries are in a great position to improve their services, and their positions with their communities," said Lankes, associate professor at Syracuse University's School of Information Studies and director of the Information Institute of Syracuse. "OITP is really a think tank within ALA, and it is important that it teams with scholars as much as possible. I'm very happy to be part of that process. It is vital to the entire library and information science community that practitioners and scholars engage in a continuous conversation on how best to serve patrons."

Lankes' work on participatory librarianship has included presentations both domestically as well as in Australia, Italy, and Sweden. More information on participatory librarianship can be found at www.ptbed.org and on Lankes site at www.DavidLankes.org.

Concerning OITP

OITP was established in June 1995 to conduct research, analysis, education efforts, advocacy, and strategic outlook in support of ALA's mis-

sion and the library community. Here's a brief overview of OITP's activities.

An important part of OITP's work involves educating policymakers and other stakeholders. OITP has initiated many collaborative research projects to gather data necessary for the development of national policies related to libraries and technology. Information on types of library connectivity and technology access to rural and poverty areas is critical to the implementation and evaluation of policies like universal service. OITP is also heavily involved with issues that are central to the academic and research library community, like copyright, public access to federally funded research, and digitization policy.

OITP provides resources and consultation to library professionals to help them better understand and communicate these issues. Through its outreach efforts, including the ALA Web site and publications like *C&RL News*, OITP is able to quickly disseminate information on key issues to support librarians in playing a leadership role in communities across the United States.

OITP's charge is as follows: OITP advances ALA's public policy activities by helping secure information technology policies that support and encourage efforts of libraries to ensure access to electronic information resources as a means of upholding the public's right to a free and open information society. It works to ensure a library voice in information policy debates and to promote full and equitable intellectual participation by the public by:

- conducting research and analysis aimed at understanding the implications of information technology and policies for libraries and library users,
- educating the ALA community about the implications of information policy, law, and regulation for libraries and library users,
- advocating ALA's information policy interests in nonlegislative government policy forums, and
- engaging in strategic outlook to anticipate technological change, particularly as it presents policy challenges to libraries and library users. *~*

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