



# Value-added School Librarianship

## Conquering the new frontier

Frazier, Robert, d. 1837. A map of the discoveries of Capt. Lewis & Clark from the Rocky Mountain and the River Lewis to the Cap of Disappointment or the Coloumbia River at the north Pacific Ocean / by observation of Robert Frazer. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

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Saturday, January 29, 2011

This keynote is an introduction to a presentation at the January 29, 2011 ECU Librarian to Librarian Networking Summit. Like the famous American explorers, Lewis and Clark, school librarians are faced with an uncertain frontier. Today's session is an opportunity to collaborate with other attendees, to exchange ideas and strategies, and to craft an action plan for facing the future and the new frontier with confidence. Graphics used in this keynote are primary sources gleaned from the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division.

# A new frontier



Fort Clatsop, detail from Lewis and Clark Expedition map by William Clark and Meriwether Lewis, 1804-06. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.

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Today's school librarians face the same kind of difficult choices as the famous explorers Lewis and Clark. We could stay safely in the familiar place we've always known (and watch while someone else blazes the new trails), or we could bravely venture into an unexplored frontier filled with unknown dangers, new ideas, and changing conditions. What new challenges, unknown dangers, and unexplored territories do you see on the new frontier?

Historical background from "Lewis and Clark Expedition." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online School Edition. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. Web. 28 Jan. 2011. <<http://www.school.eb.com/eb/article-9048028>>.

Meriwether Lewis was an experienced soldier and frontiersman; on taking on this expedition, he quickly learned botany, medicine, and the use of scientific instruments. He provisioned a keelboat and a variety of smaller vessels including an iron-framed boat that he designed for assembly on the journey. While the iron-framed boat didn't turn out to be a success, in concept it provided him with the confidence that he could traverse unexplored obstacles. Lewis' former Army Captain, William Clark, accompanied him on this journey. Together they recruited and trained what Lewis called the "Corps of Discovery" and then set out on a 2-year expedition in which they succeeded in mapping the west, and discovering a wide variety of new species of animals and plant life. Their journey was not without many hardships and challenges. From the outset it took pushing, poling, and paddling to move their boats up river. They were helped by an assorted band of individuals including a Native American woman, an African American guide, interpreters, and even a Newfoundland dog.

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Today's school librarians face a challenging new frontier. Here are some of the features I spy when I survey the terrain ahead.

# Collaborating in this session

explore the new frontier



Detail of [Mediolanensis ducatvs](#) from the atlas: [Theatrum orbis terrarum](#), Abraham Ortelius, [1570]. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

record our observations at  
[ncschoolibraryvision.pbworks.com](http://ncschoolibraryvision.pbworks.com)

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What lessons could we learn from Lewis and Clark?

Their journey was not without many hardships and challenges. From the outset it took pushing, poling, and paddling to move their boats up river. The explorers recognized the need to attain new skills and knowledge and they designed a flexibly-used craft to help them traverse uncertain waters. They were helped by an assorted band of individuals with a variety of talents, including a Native American woman, an African American guide, interpreters, and even a Newfoundland dog. Yet, with what President Jefferson later called “courage undaunted”, they became known as some of our most famous American for their success in exploring an unknown wilderness.

This is our task for this session. Let’s examine and imagine the challenges and the future for school librarians in OUR new frontier. We will brainstorm ways to support teachers, administrators, and our peers in 21st century practice, imagine a new professional identity, and share strategies for impacting student learning. As we explore these ideas, we’ll post our observations to the session wiki at <http://ncschoolibraryvision.pbworks.com>