Rocky Mountain Chapter SLA Virtual Lunch Series:
Winner, 2012 Outstanding Technology Programming Award,
SLA Information Technology Division

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The Rocky Mountain Chapter of SLA offers its new Virtual Lunch webinar series for consideration for SLA-DIT's tenth annual Outstanding Technology Programming award.

SLA's Rocky Mountain Chapter (RMSLA) covers a four-state region of the American west, comprising Colorado, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Most of our members are concentrated along the Colorado Front Range and especially the Denver metropolitan area, plus we have a satellite group in the greater Salt Lake City region. To bridge distances and offer more participation to all members throughout our chapter's geographic area, RMSLA has provided remote access to its major face-to-face events since 2010.

RMSLA also wanted to create a virtual program series that would offer professional development value to members throughout our region as well as create buzz beyond the SLA community. We hosted our first Virtual Lunch program in November 2010, featuring former chapter president Scott Brown speaking on the topic of business research in the social media. The program was kindly hosted by the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC.org), a regional education nonprofit, and used the Adobe Connect platform. Mary Ellen Bates was our second speaker in a July 2011 session hosted by Jones e-Global Library (the employer of then-President Julie Cavender) on the WebEx platform.

For continuity, convenience, and capacity development in the chapter, we knew we needed an in-house solution to present future virtual programs. When SLA announced it would launch the unit webinar program using GoToWebinar, we were ready to jump in.

Now, RMSLA hosts its Virtual Lunch series at "high noon" on the third Thursday of each month. We strive to hit a good balance of research niches, technology tools, career themes, and SLA-specific content. The Virtual Lunch schedule has included SLA luminaries, talent from within the RMSLA chapter, and outside experts. A list of programs appears at the end of this write-up.

RMSLA offers the Virtual Lunch programs free to all SLA members. Non-members are asked to pay a registration fee, which is processed via PayPal links on the RMSLA website. Revenue from

the programs has been modest but steady. For a career development series in late 2012, RMSLA will request a registration fee from both SLA members and non-members (with a price differential that favors SLA members). This is expected to earn significant revenue for the chapter.

We promote the programs within SLA via chapter, unit, and leadership discussion lists—and we take the message beyond SLA by inviting student groups and other information professional networks and associations, such as state library organizations. Information on the series is on the RMSLA website at *http://rockymountain.sla.org/tag/virtual-programs/*.

Our first 10 programs had a total of 676 participants, and attendance has been growing. Our April 2012 session with Angela Kangiser on visual presentation of research data had almost 200 registrants. We're very happy that SLA has expanded its GoToWebinar seating capacity to 500 so we don't have to turn anyone away.

Recorded programs are added to the RMSLA website for later viewing (*http://rockymountain.sla.org/programs/webinar-archive/*). Revenues in our first 6 months covered the cost of a Screencast.com account for securely hosting the edited video files.

We use an after-program evaluation to solicit speaker and topic suggestions, and the results make it clear there is no end in sight to what we can cover.

Participants from throughout the SLA community (and beyond) say they appreciate being able to attend RMSLA's Virtual Lunches:

- *Definitely a valuable use of time for any librarian. Well presented!*
- *Very worthwhile to have these practical sessions as reminders of what's on the sites of associations and government agencies. If you don't use them all the time, you tend to forget. It was a great, quick refresher.*
- *Keep them coming!*
- *I enjoy these webinars very much. They are quite helpful to staying current with resources & trends.*
- *I'm from the New England Chapter so this is my first attendance at one of your events. Very useful.*
- *I really appreciate your chapter offering these programs free to any SLA member. It's a great outreach and seems to be very popular. This topic in particular is extremely useful for me!*
- *I have attended two and really enjoyed both presentations. Thanks!*
- *Thank you to RMSLA for making this possible!*
- *These virtual lunch programs are a tremendous idea. It is one way that SLA can deliver some value for the membership.*
- *It is a privilege to be able to be a part of this and I am grateful that the technology enables participation from the other side of the world.*

With a few programs under our collective belts, RMSLA has begun answering questions from other units and is preparing a how-to video on hosting GoToWebinar programs. We're glad to have this opportunity to connect interesting speakers with a very interested audience and to

offer more reasons for our remoter chapter members to "tune in." Many thanks to SLA HQ for making the GoToWebinar platform available.

Program Schedule, 2010-2012

2010

Nov 16 - Scott Brown, Social Business

2011

July 21 - Mary Ellen Bates, Are We Virtual Yet?
Aug 18 - Constance Ard, The Value of Information Professionals
Sep 15 - Connie Crosby and Kathie Sullivan, Collaboration Tools
Oct 20 - Heidi Longaberger, Researching Telecom Sources
Nov 17 - Ulla de Stricker, Communicating Your Professional Brand
Dec 15 - Jill Hurst-Wahl, Navigating Your Career Roadmap

2012

Jan 19 - Anne Caputo and Cindy Romaine, SLA's Strategic Vision
Feb 16 - Marcy Phelps, Power Networking for Introverts
Mar 15 - Shelly Sommer, Betsy Herzog, and Dedre Henderson, New Leaves: Environment and Energy Research
Apr 19 - Angela Kangiser, Presenting Business Research Visually
May 17 - Joe Murphy, Information Impacts of Technology Trends
June 21 - Peggy Garvin, Tracking Congress 2.0
July 19 - SLA Annual Conference recap: chapter member panel/open discussion (and possible guest, SLA President-Elect Deb Hunt).
Aug 16 - Sue Cronizer, Making a Difference in Your Organization
Sept 20 – Amelia Kassel, online research specialty niche [TBD]
Oct 18 – Scott Brown and Kim Dority, session 1: What Do I Do Now? How to Prepare for—and Take Advantage of—Possible Job Changes
Nov 15 - Scott Brown and Kim Dority, session 2: Transferable Skills: Identifying and Marketing Your Unique Value to Non-LIS Employers
Dec 20 – Scott Brown and Kim Dority, session 3: So Tell Me About Yourself: Personal and Professional Branding for LIS Students and Professionals

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