

Karen Hartman takes “Beyond Google” around South Africa

More than 600 South African library workers and internet researchers now know how to set up their own RSS newsreader and weblogs thanks to Karen Hartman, U.S. Embassy Information Resource Officer.

In “Beyond Google: Keeping Up with New Search Tools” Hartman describes some of the freely available but not yet well known search strategy options at Google Labs, as well as new types of search engines (like brainboost, clusty, and mooter), and some of best library weblogs where we too can keep up with new internet technologies, and start our own weblog if we wish. Best of all (well, it’s my favorite), Hartman illustrates how we can set up an RSS newsreader and feed our favorite web pages and weblogs into our own personal web “newspaper” saving our time, and enhancing our skills in one go.

Hartman developed her presentation after she was asked to “talk about anything you want” to the Gauteng South branch of LIASA back in early 2004. Feeling a little rusty around the edges about some of the new developments on the internet, she decided to focus on something she really wanted to learn more about. It turned out to be a popular subject!

Internet searching isn’t a new field to Hartman however. While she was a reference librarian at Mary Washington University in the United States, she authored several textbooks on internet searching, including *Searching and Researching on the Internet and the World Wide Web* (with Ernest Ackerman, currently in its 4th edition) and *Learning to Use the Internet and the World Wide Web* (2nd edition).

Hartman has delivered her “Beyond Google” presentation twelve times in South Africa in the past year, six of which have been organized as LIASA events. Some of these have included the Health Information Community of South Africa, the Gauteng Department of Education Library Facilitators, the Johannesburg Public Library, Ekurhuleni Metro Librarians, and the Parliamentary Research Unit in Cape Town. She has also given the presentation to the National Library Service in Botswana.

Most recently, Hartman has presented “Beyond Google” to the Johannesburg Teacher’s Centre, to the Western Cape Special Libraries Interest Group branch (LiSLIG) in Cape Town, and to librarians and researchers in East London at the Fort Hare campus, which turned out 60 people on short notice.

Unfortunately, Hartman will be moving on this year to Nairobi to take up the East Africa region as Information Resource Officer. We have no doubt that our library colleagues in East Africa will start using weblogs and RSS readers too!

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