

## ALS 2009 Watch List



In 2006, the ALS Trends Report presented its first list of libraries that were pioneering new programs, testing new technologies, applying business models to librarianship and challenged our beliefs. The 2009 list includes academic, public, school and system libraries we admire and/or we wish we were! Just click on the hyperlinks to explore the best of the best! <http://www.alliancelibrarysystem.com/TrendsReport2009watchlist.pdf>

The libraries on the 2009 Watch List are in alphabetical order, and we make no pretense that the list is exhaustive or inclusive. At best, we can simply say these are the most interesting and innovative libraries that keep us looking to the future and saying, "Darn, I wish I'd thought of that!"

This year, we highlighted 28 libraries, but folks keep asking me, "Ms. Kitty, which one was your favorite this year?" So, not wanting to offend anyone, but up for the challenge, I've selected my all around favorite library (of course, after ALS), it is the amazing Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, in Topeka Kansas (<http://www.tscpl.org>).

I think they are the benchmark standard for public libraries in July 2009! For example, there are summer concerts for teens and bilingual puppet shows...how cool! There is the library foundation portal featuring great stories and photos of library volunteers. Their intuitive and easy-to-navigate "Ask a Librarian" reference portal is right on the front page, not buried behind three or four clicks. Information about library programs and services are well crafted, up to date, not stagnant or weeks old. And, there is an amazing portal called "The Next Decade, Redefining the Mission, Vision, and Role of TSCPL", which is populated with PowerPoint's, community presentations and demographic analysis. It truly sets the bar very high for all of us Long-Range Planners and Library Directors. It is simply the best I've seen!!!

The TSCPL website is rich in opportunities to comment, participate and be heard, but my favorite section is Library Director Gina Millsap's portal, "Gina's RealLibrary: Keeping It Relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." It actually tells you something about TSCPL and the people who are making the decisions. She is a testament to the fact that, as civil servants, we must be visible and connect to our community on a daily basis. How many websites have you explored to find out nothing about the library itself? Well, not at TSCPL. I am sure there are drawbacks to being so transparent and available, but on the other hand, the benefits are amazing.

I applaud Gina and all the folks at TSCPL; they are #1 on my list!

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